

# **Japan and Britain after 1859**

Creating cultural bridges

**Olive Checkland**

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# Japan and Britain after 1859

This is a study of the cultural bridges between Japan and Britain after Japan was forced to open her doors to Western intrusion. The Japanese were shocked to discover they had no foreign trade with which to bargain. They quickly recognised the importance of 'export' ware, pretty china, to create a demand. Their campaign to hijack the Great Exhibition, worldwide, succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. Everywhere Westerners were enchanted by Japanese pavilions, gardens and tea-houses. In Japan they snapped up books in English and had British architects build Western style buildings. In Britain, *Japonisme* became a craze. Everyone, including the music hall artiste Marie Lloyd, joined the fun. The wild success of *The Mikado* (1885) is a reminder of the excitement. Behind all this there were serious men and women, like the artist Frank Brangwyn, the anthropologist Isabella Bird, the poet Laurence Binyon and the potter Bernard Leach who were also committed to Japan and Japanese culture. It is the activities and experiences of these, and similar, individuals, and the broader background against which they operated, that are the main concern of this book.

**Olive Checkland** is Research Fellow (Overseas) at Fukuzawa Memorial Centre, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan.



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**For**

**N.T. and S.T.**

**With affection**



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# Preface

In the 1850s it was with a sense of increasing importance that the Japanese Samurai unsheathed their swords, and, brandishing them with a flourish, cried ‘revere the Emperor and expel the barbarian’. But the samurai sword was no match for the armoured ships of the ‘barbarians’. Nor, despite the primacy of the American, Commander Matthew Perry, was it, at that time, the Americans that the Japanese had to fear. It was the British, whose commercial supremacy then dominated the world, who were the real threat. Britain, being an island nation, situated off the west coast of Europe – as Japan was to be found off the east coast of Asia – became a model and a challenge. Establishing cultural bridges became an urgent priority.

The young Samurai hot heads, still carrying their two swords – now modestly sheathed – set out from Japan to explore the West. They were mortified by the industrial power they saw in Britain and in Europe. The embarrassment of appearing in the West in their wonderful, impractical, voluminous clothes led at once to an appreciation of the need to know how to dress. What was a Japanese man to do with ‘shirts, studs and wash hand basins’?

In Vienna, in 1873, the Iwakura Mission, the most influential delegation of new Japanese leaders ever sent overseas, was bowled over by the great Exposition. The exhibition movement of the nineteenth century, initiated by Britain in 1851, although disguised as cultural bridge building, was about trade and commercial prosperity. The Japanese were shocked. Japan had no overseas trade, nor any modern industry. With the courage of desperation they determined that they, the Japanese, would take on the Great Exhibition and create their own cultural bridges with the West. Far from retreating, the Japanese embraced these great Western competitive showcases.

True to their resolve, at the great exhibitions throughout the developed world, the Japanese, with flare and pizzazz, bombarded the West with their culture. They erected Eastern pavilions and adorned them with the most exquisite Japanese furniture, faience and frivolities. As a result the Japanese corner of any exhibition was besieged by visitors, enchanted by this strange exoticism.

Strenuous efforts were made in Japan to encourage and market the export industry. Although the trading company *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was not an obvious success, largely because of confusion over objectives, Japan's struggles to create a viable export trade were, in the end, triumphant.

Paradoxically, using the momentum gained from the exhibition, the Japanese encouraged their craftsmen at home to manufacture masses of cheap export ware. This could be china, lacquer ware, *cloisonné* ware, fans or folding screens. Having visited the exhibition every British housewife wanted a piece of Japan in her home. Japanese government strategy had indeed paid off. Their cultural bridges were second to none.

In Japan curiosity about Britain and the West was tempered by a feeling of shame. How could the Japanese conform and excel when everything they knew of the West was so remote and alien? In Japan, Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the great inspirators of Meiji Japan, recognised that most of his fellow countrymen would never visit the West. They would have to learn about Western culture from foreign books imported into Japan. One of Fukuzawa's students founded Maruzen, which became an important chain of bookshops handling a wide collection of imported books in English, or other foreign languages.

One of the most startling developments was the need in Japan to conform, and this created a demand for 'Western'-style buildings. British architects were initially important but they had soon trained the first generation of Japanese architects who built in Western styles. Several Japanese institutions were soon housed in buildings in the Western idiom; these were important symbols for power hungry Japan.

Japanese curiosity was assuaged and their leaders reassured when a modern industrial designer like Christopher Dresser visited Japan. They hoped to learn more of modern pottery design and the techniques of large-scale manufacture from such a man. Japanese painters also became students of and learnt from British painters. This was a controversial matter as Japanese traditionalist artists struggled to maintain *Nihon-ga*, or the Japanese style of painting. With the new medium, photography, co-operation was clearly necessary and desirable.

In Britain the fever of excitement over Japanese art developed a life of its own as *Japonisme*. Everyone was obsessed with Japan; both theatre and music hall were involved. Did the excited response to Japanese art and art objects reflect a staleness in Western art in the mid-nineteenth century? In Britain certainly the art world was being challenged by the competitiveness of mass manufacture of an industrialised society. A voyage to Japan, could, for an impecunious painter, lead to a comfortable living as pictures of a romantic Japan sold well to a small but eager picture-buying public. Other painters made contact with Japanese art collectors in Britain and found these connections both profitable and stimulating.

The magic of fairyland Japan was described in many books written by enchanted travellers. Japan, the British came to believe, was a land apart, an

earthly paradise, where a carefree people played, forever, with their children, under the cherry blossom. These books were published by enterprising men who knew they had a ready market and could make a good profit. New techniques in printing and reproduction made wonderful illustrations possible. British artists, who could paint their own pictures of Japan, were astonished at the demand for their books.

But using Japanese images in this way was only part of the picture. Many, including artists and painters, were full of admiration for the beauty and the technical achievements of the art industries of Japan. There were eager collectors of Japanese art, whether of *Ukiyo-e* prints, china or porcelain. Individuals, enchanted by Japanese craft skills, became obsessive collectors. Today the Japanese collections of the great museums and art galleries in England and in Scotland owe much to gifts and bequests from private individuals.

By 1910 the Japanese felt that they could create an exhibition of their own on equal terms with any Western power. The Japan British Exhibition in London was intended to announce Japan's arrival on the world stage, and to encourage the sale of even more Japanese goods in Britain. The market for Japanese antiques, despite the difficulty of dating and valuing such objects, was strong. Sometimes 'antiques' were not antiques; it was hard to tell.

The four bridge builders featured, finally, illustrated Japanese curiosity about, and need for stimulation from, British culture. On the Japanese side this was through Kawanabe Kyosai, the painter, and Mikimoto Ryuzo, of the pearl-making family. The poet/scholar Laurence Binyon brought precision to the challenge of classifying Japanese artefacts. Bernard Leach was different, in the sense that, although he understood only too well the cultural differences between Japan and Britain, he behaved with generosity towards both.

In this study there is inevitably more information about the British response to Japan. As the greatest imperial power of the nineteenth century the British embraced Japan with enthusiasm, as of right. Indeed imperial attitudes towards Japan, although not then recognised, were universal. The position of the Japanese was very different. Cut off from the world as they had been for some two centuries, they were curious, but also nervous and defensive.

Some references are made here to London and also to Glasgow. London's position, as the capital at the centre of the then greatest imperial power, was clear and obvious to the Japanese. At this time Glasgow, 'the second city of the Empire', was at the height of its power. Glasgow was, with the exception of London, until 1914, home to more Japanese than any other place in Britain. Japanese students studied engineering and ship design at its ancient University. Glasgow made railway steam engines, which operated in Japan and on all railway lines of the world, and Clyde-built steamships were to be found in every port, worldwide. Glasgow's importance was recognised by the Japanese; an Honorary Japanese Consul served in the city from 1890–1941.

The debts incurred in preparing this study have been many. Rena Niimi helped to prepare ‘Shirts, studs and wash hand basins’, Peter Kornicki assisted with his expert knowledge of *Hakurankai*. Richard Wilson (now of the International Christian University, Tokyo) kindly put me in touch with the Peabody and Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Suzuki Yoji of Maruzen, Tokyo, was indefatigable, as he searched their archives on my behalf. Tomida Emiko, at the John Ruskin Library and Museum in Tokyo, was enthusiastic. The Institute of Architects at Mita, Tokyo, were concerned and helpful. Dr Kawanabe Kusumi was a wonderful guide to her great grandfather’s work, and entertained me at the Museum to Kawanabe Kyosai, which she maintains at Warabi, Saitama. Dr Brenda Jordan kindly allowed me access to her thesis material. Glennys Wyld in Birmingham generously helped trace Michael Tomkinson. Inanaga Masuo engaged my interest in the photographer, William Kinninmond Burton, on behalf of Burton’s great granddaughter, Tsurumi Sachiko. At Hornel’s home, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, Scotland, Frances Scott and James Allan were supportive. My thanks to Ayako Hotta Lister for her assistance in London and to Jake Brown, Tony Hallas and S.C. Renow. Hirota Toshiko, Keio University Library, Tokyo, the late Ian Gordon of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, John Moore of the University Library, Glasgow, and Stephen Lees of the University Library, Cambridge, have all been supportive.

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Margaret Lamb and Norio Tamaki have read the text with care: their insights have enriched the study. Bill and Isabel Burnside have ensured that the text emerged, faultless, on page and disk. Their generosity is always appreciated.

Olive Checkland  
Ferry Path, Cambridge  
Keio University, Tokyo

### **Author’s note**

Japanese names are usually given in Japanese style, with family name followed by given name.

## **Part I**

# **The price of seclusion**





*Figure 1.1* Samurai, clumsily dressed in Western clothes with Samurai sword

# 1    **Shirts, studs and wash hand basins**

## **Japanese gentlemanship**

For over 200 years the Japanese had been denied contact with people other than their compatriots. Only when, after 1859, delegations of Japanese left the country to explore the West did their ignorance of the outside world become apparent.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, who alone amongst the Japanese made three journeys to the West *before* the Meiji Restoration of 1868, was sensitive to his fellow countrymen's embarrassment. He himself had been mortified by Japanese abroad, as he wrote:

Before our departure, the organisers of the embassy had decided that we should carry all the necessary food, because agreeable food would not be available in foreign lands. So hundreds of cases of polished rice were put in our baggage. Likewise ... they had provided dozens of very large lamps (a frame-work, two feet square, for an oil-burning wick with paper sides and wire coverings). Then they ordered smaller lamps, portable lanterns, candles – all the necessities of travel customary in our native country.<sup>1</sup>

This was awkward, as wherever the Japanese were lodged, European governments housed them in grand hotels, gas lit and warm. They were offered 'such a spread of food, delicacies "both of the woods and of the seas"' that they were spoiled for choice. Everywhere they travelled in Europe they were treated as honoured guests.

The early delegations of Japanese to Britain appeared resplendent, if outlandish, in their traditional dress. What on earth were they wearing? The British public were excited but puzzled. Pictures of these exotic figures appeared in the newspapers to the delight and astonishment of the British public. If Japan was to become part of the modern world then something had to be done to create a Japanese gentleman who was appropriately dressed.

It was Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) who tackled this cultural difficulty. As he noted, when the Japanese arrived in Europe in 1862, 'We all wore our Japanese dress with a pair of swords in our girdles, and appeared on the streets of London in such attire. A sight indeed it must have been.'<sup>2</sup>

#### 4 *The price of seclusion*

Under the guidance of Fukuzawa, Katayama Junnosuke wrote the preface to, and prepared, *Seiyoishokuju* [Guide Book to Everyday Clothes and so on in European Style], which appeared in November 1867, that is, on the eve of the Meiji Restoration. The book was republished in 1994 by the Fukuzawa Memorial Centre at Keio University.<sup>3</sup> *Seiyoishokuju* was very useful for those planning to travel abroad.

The young Japanese also needed a tailor. It would appear that Keio College did initially provide a tailoring service. But, in 1873, this was transferred to Maruzan in Yokohama. To move the tailoring service to Yokohama was a sensible and logical step given the availability of foreigners, and foreign tailors, in the treaty port.

For the purpose of this study a few pages of *Seiyoishokuju* have been reproduced. These show drawings of Western clothes, washing facilities and basic furniture, together with a translation into English of the Japanese text that accompanied the pictures.

### **Food, clothing and shelter in the West**

There are many people who wear Western style clothes recently. It is needless to say that Western clothes are very convenient not only for soldiers but also for people who work outside. Many Japanese, however, do not quite understand how to wear them and make mistakes such as putting on a warm jacket in the summer or wearing it as underwear. This book is written to give a general knowledge of the Western way of living for Japanese who do not know much about it.

### **Clothing**

These two (undershirt and drawers) (see figs 1.2 and 1.3) are made mostly from knit cotton or some from flannel. People usually use the ones made from flannel in winter. Shirts, made from calico or hemp, are for general use. Flannel shirts are used during trips. Because they are woollen they do not get dirty easily.

The collar (fig 1.4) is made of hemp, some paper-made. The latter ones are inexpensive, but you have to throw them away after using them for only one day. Do not forget to put this collar on. Otherwise, it is as if you wore underwear (worn with a kimono) with *han-eri* (a collar for kimonos). It is very inexcusable.

Ordinary shoes (see fig 1.5) are substitutes for *geta*. Boots are used in rainy weather or on horseback. Slippers are substitutes for *uwa zori*, used inside. A shoehorn is used, putting it between your heels and shoes and slide it to make it easy to put on the shoes.

A gentleman's coat (see figs 1.6 – 1.9) is everyday clothing for people of the upper classes. A business coat is for ordinary people; upper-class people, however, wear it when they are both in and out. Even servants



Figure 1.2 Undershirt and drawers



Figure 1.3 Shirts

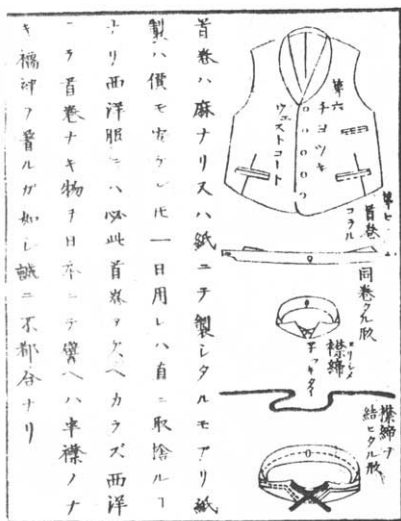


Figure 1.4 Shirt collar



Figure 1.5 Shoes and shoehorn



Figure 1.6 Coats 1



Figure 1.7 Coats 2

sometimes wear it. It depends on each person's taste. The French, who like dressing up, usually put on a gentleman's coat. The Americans and the British, on the other hand, do not care how they look, like a Tokyoite. They do not care as long as their underwear is clean, and are unconcerned about their outerwear. Many of the upper classes wear business jackets. Only soldiers and sailors of high rank wear 'uniform' with badges made of gold or silver according to their class on formal occasions. There are many kinds of uniform, but it is difficult to show all of them here. These kinds of coat are made of cashmere, that is fine wool woven with silk and wool, half each, or flannel, or white hemp.

A hat (see fig 1.10) is for upper class and a cap for middle and lower classes. Although the cap is for lower-class people, upper-class people also wear it. It is the same as in the case of business jackets. In general, you should remember that you put on a hat when you wear a gentleman's coat, and a cap when wearing a business jacket. Ordinary people sometimes wear caps, but mostly they are for army and naval officers. In front of a cap, each of them put badges made of gold or silver, or ribbons according to their classes. Therefore, when you see the person wearing the cap with gold and silver coloured ribbons, you should take him as an officer in his country.

This is a brief sketch (see figs 1.11 and 1.12) of the clothing in the West. You wear them in order of the number on the figure. First, wear undershirt, second, drawers, third, shirt, and so forth. The last is putting on the jacket. Their clothes usually have pockets everywhere in which to put your belongings. For example, you can put your handkerchief in



Figure 1.8 Coats 3



Figure 1.9 Coats 4

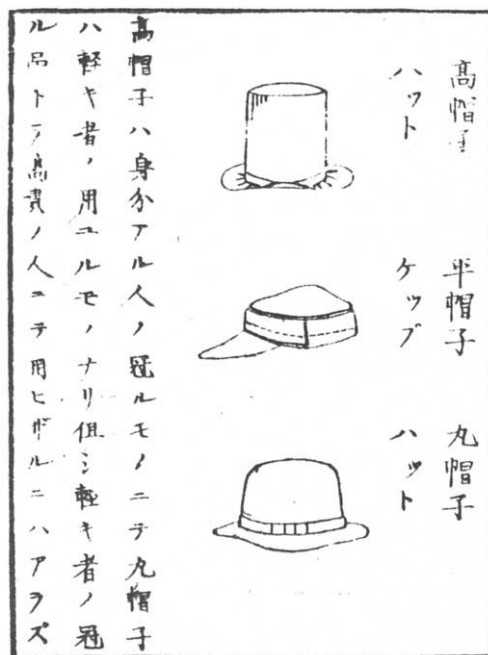


Figure 1.10 Hats



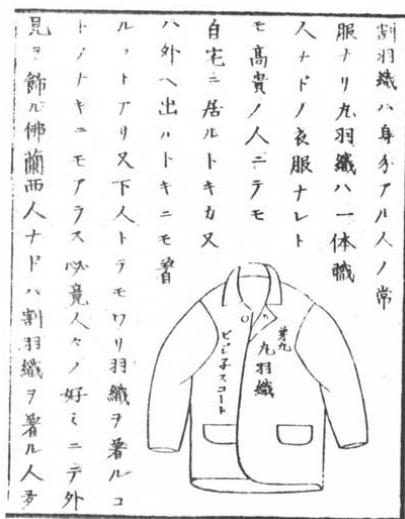


Figure 1.11 Jacket

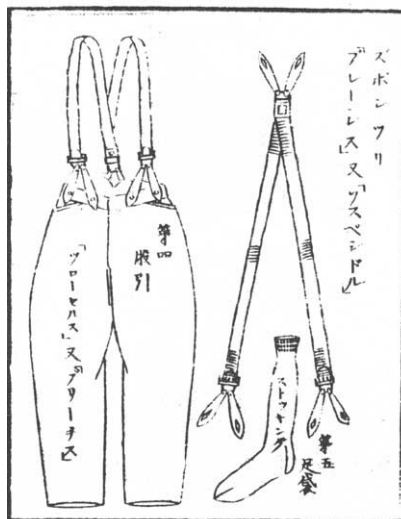


Figure 1.12 Trousers and braces



Figure 1.13 Wash stand



Figure 1.14 Basin, jug, etc.

your jacket pocket, your purse in your trouser pocket, and place your watch in your waistcoat pocket and hook the chain at one of the buttonholes and so on. When you go to the toilet, you can just relieve yourself by unbuttoning your trousers and jacket. In the case of defecation, you have to unbutton the same parts, both front and back of braces. When you are finished, you button them again. Since you cannot see the back button, it is very inconvenient until you get used to it.

There is a wash stand (fig 1.13) in the Western-style bedroom. They wash their face, hands and teeth every morning and after a meal. On the wash stand is a basin made of porcelain that is a substitute of the metal basin we use. Under the washstand is a jug. Figures of the other appliances are as follows.

This figure (fig 1.15) shows drawers with a mirror on it. It is too difficult to wear Western clothes without looking into a mirror such as reaching for buttons. Because they brush their hair every morning and evening every room has a mirror inside. After putting on the clothes, they wear perfume to keep it clean. At the left side of the mirror on the drawer is a smelling bottle. In front of the mirror is a brush, which is used for dusting clothes. All in all, the Western person likes to be clean more than Japanese do.

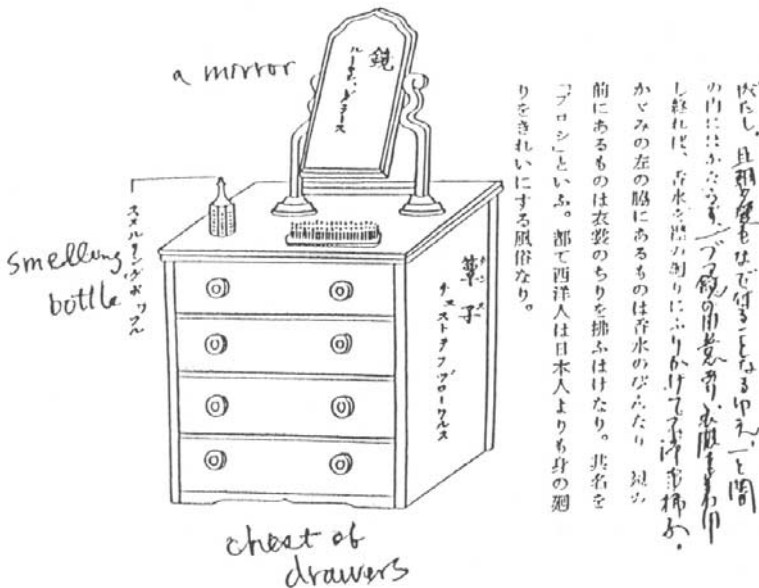


Figure 1.15 Chest of drawers



The Figure on this page show a table setting for one person, and other tableware. When you dine with many guests, there can be twenty or thirty people sitting around a dining table all together. In usual meals, they drink red wine, sherry wine, port wine, etc. When they have guests or ceremony they drink champagne and other tasty wines. Liqueur and brandy are served in small glasses after a meal. Beer is malt liquor and has a bitter taste. It is good to have a heart-to-heart talk over a glass of beer. Some people appreciate its bitterness. Whisky and brandy are too strong to drink during the meal. They are usually for servants.



西洋人は箸を用ひず。内類其外の品々、大切に切りて平皿に盛り、銘々の前に並べたるを、右の手に應丁を以てこれを小さく切り、左の手の内刺に突掛て食するなり。應丁の先に物を載せて直に口へ入るゝは、甚不行儀のこととせり。汁ものも矢張平皿に入れ、匕にて吸ふなり。汁もの其外、茶を飲むにも、口に替をさすることも不行儀とす。此圖は一入前の皿茶碗等を並べたる所なり。大勢會食するときは、一つ食事臺へ二十人も三十人も席を列ぬることあり。食事諸道具の名は次に記せり。

Figure 1.16 Table setting

The watch is quite different from the topic we are talking about now. It is, however, their custom that we should be informed of. In the West, they know the time not by the boom of a temple bell but by a watch they always bring with them. Recently, it is getting popular that people here wear the foreign-made watch. Sometimes they do not know how to read it.

Since they divide one day into twenty-four hours, an hour for them is half *toki* for us. One hour is divided into sixty equal parts and each part is called a minute. One minute is also divided into sixty parts and this is called a second. One second is about as long as one *pule*. The face of a clock shows the number from one to twelve, and an hour hand goes twice and a minute hand twenty-four times a day. At noon or midnight, both hour and minute hands point out the number twelve and the minute hand lies upon the hour hand. Then they start moving to the right, while the minute hand revolves once for an hour, the hour hand moves to the number one. In this way, when the hour hand points out between one and two, the minute hand turns around to the number six, taking half an hour. Therefore, when you would like to know the time, find where the hour hand is first, and then look at the minute hand. For example, the hour hand is between number nine and ten, and the minute hand shows number two. It is called ten minutes past nine: when the hour hand goes beyond the middle between number nine and ten and the minute hand indicates number eight, you call it 'twenty minutes to ten'. This 'twenty minutes' means that we will have twenty more minutes

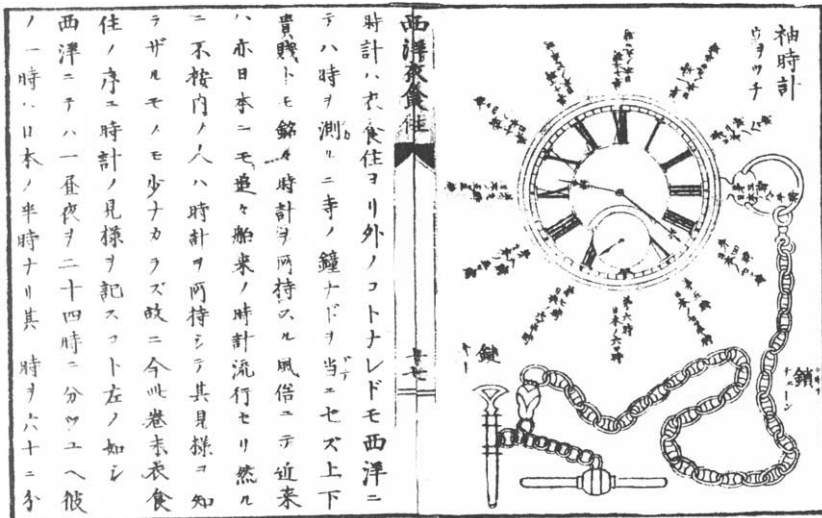


Figure 1.17 Watch

to reach number twelve, and we know what time it is by where it points out around the graduated face in sixty minutes. This figure shows twenty-two minutes past nine. A second hand rotates once a minute, but we do not mention the second when you check the time.

There are no *tatami* mats in Western-style houses. Instead, they spread a mat on the floor, then lay a beautiful carpet on it. Their custom is to sit on a chair on the carpet. Because they do not sit on the floor directly it is all right to walk inside the house with shoes on. They place the doormat at the entrance and wipe their shoes on it. That helps them keep clean inside the room. When Westerners visit Japan, they sometimes enter a house with their shoes on. It seems to us very rude; however, we should overlook such things.

Bed (see fig 1.18) is 3 *shaku* wide, 6 *shaku* long. The one for two persons is even 4 *shaku* wide. The mattress is filled up with straw, then cotton, and wool. Finally they spread a bleached cotton sheet over it.

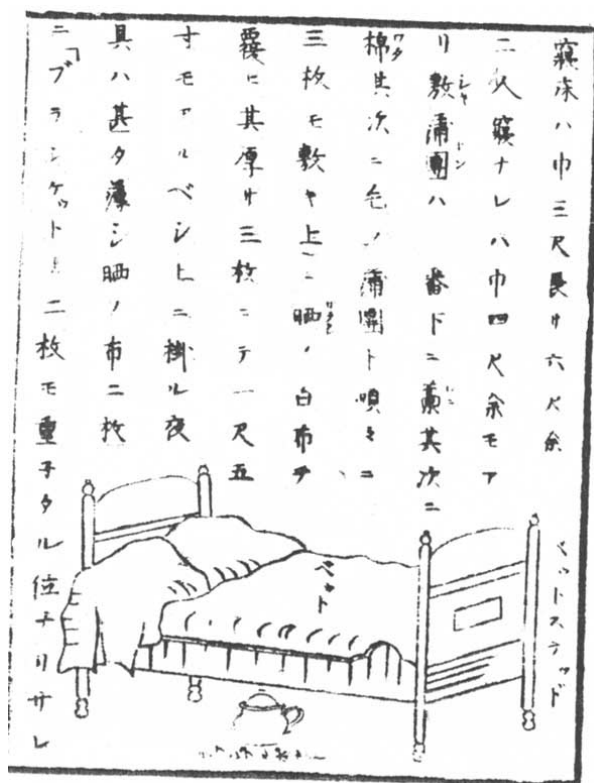


Figure 1.18 Bed and chamber pot

The mattress is as much as 1.5 *shaku* thick. The bedclothes are very simple. They are only two bleached cotton sheets and two blankets. Since the mattress is thick and soft enough for the body to sink, you can sleep warm and comfortable. Both sheet and bedspread are all made by bleached cotton and are as white as snow. You cannot find any lice in winter or fleas inside. Under the bed is a chamber pot. There is always at least one chamber pot in their bedroom. If you travel in the West for the first time, you often take it as an ornament. Be careful.

It can be argued that Fukuzawa Yukichi, by initiating the tailoring service and the small handy book that was a necessity for travelling Japanese, built the first, and most useful, cultural bridge. It is certainly the case that those Japanese who feature in this study were indeed grateful for any information that would help them in their first tentative steps in the West.

And there is more: the disadvantages that assailed the Japanese, such as not knowing how to dress in Western style, seem, without doubt, to have strengthened their resolve to succeed.

## Notes

- 1 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Autobiography*, Tokyo, 1960, p. 127.
- 2 Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, p. 127.
- 3 With thanks to Nishikawa Shunsaku, Fukuzawa Memorial Centre, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan.

## 2 The Great Exhibition as a cultural bridge

### The challenge of the Great Exhibition

During the Meiji Years, that is from 1868 to 1912, nothing was more difficult for the new Japanese leadership than the exhibition, an international display taking place in various Western cities designed to glorify the wonders of the new industrial age. Exhibitions in the nineteenth century were a remarkable mixture of lofty aims and crude commercialism. They revealed blatant nationalism, a false internationalism and an ardent imperialism.<sup>1</sup> By demonstrating national pride the exhibition could also be enthusiastic about informing and educating the people, demonstrating to them the glories of the new science and technology of the age. Underlying all this self-promotion were the hard realities of commercial success.

The Japanese, already mortified by their non-conformity, decided to take on the International Exhibition, 'one of the measures Japan had positively undertake to counter the current of capitalism in the world market into which Japan had been drawn, willingly or unwillingly, after having opened the country'.<sup>2</sup> Japan's commitment was intended 'to show off the originality of Japanese culture in the face of Western culture. We can call it cultural nationalism against the economic military and cultural power of the Western countries which were then menacing Japan.'<sup>3</sup>

The British had started the ball rolling when, in 1851, inspired by Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert,<sup>4</sup> they had organised the 'Great Exhibition of the Works and Industry of all the Nations'. The Japanese, in the form of the Iwakura Mission,<sup>5</sup> a large group of new young Japanese leaders, came face to face with the exhibition in Vienna in the summer of 1873. At that stage the Japanese were already reeling from the shock of seeing and experiencing the industrial might of Western Europe. They had landed at Liverpool on 17 August 1872; by 29 April 1873 they were in Vienna. In the interval they had by railway and steamship visited Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Russia; wherever they went they had been shown industrial marvels in which all these industrialised nations gloried.

For the purpose of this brief survey attention will be given to the financial commitment that the new Japanese government made to the

international exhibition movement. This is followed by a reference to the Japanese in Vienna in 1873, and then London in 1851, 1862 and 1874. Thereafter London does not feature again until the Japan British Exhibition of 1910, which is dealt with in a later chapter. The Great Exhibition of 1901 in Glasgow is considered, as is the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition, in 1875. Finally there is a very brief look at the role of the United States in the exhibition movement.

## **Profit and loss**

When the Iwakura Mission arrived in Vienna on 29 April 1873 the Japanese government had already invested ¥508,000 in the Japanese display. It was a large sum to commit to an exposition enterprise about which the Japanese themselves knew nothing.

Although the Japanese may have drifted into the Vienna Exposition, in later years they did make a huge commitment to international exhibitions. At Philadelphia (1876) they spent ¥360,000, at Paris (1900) well over ¥1 million, at St Louis (1904) over ¥800,000 and finally in London (1910) nearly ¥2 million. There seems to be no doubt that Japanese leaders, such as Kido Takayoshi (1833–77) and Okubo Toshimichi (1830–78), recognised that, in terms of what Japan could gain from the exhibition movement, the money was well spent. But the Japanese government was discriminating. As can be seen from Table 2.1 the government was committed and often made a very large financial contribution, but many other international exhibitions, which had Japanese displays, were privately financed.

It should be noted that, although Table 2.1 gives useful information about the Japanese government's involvement, it may not be correct in all its details. Certainly the Japanese government was directly committed to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, and spent ¥360,000 there, despite the 'P' for private investment, entered in Table 2.1.

The exhibition movement was expensive, but of course in theory there should be a return on the investment. Certainly the Great Exhibition in London of 1851 did make a handsome profit. It was gratifying for the British organisers that they did so well; from the profits it was possible not only to buy land in Kensington but also to finance the Museum of Manufactures. The site bought with the 1851 Exhibition profits also included the area now occupied by the Science Museum and by the Imperial College. Exhibitions were not always a financial success. The 1873 Exposition in Vienna proved to be a costly luxury, which 'almost bankrupted Vienna',<sup>6</sup> while the show at Paris in 1878 proved again to be an expensive undertaking.

## **The Vienna Exposition of 1873**

On 29 April 1873 the Japanese leaders travelling with the Iwakura Mission arrived in Vienna, the centre of the then powerful Austro-Hungarian

Empire. It was to be a demanding visit. The Mission was led by Iwakura Tomomi, a Japanese nobleman who had embraced change and the new regime. They arrived in Vienna just as the Exposition was about to be opened. As Kido Takayoshi wrote of the opening ceremony:

I went to the grounds in the carriage. ... Spectators lined the road. ... At 12 the Emperor, Empress, the English Crown Prince [later King Edward VII] and the Crown Prince of Prussia [later Kaiser Wilhelm II] entered the hall. ... At the same time a salute was fired, and the people all cheered. The Emperor then mounted the dais to deliver a speech of congratulations.<sup>7</sup>

Kido Takayoshi later expressed, in the clearest terms, his unease at the Japanese contribution to the Viennese exhibition, writing:

Minister Sano<sup>8</sup> confided in me on some things, and I gave him my opinions. The reason he talked with me is that our people had brought a collection of articles to display. ... The people of our country are not yet able to distinguish between the purpose of an exposition and of a museum; therefore they have tried to display a mountain of tiny and delicate Oriental objects without regard for the expense. This seems to invite contempt for our country on the part of others.<sup>9</sup>

Kido's alarm was perfectly justified. National pride demanded that Japan should join the comity of nations by exhibiting worldwide. But, in Japan's case, it could not be the industrial products that were displayed so proudly but the fine craft objects, handmade in Japan.

The official diary-writer to the Iwakura expedition was Kume Kunitake (1839–1931). He wrote over thirty-two pages on the Vienna Exposition. When Kume came to write about the Vienna Exposition he was bowled over. He reported:

I was overwhelmed by the huge number of products on display. It is far beyond any comment. The illumination of the whole site is amazing ... and some of the delicate works touch nerves.

Japanese goods on display were particularly popular. Firstly they are very different from the European counterparts and looked strange to the people. Secondly there is a relative shortage of fine products on display from our neighbouring countries. Thirdly things Japanese have been in recent years highly appreciated. Among the manufactured goods, Chinese are esteemed but it is due to strength and size of the goods. They are not worth investigating, temperature, mixture of paints, drawing and so on. Beauty of silk goods is entirely dependent on silk threads. Spinning is very uneven. Dyeing is done by plants and therefore cannot produce lustre and liquidity. Lacquer works, as they are a Japanese speciality, are appreciated very much. Copper works lack

*Table 2.1* Japan's commitment to the exhibition movement from 1873–1910

<i>Year</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Expenditure (in Yen)</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Participation (G: government; P: private companies)</i>
1873	Vienna	508,000	International	G
1875	Melbourne	20,000	International	G, P
1876	Philadelphia	360,000	Centenary	P
1878	Paris	215,000	International	P
1879	Sydney	39,000	International	P
1880	Melbourne	33,000	P	
1880	Berlin	n /a	Fishery	G
1881	Atlanta	n /a		G
1883	London	2,000	Fishery	G
1884	London	24,000	Sanitary	G
1884	St Petersburg	10,000	Horticulture	G
1884	Edinburgh	20,000	Forestry	G
1884	New Orleans	16,000	Industrial	G, P
1885	London	28,000	Invention	G, P
1885	Nuremberg	33,000	Gold Work	
1885	Antwerp	n /a		
1888	Barcelona	23,000	International	G, P
1889	Paris	130,000	International	G, P
1890	St Petersburg	5,000	Prison	G
1893	Chicago	630,000	Columbian World	G, P
1900	Paris	1,319,000	Universal	G, P
1901	Glasgow	40,000	International	P
1904	St Louis	823,000	Louisiana Purchase	G, P
1905	Poland	30,000	?	P
1905	Liège	40,000	Belgium	P
1906	Milan	16,000	International	G
1907	Jamestown	15,000	International	P
1908	St Petersburg	30,000	Fine Art and Furniture	P
1910	London	1,966,760	Japan British	G

*Source:* Marunouchi Research Centre (ed.), *Nihonbankokuhaku Jiten*, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 102–4.

vividness, but cloisonné wares and inlaid works are esteemed. Painting is very different from the western. Flower and bird paintings arouse appreciation as they are themselves scenic beauty. Portraits featuring actors look ugly and cause us cold sweats. Mosaic works are popular but joints are badly done and are covered only by lacquer. If the Europeans look at them, they will soon make them in their own countries if they can invent a new technique. Straw works are also popular, but as they are cheap and roughly made they will not endure for long.<sup>10</sup>



It was following the visit to the Vienna Exposition that the Japanese made the decision to embrace the exhibition movement. It seems certain that Gottfried Wagener<sup>11</sup> (1831–92) (also Wagner), the German adviser who had been in Japan since 1868, set up the arrangements for the Japanese in Vienna. Was Wagener also influential in helping the Japanese to make the decision to embrace the world exhibition movement?

### **The British pioneers**

The Great Exhibition of the Works and Industry of all the Nations in London in 1851, in effect a showcase for Western, and especially for British, industrial achievement, set a precedent. After 1851, ‘International’, ‘Grand’, ‘World’, and ‘Centenary’ exhibitions came thick and fast in Western cities worldwide.

The Great Exhibition project had been launched at the Mansion House banquet in London on 21 March 1850, when Prince Albert had made an inspirational speech. In the course of this he said:

Nobody ... who has paid any attention to the peculiar features of our present era will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end ... the realisation of the unity of mankind. ... The distances which separated the different nations and parts of the globe are rapidly vanishing before the achievements of modern invention. ... Gentlemen, the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their exertions.<sup>12</sup>

On 5 July 1850 the *Illustrated London News* published the proposed design for the exhibition of the Crystal Palace to be erected in Hyde Park, to a design of Joseph Paxton. Ordinary people were immediately enchanted.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was above all a demonstration of the achievements of British industrialisation. As Henry Cole, the principal promoter, wrote:

The history of the World, I venture to say, records no event comparable in its promotion of human industry, with that of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all the Nations in 1851. A great people invited all civilised nations to a festival, to bring into comparison the works of human skills. It was carried out by its own private means; was self supporting and independent of taxes and employment of slaves, which great works had exacted in ancient days. A prince of pre-eminent wisdom, of philosophic mind, sagacity, with power of generalship and

great practical ability, placed himself at the head of the enterprise, and led it to triumphal success.<sup>13</sup>

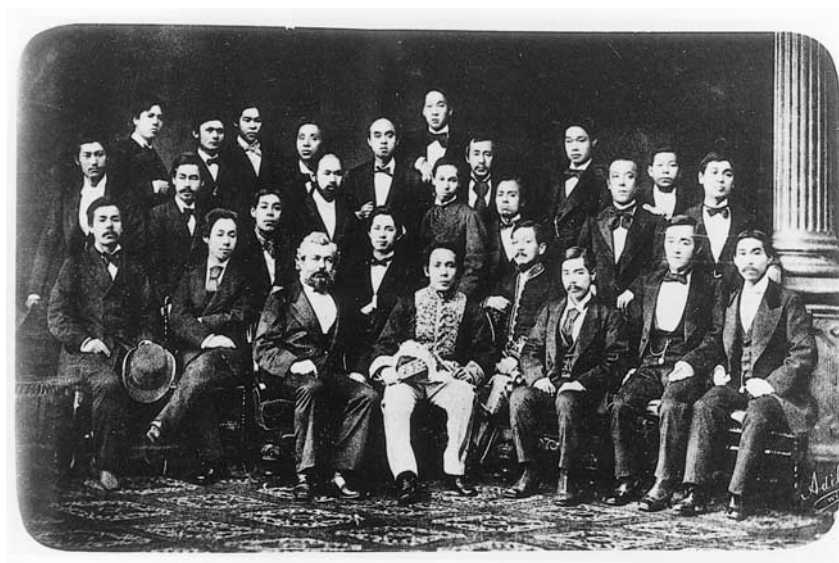
As Kume reported:

Only five exhibitions pre-dated that of Vienna in 1873. Twenty three years ago, in 1851, the Prince Consort of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, was the inspirator. A large glass house, the Crystal Palace, was built in Hyde Park in London to house the exhibits. On 1 May 1851 the Crystal Palace opened to the public and remained open for 141 days. This was the first exhibition. ... Later, so as not to forget the Great Exhibition, Prince Albert founded the South Kensington Museum.<sup>14</sup>

The Great Exhibition opened on 1 May. It closed on 13 October 1851. During the summer it had attracted some 6,201,856 visitors. On some days as many as 100,000 attended.<sup>15</sup>

There was a worldwide tradition of small-scale local fairs or markets that were held to effect an exchange of goods and ideas. The Great Exhibition of 1851, following the Prince Consort's own decision to make it international, to bring exhibits together from all over the world, was a departure. In London, in 1851, the Great Exhibition was a breakthrough, for it included:

every important type of process of manufacture then known; it appealed to all classes of the population; it stimulated trade; and



*Figure 2.1* Vienna Exposition (1873), Gottfried Wagener and twenty-five Japanese

created a new habit of excursion travel. The educational benefit to this country was considerable; and, when the show was over, there was a solid profit of £186,000; all this commended the Exhibition as much to our ancestors as it does to ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

But the exhibition, as seen by the Western nations, was essentially a paeon of praise for large-scale industrial processes. It had little or no time for old-fashioned manual craft work. This becomes clear from the comment on the Chinese display in 1851.

Allusion has already been made to the strange collection sent to the Great Exhibition from the Celestial Empire. The curious workmanship of many articles bears witness to the sort of instinctive learning which the Chinese have for the most difficult and delicate manual labour; but we need envy nothing that they have, unless it be the abundance of some natural productions, especially silk. Their porcelain has been known since time immemorial, and in everything else the Chinese are so stationary that they may be considered as the most ancient workmen on earth. Among the articles which they displayed were some which were produced at a period nearly as remote as that of the deluge, and which, in truth, did not appear to be very dissimilar to those which they manufacture at the present day.<sup>17</sup>

This dismissive opinion, written by someone totally convinced of the achievements of the machine age, underlines the problems facing the Japanese. They only had the products made by hand; skilled hand craft was for them the epitome of human achievement. In some senses the Japanese were embarrassed by the exhibits they put on show but in the course of time they discovered that visitors flocked to see their delicate craft ware; then, wonders of wonders, they wanted to buy items for themselves.

### **London, the International Exhibition of 1862**

At the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, over 600 Japanese objects, including books, bronzes, enamelled ware, lacquer ware, porcelains and prints, were exhibited. They caused a sensation, especially amongst the artistic community. The unreformed Japanese government, still largely isolated from the world, was not involved in providing artefacts for this exhibition. The art world had reason to thank Sir Rutherford Alcock,<sup>18</sup> who had collected most of the Japanese items on display in the course of his tour of duty in Japan, as British Minister. This was the exhibition that stunned the *cognoscenti*, the specialists, the artists, designers and painters, many of whom were, after 1862, buying up Japanese *objets d'art*.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, on a European tour by a government-sponsored group of Japanese, visited the 1862 Exhibition, as he reported:

Wednesday 14 May 1862.

Went to the Exhibition. It has been in preparation for the last year and opened its doors on 1 May. This is the venue that collects all the products, newly developed machines and so on and displays them to people. Countries in Europe, America and Asia put on a display of their special products and useful machines. There are machines the operations of which are shown by workmen, steam engines by which cotton is spun, chemicals by which ice is manufactured in summer, and a large steam engine by which water is pumped. There are numerous inventions including a fire gun, sophisticated watch, farming tools, harnesses, scale models of batteries and ships and paintings, pictorial arts and vessels of ancient times. If people wish to buy them, they can do so from the manufacturers at listed prices though they cannot take those on display.

There is a corner for Japanese products, but the number on display is very small. There are silver notes current in Hizen. Although the number of goods is small compared to foreign countries, the total value is said to be more than 200,000 ryo. The venue is in north east London. It is built by stones and the roof is covered by glasses. It is therefore a large house with a small number of windows, but the inside is very bright. A person who visits the Exhibition is required to pay 1 shilling which is equivalent to 10 momme in Japan. There are 40,000 to 50,000 visitors per day. Nowadays, all the aristocrats, high officials, wealthy merchants and big traders visit the Exhibition. Hotels in London are full of people.<sup>19</sup>

Fukuzawa's comments, in 1862, are those of a man uncertain of the commercial imperatives behind the exhibition. Clearly Fukuzawa gave this matter some thought, for by 1866 when he published his *Conditions in the West* he had reassessed his view of the exhibition writing that:

exhibitions were broad enough in scope to cover both steam engines and works of art, a juxtaposition hitherto unthinkable and only justified by Western precedent. That exhibitions were also an opportunity to learn from other countries. And they brought a great deal of business and prosperity to the towns in which they were held.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Iwakura Mission in London in 1872**

The members of the Iwakura Mission were warmly greeted in London in 1872. They were received at the South Kensington Museum by the Director, Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen, who in turn requested some Japanese art products that could be shown at a proposed exhibition in London. Although the members of the Mission had not then seen the Great Exposition in Vienna (of 1873) they were proud of the artistic achievements of their country, and keen to respond. Haruo Sakata, a junior member of the Iwakura Mission,

who was to study in London at the Royal School of Mines, himself delivered personally 'silks, leather papers, lacquer and some coarse ceramics' directly to Cunliffe Owen at South Kensington.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901**

Glasgow in 1901, the 'Second City of the Empire', was at the peak of its success, renowned throughout the world for its engineering and ship-building. Wherever there were railway lines, there were Glasgow-built steam locomotives running on them, and Clyde-built ships steamed proudly across the oceans of the world. Japan's railways depended on Glasgow steam engines, and Clyde-built steam ships filled her harbours.<sup>22</sup>

Behind this industrial success stood the University of Glasgow, celebrating its 450th birthday in 1901, from its new dominating position on Gilmorehill towering over the Great Exhibition site at Kelvingrove. Although it had been a struggle to force the University into teaching subjects such as engineering, the transformation of the University into a modern educational institution, in tune with the new twentieth century, had been successfully completed, thanks to John McQuorn Rankine, Lord Kelvin, Archibald Barr and others. The availability of engineering teaching in the University and also in the Royal Technical College (now the University of Strathclyde), and the easy access to practical shipbuilding expertise at the many shipyards nearby on the Clyde, made Glasgow a Mecca for students, both local and from overseas.

None were more enthusiastic than the Japanese. The University of Glasgow's prestige had been much increased in Japan because of the recruitment of a handful of Glasgow graduates to staff the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo in the early 1870s. The first Principal of this College had been Henry Dyer (MA, BSc, Glasgow)<sup>23</sup> who had worked in Tokyo until 1882. From 1890 Glasgow had an Honorary Japanese Consul in the person of A.R. Brown,<sup>24</sup> who acted as an agent of the Japanese in negotiations with Clyde shipbuilders. Dyer and Brown were both powerful supporters of the Japanese in Glasgow and made themselves into an important pro-Japanese lobby.

The Japanese did not build a new structure to house the Japanese collection at Kelvingrove in 1901. They converted part of Kelvingrove Mansion (most of which had already been demolished), which stood near to the newly built Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, which opened to the public exactly at this time. Did this initiative come from A.R. Brown, the Honorary Consul for Japan, in Glasgow? Certainly Japan's expenditure, of ¥57,000 in the case of the Glasgow Exhibition, 1901, was modest.

From the only photograph that remains (taken by T.&A. Annan) the Japanese Pavilion rises splendidly from the south bank of the river Kelvin looking exotic and Eastern. Superficially it does not show any traces of its former life as Kelvingrove Mansion, but it does look like one of the Great Japanese castles that still dominate cities such as Osaka and Himeji in

Japan. It is not known which architect transformed the building but the pagoda-like roofs are distinctive and support two huge 'rising-sun' flags.

According to the catalogue:

Brightness, rich colouring, delicate workmanship, and chaste artistic knickknacks are always associated with the deft workers of Japan. The examples of Ware, Ivory and Wood Carving, Metal Working, Silk Weaving, Carpentry, Embroidery, Art Paper, Fancy Goods, Furniture and so on to be seen in the Japanese Pavilion, will bear favourable comparison with any previous exhibit.<sup>25</sup>

About twelve Japanese manufacturers of porcelain and faience, coming from Kagoshima (Satsuma ware), Kyoto, Osaka and several other places, presented their wares to the Glasgow public (see Appendix I). Some ten companies showed 'Art Metal' objects, including 'art bronzes', some enamelled, some with 'inlaid metal working' and some with 'metal carvings'. Another group of companies displayed 'Cloisonné and Enamels' while others showed 'Ivory and Wood Carvings' and 'Lacquered' objects. It is worth noting that in the category of 'Ivory and Wood Carvings' exhibitors included Yamanaka and Co. of Osaka. This company had, by 1901, shops in New York, Boston and London (see Chapter 14).

There were four categories of textile exhibits, which included 'Cotton and Mixed Fabrics', 'Raw Silk', 'Silk Thread', 'Silk Fabrics and Embroideries' and 'Yuzen Dyed Stuffs'. Unfortunately the only further information relates to the names of the companies concerned. Under the final heading of 'Other Trades and Manufactures' there were Japanese companies exhibiting carpets, reeds, purses, card cases and other fancy articles, fans, papers, paper lanterns, paper panels, toys, picture books, furniture, and wicker baskets. The only other category is food and there are exhibits of starches, table salt, smoked salmon, bamboos and soy sauce. It is not known how firms producing these foods, which were also produced in Scotland, had been persuaded to invest time and money in sending as it were 'coals to Newcastle'. It is also impossible to say whether any orders resulted from this array of Japanese goods. Maybe the representatives of Japan were able to negotiate directly with Glasgow companies; more likely, the big Glasgow department stores bargained with London agents for the supply of *Japonoiserie*.

### **The Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of 1875**

Nowhere were the Japanese and their hand-crafted exhibits more enthusiastically received than in Melbourne.<sup>26</sup> Australia, a British colony on the Pacific rim, and a neighbour to Japan, seemed to the Japanese to be of special interest. The Japanese decided that it would be worthwhile for them to make an exploratory visit. It would also seem that their strong commercial interests were more obvious in Melbourne than elsewhere.



The inspiration for the Intercolonial Exhibition of Melbourne in 1875 came from Sir Redmond Barry (1813–80), an entrepreneurial figure who had emigrated to Victoria from England as a young man. Barry, as President of the Commissioners of the state of Victoria, had been much involved with the exhibits from Victoria that had been shown at the International Exhibition in London in 1862.

In Australia, and in other colonies, there was an old, established tradition for local Agricultural Societies to organise, from time to time, fairs, at which new seeds for improved agriculture and new machinery were displayed. Although they had a serious purpose, these were celebratory occasions for farmers and their families, and had become much appreciated get-togethers, high points of the hard-working farmers' year.

On Barry's initiative, the idea for the Intercolonial Exhibition, as a precursor of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition planned for 1876, was mounted. Invitations to exhibit were sent to 'the inhabitants of all the British, French and Dutch possessions in Australasia'.

Barry also wrote to Sir Harry Parkes, British Minister in Tokyo, with the suggestion that the Japanese government be invited to participate. Japan was not indeed a colony but Parkes was a forceful figure and eventually the Japanese government made a positive response. They would not directly involve themselves in Melbourne but they would send representatives through the agency of the Exhibitions Bureau, set up in Japan immediately after the Vienna Exposition of 1873. In addition any individual Japanese who wished to participate was to be encouraged to do so.

The Exhibitions Bureau (*Kangyoryo*) sent representatives, who stayed in Australia for many months, and who travelled widely. It seems clear that the Japanese were looking around the Australian states with a view to future trade. It is worth noting that the Yokohama Specie Bank opened branches in Sydney and Melbourne in May 1882, no doubt because of the business available through the Sydney and Melbourne exhibitions. These closed in May 1883. The Sydney office was reopened in August 1915 and became a branch office in 1919.<sup>27</sup>

But the most startling feature of the Japanese presence in Melbourne in 1875 was the blatant commercialism. The underlying objectives of the great exhibition movement had always been commercial but they were not usually as obvious as at Melbourne (see Chapter 4 on export ware). Most of the commentators in Melbourne were enthusiastic about the romantic Japanese exhibits. Clearly the Australians in Victoria were delighted that Melbourne had attracted such an exotic exhibitor.

Under the heading 'Advance Victoria' one Melbourne newspaper exulted:

That the young Colony of Victoria should be recognised by the ruler of one of the oldest empires of the world is a fact upon which we cannot congratulate ourselves too much. As the years roll on, our trade will revert to those countries which are nearest to us, and there-

fore the importance of cultivating friendly relations must not be overlooked.<sup>28</sup>

The compliment, which Japan paid to Melbourne in 1875 by exhibiting, and selling, Japanese export ware there, reflects Japanese shrewdness.

## **United States of America**

The Japanese committed themselves wholeheartedly to three great exhibitions in the United States of America. These are shown in Table 2.2.

*Table 2.2* Japan's commitment to the exhibitions in the United States of America

1876	Philadelphia	360,000 yen invested
1893	Chicago	630,766 yen invested
1904	St Louis	800,000 yen invested

It was the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, in 1876, to celebrate one hundred years since the Declaration of Independence, which brought the Japanese to the United States in a big way.

As has been explained:

the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 introduced to the American public a wide variety of Japanese decorative arts hitherto largely unknown to them. Displaying objects that ranged from elaborately crafted ceramic and bronze vases to affordable souvenir trinkets, such as fans and paper lanterns, the Japanese exhibition and bazaar at the centennial sparked a nationwide fad for Japanese goods which was to last in the twentieth century. ...

The centennial was a stimulant to a large segment of the middle class population. Japanese decorative arts objects were new, exotic, well crafted, and yet affordable. Victorian Americans – particularly women – desired a profusion of things for the decoration of their homes, and their eclectic taste delighted in the addition of this curious breed of arts and crafts.<sup>29</sup>

The Japanese presence at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition was notable and important. The commissioner for the Japanese government was Saigo Tsugumichi (1843–1902). Saigo, an important member of the Satsuma-choshu clique, was conservative and, unlike his rebellious brother,<sup>30</sup> wholly supportive of the new Meiji government. Sustaining him were several junior Japanese and Gottfried Wagener, the German chemist, who did so much to encourage the Japanese into the exhibition movement. Certainly Minister Okubo made a special journey to Yokohama to bid farewell to Wagener and his team.



It is worth taking a closer look at Japan's involvement in 1893 with the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. As has been noted Japan was the first to respond to the invitation, and it eventually invested more than ¥630,000. This was one of the largest sums spent by any foreign country in setting up its exhibits. Japan, moreover, seems to have been given one of the choicest locations on the fairground. Japanese workers were sent from Japan to build the Ho-o-den Palace. The building, designed by a Japanese architect, was decorated by members of the Tokyo Art Academy. Gozo Takeno, the Japanese minister to Washington, explained that his country was enthusiastic about participating in the Exposition because of Japan's interest in furthering commercial ties with the United States as well as proving that 'Japan is a country worthy of full fellowship in the family of nations.'<sup>31</sup>

It was astonishing that the Japanese, newly venturing into the world outside Japan, should have responded so positively to the great publicity engine of industrialisation, the Great Exhibition. By so doing they created an unusual but effective cultural bridge. Any Japanese artefacts that were for sale were eagerly snapped up by enthusiastic buyers. What in retrospect is intriguing is the way in which the Japanese government made involvement with the great exhibitions part of official government policy.

The grand finale, the exhibition that involved the Japanese more than any which had gone before and the culmination of her pro-exhibition policy, was the Japan British Exhibition held in London in 1910. This very expensive exhibition is discussed in Part IV.



Figure 2.2 Street of shops at Japan British Exhibition, London, 1910

## ‘Leaving Asia’

Yukichi Fukuzawa had used the phrase ‘leaving Asia’ to underline to the Japanese the necessity for Japan to search out and come to terms with the wider world. As Fukuzawa wrote, ‘The principle is in the two words: “leave Asia”. The spirit of our people has already left the old customs of Asia and moved on to Western civilisation.’<sup>32</sup> The group of Meiji leaders, on the Iwakura Mission, were challenged at the exposition in Vienna in 1873. The decision, that Japan should commit itself to the exhibition movement, despite the inability to mount shows of industrial products, was a bold one. Japan’s willingness to grasp at the opportunity offered by the worldwide exhibition movement amply demonstrated a willingness, as Fukuzawa had put it, ‘to leave Asia’.

## Notes

- 1 See P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas, the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851–1939*, Manchester, 1988.
- 2 T. Hida, *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* [Establishing Manufacture and Commerce], Kyoto, 1987, p. 3.
- 3 Hida, *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha*, p. 4.
- 4 D. Bennett, *King without a Crown, Albert Prince Consort of England, 1819–1861*, 1977.
- 5 See D.W. Anthony and G.H. Healey, *The Itinerary of the Iwakura Embassy in Britain, August–December 1872*, Sheffield, 1996; S.D. Brown and A. Hirota, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, Vol. II, 1871–4, Tokyo, 1985.
- 6 *Guardian*, 9 September 2000.
- 7 Brown and Hirota, *Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, Vol. II, p. 320.
- 8 Tsunetami Sano (1822–1902), influential Saga Clansman, who helped create the Japanese Navy and the Japanese Red Cross Society, also served as minister, of finance, and of agriculture and commerce.
- 9 Brown and Hirota, *Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, Vol. II, 4 May 1873, p. 322.
- 10 Kume Kunitake, *Tokumei Zenken Taishi; Beio Kairan Jikki* [A Record of the Tour of the Ambassador Extraordinaire through the United States of Europe], Tokyo, 1878, Vol. 5, pp. 29–43.
- 11 Gottfried Wagener was a German chemist who devoted his career to the Japanese ceramics industry; see G. Avitabile, ‘Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892)’, in O. Impey and M. Fairley, *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, 1995, pp. 98–110 and E. Schultze, *Letters from Meiji Japan*, New York, 1980; see also Chapter 4.
- 12 T. Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, 5 vols, 1875–80, Vol. II, pp. 247–8.
- 13 C.H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 2nd edn, London, 1981, p. 7. See also E. Bonython, *King Cole, a Picture Portrait of Sir Henry Cole KCB, 1808–1882*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, n.d.
- 14 Kume, *Tokumei Zenken Taishi*, Vol. 5, p. 24.
- 15 *The Times*, 13 October 1851.
- 16 Gibbs-Smith, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, p. 7.
- 17 Gibbs-Smith, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, p. 56.
- 18 See R. Alcock, *Catalogue of Works of Industry and Art Sent from Japan*, 1862.

- 19 Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Saiko Nikki* [Diary of Tour in the West], in *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshu* [Collected Works of Y. Fukuzawa], Tokyo, 1958–71, Vol. 19, pp. 27–8.
- 20 Quoted in P.F. Kornicki, 'Japan at the Australian Exhibitions', *Australian Studies*, July 1994, p. 17.
- 21 W. Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, 1990, p. 38.
- 22 See O. Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan 1858–1912*, 1989.
- 23 For Henry Dyer see <http://www.cs.strath.ac.uk/rbh/hd/ice.htm>.
- 24 For A.R. Brown papers see the University of Glasgow Archives.
- 25 *Glasgow International Exhibition Catalogue*, Glasgow, 1901, pp. 214–15.
- 26 The author is indebted to P.F. Kornicki, of the University of Cambridge, for his help.
- 27 *Yokohama Shokin Ginko-zaishi* [History of Yokohama Specie Bank], Tokyo, 1984, Vol. 6, p. 213.
- 28 'Advance Victoria', *Herald*, Melbourne, 2 September 1875.
- 29 Frederic A. Sharf, Dean Lahikainen and William T. LaMoy, *A Pleasing Novelty: Bunkio Matsuki and the Japan Craze in Victorian Salem*, Peabody and Essex Museum, Salem, MA, 1993, p. 89.
- 30 Saigo Takamori (1827–77) led and died in the rebellion against the Meiji government of 1877. He has remained a hero in Japan.
- 31 R.W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, Chicago, 1984, pp. 48–9.
- 32 Fukuzawa, *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshu*, 1958–71, Vol. 10, pp. 238–9.

### 3 Affirmative action, abroad and in Japan

#### Government intervention

The Japanese and their government paid a high price for the closed-door policy that had prevented Japan from having any meaningful foreign trade for some 200 years. From 1859, once the treaty ports were opened, those Japanese merchants who attempted to deal with the foreigners found themselves outflanked and outmanœuvred. The members of the Iwakura Mission, in 1872 and 1873, seeing in Western Europe the pride, and achievement, of Western industry, came to appreciate the huge gap between non-industrialised Japan and the developed Western world.

Certainly Okubo Toshimichi (1830–78)<sup>1</sup> and Kido Takayoshi (1833–77), both perceptive men, were concerned. Okubo, writing from London on 15 November 1872, noted that:

While travelling around we would visit manufacturing places one after another in every city. We visited shipyards in Liverpool, cotton mills in Manchester, iron works in Glasgow, sugar refineries in Greenock, paper works in Edinburgh, iron works in Newcastle – this is where Mr. Armstrong works – silk and woollen mills in Bradford, iron works in Sheffield, brewers and glass works in Birmingham and a salt mine in Chester – we could see why Britain became rich and strong.<sup>2</sup>

Once back in Japan, problems, other than those of foreign trade, loomed. There was talk of a Japanese military expedition against Korea. Some like Kido and Okubo were dismayed. In August 1873 Kido wrote a memorandum arguing that since Japan ‘lacked civilisation’ having ‘independence in name but not independence in fact’, the proper policy to be followed was ‘to give heed to our own affairs and increase our national strength’. Okubo endorsed these sentiments.<sup>3</sup> In the end Kido resigned. Okubo outlined his plans in *Shokusan Kogyo ni Kansura Kengisho* [Memorial on the Promotion of Industry and Trade], written in 1874. This seminal document argued that a ‘trade and industry promotion policy was the core of the all-round modernisation policies of the Meiji government’.<sup>4</sup> Okubo,

effectively in charge of the government, used the Home Ministry (*Naimusho*) as the agent by which he could take new measures to encourage industrial growth. His initiatives included the Exhibition Bureau and a state-financed company.

The critical question became what should Japan export? It is worth emphasising that, until 1873, at the Vienna Exposition, the Japanese were not aware of the export potential of what were then called 'industrial art objects'. After Vienna the Japanese minister Sano Tsunetami set out five objectives for the Japanese to adopt in respect of their export trade. Sano recommended, among other things, that Japan must try to improve the way in which 'our unique products' were produced so that they would attract approval. Sano hoped that in this way Japan would increase its exports.

As one commentator has noted:

material and spiritual necessities brought about the export of traditional handicrafts. The export items were fabrics, articles of cast metal, ceramics, lacquer ware, tortoiseshell work, leather work, folding fans and so on. All of them would be called artistic craft work today. This promising exportable craft work ... went under the general name of Art 'Industry'.<sup>5</sup>

### **Marketing the Japanese art industry**

That selling the Japanese art industry abroad was to become a matter of urgency for the Japanese government becomes clear from a reading of Kido's *Diary*. At the Vienna Exposition in 1873 Kido had been consulted by an anxious Sano Tsunetami.

As Kido explained:

sixty or seventy people have been brought over [to Vienna] to study crafts here for a mere five or six months. It is absolutely impossible for an inexperienced man to master such a skill in a few months, no matter how easy it is. In addition prices of commodities are four or five times higher in Vienna than in other places; therefore, the Minister insists that it is best to have persons of little promise sent home. The government, however, intends to send money as needed to meet the costs here. In consequence all sixty or seventy of them want to be allowed to remain to study their crafts. I do not have the right to pick out some to return home. My only concern is that our government grasps for the shadow, rather than the substance. It never gives a thought to the fact that such expenditures affect our national strength.<sup>6</sup>

Kido's anxieties were not surprising, given the economic difficulties faced by the new regime in Japan. In fact the expensive arrangements, which had been

set up in Vienna for the Japanese at the Exposition, were the work of Gottfried Wagener (1831–92), who had entered Japanese service not long after the Meiji Restoration. Wagener was to be the agent who effectively brought the Japanese pottery industry into the modern world (see Chapter 4).

### ***Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha***

Despite Kido's implied criticism of government expenditure and reservations in Japan about the advisability of the Japanese government being directly involved, *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* (a company to establish manufacture and commerce) was founded, with government support, as a private export company. The company was established in 1873 because 'Mr Owen, Secretary General of the British Exhibition Office, requested help from Japan to remove, and reconstruct in London, the Japanese Pavilion which had been erected in Vienna, for the exhibition there'.<sup>7</sup> The reference to 'Mr Owen' was without doubt to Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen, of the South Kensington Museum in London, by whom the Japanese had been entertained, and with whom they had discussed the worldwide exhibition movement.

Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen may have been important but his influence was only superficial. As has been explained:

the formation of the art industry in Japan in the latter half of the nineteenth century resulted from the efforts of the Japanese people of the Meiji period who, being confronted with modern Western civilisation, tried to obtain a mental autonomy by establishing national independence ... it was in fact the first step of the Japanese people towards the pursuit of self-assurance in the modern age.<sup>8</sup>

Wakai Kenzaburo (1838–1905) and Matsuo Gisuke were chosen to be President and Vice-President respectively. On their return to Tokyo, in March 1874, an office was set up in Tokyo at Asakusa. The purpose of *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was to gather in traditional handicrafts and to show and sell them internationally. The products commissioned by the company included 'enamelled ceramics, produced in the attached china-painting factory, lacquer ware, metal works, cloisonné ware and art embroideries, manufactured in the first and second factories and other handicrafts purchased from various producing areas all over Japan'.<sup>9</sup>

*Kiritsu's* products were exported originally to London, where Alexander Park & Company handled them, and to New York, where, following the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia (1876), an office was opened. Although the staff (including those serving overseas) never exceeded twenty persons, *Kiritsu* required constant investment. Wakai Kenzaburo, the President, had resigned in 1882 so that he could devote his time (with Hayashi Tadamasa [1851–1906]) to his own private company, which would

itself sell art objects overseas. The decision to stop government funding in 1891 brought the venture to an end.

The difficulty with *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was that it was searching for a limited market in high-quality handmade products. Christopher Dresser, also thinking of the upper end of the market, commented:

Under the auspices of the Japanese government, a company has been established with the view to redeeming the arts from the corrupting influences of the large European and American demand, and in this company the Hon. Mr. Sano ... takes a warm interest. This company may do much to maintain the excellence of Japanese manufacturers. ... but its management must be conducted with care as I fear that even the Japanese ministers have but an imperfect idea of the enormous demand which Europe makes upon Japan. ... If, however, Japan can produce works of the highest quality in sufficient quantity, Europe certainly can furnish the market for their sale, for we know the excellence of their works and love them.<sup>10</sup>

It was wishful thinking on Dresser's part that the finest Japanese faïence could, by itself, create and then dominate a large overseas market.

In order to work out a business strategy it is necessary 'to determine the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and to adopt courses of action and to allocate resources necessary in order to carry out these goals'.<sup>11</sup> The difficulty with *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was not the lack of support from the Japanese government – money was pumped into the business for many years – but the confusion over objectives. Most of the commentators, including Dresser, were looking to the top end of the market. Progress was, in the end, to come from the cheap end of the market as Western housewives, enchanted by the romance of Japan, as seen at the Great Exhibition, demanded jolly pieces of export ware.

**Market research**

*Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was but one initiative from the Japanese government. In addition Japanese legations worldwide were requested to make enquiries in the great Western cities as to the most popular Japanese ware.

Market research undertaken by Japanese consular staff, 1886

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Porcelain	London, New York, San Francisco, Hamburg, Melbourne, Sydney, Bombay
China (painted in Tokyo)	Hamburg, Antwerp, Trieste, Melbourne, Venice
Lacquered paper work (umbrellas?)	Hamburg, Antwerp Trieste, Melbourne, Venice
Silk	London, New York, San Francisco, Antwerp, Trieste <sup>12</sup>

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In 1875 Miname Tamotsu, an official from the Trade Encouragement Bureau, was sent to London to investigate all aspects of the British market. His report was submitted to Hideji Kawase, then head of the Bureau. The odd thing about this report is that it contained a long and detailed letter from James Lord Bowes (1834–99) in Liverpool.

It is not known how the enquiry regarding the export and sale of Japanese pottery goods landed on the desk of James Lord Bowes of Liverpool. But it is more than possible that this enquiry in 1875 was the beginning of Bowes's Japanese connection. Bowes was already, in 1875, an enthusiastic, if controversial, collector of Japanese ware. It seems likely that eventually he became Honorary Japanese Consul in Liverpool as a result of this enquiry (see Chapter 10).

Bowes wrote:

Mr. Tamotsu Minami

I am writing replying to the queries made the other day. Regarding the sale of goods, there will not be any inconvenience if the government appoint an agent who is in charge of shipments.

- 1 [p. 166] Setting aside for a while explaining the method of the sale, I think there will be advantages if the government appoints an agent in London and like to make expositions in detail. The agent should be more acquainted with the business than those who would work for the British. If there arises any need to improve the way in which the goods are produced and maintained, the agent should co-operate with the Japanese. He should also decide in detail the way in which the shipment of goods will most conveniently be done. The precise knowledge of all the business is essential in placing most suitably Japanese goods in European markets. Receiving this report the government should follow the procedures including shipment as suggested in it, which help the Japanese greatly. If the government considers that a bank such as the Oriental Bank could do all the business, it would not work as it is expected. It is because this sort of business selecting goods and so on is not that of a bank.
- 2 Nowadays, people buy a piece or two of the said vessel, but they do so mainly because of its strangeness. If the agent is employed, he could know ways how they use them and obtain the British samples to be sent to Japan. Simultaneous with this he could easily prepare detailed instructions to the effect that the Japanese should copy the British samples in terms of size and shape but should not change Japanese colour and never use imported dyes such as aniline (so called a kind of Chinese crimson). China of Imari and Owari (the Seto Sea) is perfectly suitable for the market in this country. Their indigo china are used here for supper and breakfast tables. They could be decorated there or in Kyoto and painted in Tokyo, which should be used here for dessert (served after meal). Red china of Kutani and Eiraku are fitted in dessert and tea. Awaji-yaki and Bank-yaki could be popular. China is almost exclusively



for it. Other goods such as lacquer, straw and gold wares, could promote sales if they would be improved so that western people be attracted. I am making only a few points of them and if smart and talented Japanese could be placed in this country, they could do good jobs for it.

- 3 [p. 167] I am afraid that the government may wonder whether a Japanese, who arrives here without any preparations, could do the job, but I dare to say he could do it.
- 4 I believe it is the best way of exporting goods that their own people should carry out the business and the government should not intervene. But I think that it is a duty, and even a crucial job when an urgent matter would happen, for the government to intervene more or less, until people could understand how to prepare goods so as to fit western taste.
- 5 In order to accommodate the agent, there is no need of a large house. It is not difficult to find the British clerks who could deal with the business. Two people, the one with the annual salary £400 and the other of £100, could fully cope with the business. Other expenses including rent and tax will be no more than £300 per annum and £700 to £1 000 would be sufficient for the whole annual expenses. If the Japanese agent is resident here, commissions for the importer are saved, though brokerage costs have to be incurred.
- 6 The government is asking whether the broker could be trusted, but there will be no worry if the government make a wise selection.
- 7 It is a matter of urgency for the agent to select these persons. There will be no difficulty, but if it becomes necessary I shall look for the persons.
- 8 In selecting the broker, it is understandable to choose a person who knows well about the goods to be sold, but at the same time it is also crucial to select a person who is competent in accounting and does the work efficiently.
- 9 The agent should oblige the broker to pay the proceeds to the former whenever the latter receives them.
- 10 The Japanese agent enters into an agreement with the broker that the latter secures the sales for the former.
- 11 The agent can easily supervise money transactions. A crossed cheque has to be handed over to the bank immediately, and the handling of it is entirely dependent upon the accountant.
- 12 The agent must open an account with bank, in which he will keep the proceeds.
- 13 [p. 168] When the agent gives a contract to the broker to sell goods on the latter's own risk, the commission may need to be somewhat increased.
- 14 The government must insure all shipments.
- 15 When the government sends goods out, please do not use the proceeds before they arrive in London.
- 16 It is not wise to sell goods before they really arrive.
- 17 Once the government is involved in this trade, they should note the duty. They are just same as merchants and persons seeking profits. It is essen-

- tial for the government to establish itself to introduce Japanese goods to western merchants and consumers.
- 18 There is no doubt about the fact that a number of producers, manufacturers and merchants increases gradually.
  - 19 When the agent opens transaction with bank regarding sale of goods, it is recommended to do so following an example of a German bank operating in Britain. The bank account should be open in the name of the agent and the consul.
  - 20 Lastly, regarding a question whether the broker is allowed to trade with the Japanese, I am afraid that the broker, in his capacity, could not do it.

James L. Bowes,  
19 April 1876  
Liverpool<sup>13</sup>

Bowes's letter to Miname Tamotsu is important and revealing. In 1875, when the letter was written, Japan had few banking facilities. Most government business was done through the Oriental Bank, which had offices in Japan, at Yokohama, in India and London. Bowes was clearly not aware of the primitive nature of Japanese financial arrangements. The Yokohama Specie Bank,<sup>14</sup> founded in 1880, did open an office in London, but this was, until the end of the century, housed in the premises of the Japanese legation in London.

Bowes's letter is also surprising in assuming that Japanese ware would be used in Britain, as in Japan, for everyday use, as table ware. This was not so. Japanese pieces were rarely, if ever, used in Britain for practical purposes. They were always extra and exotic, and for decorative display, on the mantelpiece or sideboard in the home.

The Japanese government's earnest endeavour to stimulate its export ware industry was, in the end, destined to be successful. In fact, the old handmade ware, rich and idiosyncratic in its diversity, was to give way in the twentieth century to smooth, perfect factory ware, which had none of the charm of the eccentric individually crafted earlier pieces. This was an inevitable part of the modernisation programme that the government was pursuing both abroad and at home.

### ***Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai, exhibitions in Japan***

Prior to the 1868 Restoration, and the rush to modernise, which was the hallmark of Meiji Japan, there was a tradition of exhibitions in Japan. These *bussankai* were locally run and organised, and usually only attracted people from the immediate neighbourhood. There were antique and modern items, side by side, with little attempt at classification. Nevertheless it was this tradition that the new administration of Meiji Japan was using, on to which were grafted schemes for much more ambitious *Hakurankai*.

The Japanese prepared an exhibition building at Ueno Park in 1877. A permanent structure allowed the organisers to plan shows every five years and to divide the exhibits into categories such as agriculture, fine arts, horticulture, manufacturing, metallurgy and mining.<sup>15</sup> The snag was that this sort of conformity eliminated any spontaneity. In the West the imagination of the organisers was encouraged, and this unexpectedness without doubt was attractive to visitors.

The first Domestic Exhibition for the Encouragement of Industry was held in Ueno Park, Tokyo, from 21 August to 30 November 1877. It was a project carried out in spite of the dangerous Satsuma Rebellion, which had broken out in far away Kyushu on 27 January and which did not end until 24 September 1877. It says much for the courage and determination of Toshimichi Okubo that the project went ahead. The aim was 'to improve the quality and design of export products and to stimulate industrialisation and the expansion of domestic markets'.<sup>16</sup>

From the plan of the opening ceremony at the exhibition centre in Ueno Park, Tokyo, it is clear that the proceedings were formal and rather grand. The Emperor and the imperial family had pride of place; foreign ministers and their officials were also present, as were very many government officials. The Empress declared the Exhibition open but Okubo made the speech of welcome.

In the course of his speech Okubo declared that:

the Exhibition would contribute greatly to encourage the art and skill of agriculture and industry, and especially in enhancing knowledge and thus increasing the wealth of the nation through developing foreign trade. ... When we turn our faces to the exhibits themselves we find that there are nearly 4,000 products on display, brought here by nearly 20,000 people. Looking at the splendour of the products, and the beauty of the manufacture itself, we should be encouraged and we should expect a bright future and one of affluence.<sup>17</sup>

Clara Whitney, an observant American, sixteen years old, also went to the Ueno Exhibition (on 23 August 1877). Her comments give a good idea of the scope of the show. Clara Whitney wrote:

Thursday 23 August 1877

We went to the National Exhibition this afternoon and, though not as large as we expected, it was still a very fine affair. We went rather late, so that we had very little time to see all the sights. The Art Gallery was perfectly fascinating to me and appeared to be most attractive to the Japanese also, for it was full of people, some of whom in their flowing dresses and spread out fans looked like statues themselves. It was with difficulty that I tore myself away from all the loveliness. We entered the Eastern Hall and found ourselves in the midst of cotton, canned fruit

and other uninteresting things – although there was a nice bedroom set there. In the Machinery Hall there was a loom invented by a Japanese. The Horticultural Hall was made up of dwarf pine trees and other botanical monstrosities. In the Agricultural Hall were very interesting collections of seeds and fruits from different provinces. The Zoological section was not interesting because of the fierce looking cows and horses there. But next to the Art Gallery, the Western Hall was the best, for in this were fine china, lacquered work, enamelled ware, inlaid furniture and thousands of other pretty things.<sup>18</sup>

Table 3.1 *Hakurankai*, exhibitions in Japan, 1871–1903

1871	14–20 May	<i>Bussankai</i>	Daigaku Nanko	Tokyo
1872	10 March–30 April	<i>Hakurankai</i>	Museum of Mombusho	Tokyo
1873	15 April–31 July	<i>Hakurankai</i>	Exposition Office Museum	Tokyo
1874	16 March–10 June	<i>Hakurankai</i>	Missum Museum	Tokyo
1877	21 August–30 November	<i>Naikoku</i>	Home Ministry	Tokyo
		<i>Kangyo</i>		Ueno Park
		<i>Hakurankai</i>		
1881	1 March–30 June	<i>Naikoku Kangyo</i>	Home Ministry and Finance Ministry	Tokyo
		<i>Hakurankai</i>	(Later by Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce)	Ueno Park
1882	1 October–20 November	<i>Naikoku Kaiga</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce	Tokyo
		<i>Kyoshinkai</i>		Ueno Park
1884	11 April–30 May	<i>Naikoku Kaiga</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce	Tokyo
		<i>Kyoshinkai</i>		Ueno Park
1890	1–31 April	<i>Naikoku Kangyo</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce	Tokyo
		<i>Hakurankai</i>		Ueno Park
1895	1 April–31 July	<i>Naikoku Kangyo</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce	Kyoto
		<i>Hakurankai</i>		Okazaki
1903	1 March–31 July	<i>Naikoku Kangyo</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce	Osaka
		<i>Hakurankai</i>		

Source: Buntens (*Monbusho Bijutsu Tenrankai*) [Art Exhibition by Ministry of Education], Tokyo, 1907.

It should be noted that, in addition to government-inspired exhibitions, there were also private initiatives. A private exhibition company was established in Kyoto in 1872, which resulted in the Kyoto Exhibition of that year. In 1904 a private exhibition company was set up in Tokyo.<sup>19</sup>

### **Educating the Japanese people**

In Japan itself the government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, recognised the importance of the exhibition, or *Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai*, to publicise, inform and educate the Japanese people themselves. As early as 1872 there had been a privately organised exhibition of arts and manufacture in Kyoto. Further displays were held in Tokyo in 1881 and 1890, and Kyoto hosted *Hakurankai* in 1895. Osaka's turn came in 1903.

Without doubt behind the exhibition movement in Japan was the idea of educating the Japanese people. A series of national shows within Japan attracted increasing crowds. Fukuzawa Yukichi, writing in the newspaper *Jiji Shinpo* in 1884, aired the whole matter at some length, writing:

Therefore for the purpose of promoting public opinion in the West, I propose the opening of an International Exhibition in Tokyo, to which we encourage western gentlemen to come to look at the whole country. Then we should fully argue and prove that we are not primitive but one of the civilised nations of the world. The commencement of *Hakurankai* in Japan was the Domestic Exhibition for the Encouragement of Industries (*Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai*) held in 1877 in Ueno Park, Tokyo, under the initiatives of Interior Minister Okubo. The second one was held in 1881. These were, however, no more than displaying Japanese products and no western counterparts were invited to compare with ours. Therefore, if we can hold *Bankoku* (international) *Hakurankai*, it is going to be an unprecedented incident. ... [p. 476] Then we should decide upon when we hold *Bankoku Hakurankai* (abbreviated as *Banpaku*). ... It is going to be 1886 or 1887. Where should be the venue? The best place is Ueno. If it is too small, we should find a place in the suburbs of Tokyo which should be connected by building a railway line to the city centre of Tokyo. Further to help western products on display and visitors coming, we should negotiate with not only shipping companies of Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans but also railway companies of the European and North American Continents to deduct fares for passengers and luggage designated to Tokyo *Hakurankai* by giving them subsidies. Or we could allow Mitsubishi Corporation and Kyodo Transport Co. to operate provisionally ocean liners on Pacific and Indian Oceans and so on to facilitate transportation between East and West. ... Financing *Tokyo Bankoku Hakurankai* is done by ... national revenues of the central government. ... The budget would be ¥10 000 000.<sup>20</sup>

Fukuzawa's argument is significant, especially if he expected to attract foreigners to Japan. But the number of foreigners then visiting Japan was relatively few. Nevertheless Fukuzawa's business sense, advising that shipping companies should give concessions to those committed to visiting the exhibition in Japan, is remarkably far sighted.

Valentine Chirol, who was pro-Japanese, and who worked for *The Times* of London, commented encouragingly that:

the Kyoto exhibition [of 1895] contains an epitome of all that Japan has learned during the twenty-seven years from the ripe experience of the West, not learned by rote or slavishly copied, but inwardly digested and moulded to her own needs and informed with her own spirit.<sup>21</sup>

At Kyoto, Chirol commented on the exhibition buildings:

from the outside they are not unsightly and inside they are well lighted, well ventilated, and of course kept scrupulously clean and conveniently arranged and distributed. The contents show the whole range of Japanese industry; and within the short space of a quarter of a century, the range of Japanese industry has so swiftly and steadily broadened out in every direction that it may be said to fall very little short now of the whole range of the world's industry.<sup>22</sup>

At Osaka in 1903 Murai Bros and Co. (tobacco merchants) are believed to have built a 40 metre tower embellished by 15,000 lighted candles. This publicity stunt was said to have astonished the visitors and been visible for many miles. Would the candles have remained alight despite the wind? There was also the *Kankojo*, a store near the exhibition, which sold off, cheaply, some of the exhibits, once the exhibition had closed. The *Kankojo* was so successful that similar temporary stores were set up in Japan after every major show.<sup>23</sup> These Japanese exhibitions were of great public interest, for they educated Japanese craftsmen and encouraged them to 'use new materials and processes brought back from abroad'.<sup>24</sup>

The extraordinary response from the Japanese towards the worldwide exhibition movement could be considered, in part, an answer to the frustrations engendered earlier in a Japan hidden and shut off from the world. That *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* was not a success was but a small set-back for the Japanese as they struggled to surmount their international trading difficulties. There is no doubt that two Meiji leaders, Okubo Toshimichi and Kido Takayoshi had learned well the lessons from the Vienna Exposition of 1873, and indeed from the Western world.

In April 1876, Okubo had made 'A proposal of strengthening the basis of the nation' to the cabinet:

Even if the progress of preparing decrees results in the emergence of a policy, it does not necessarily mean real power. Even if the strictness of laws results in the fairness of judgement, it does not necessarily mean real power. Even if the repletion of armaments results in increased strength, it does not necessarily mean real power. Even if the advancement of education results in the high morale of people, it does not necessarily mean real power. What gives an idea of the real power is the statistics of the nation. Among the statistics, the most remarkable barometer is those of foreign trades. The key factor to strengthen the basis of the polity is to encourage industries and develop trades.<sup>25</sup>

Kido Takayoshi died on 26 May 1877, aged forty-four; Okubo Toshimichi was assassinated a year later by Satsuma Samurai, infuriated by his commitment to the new Meiji regime, on 14 May 1878, aged forty-eight.<sup>26</sup> These, and others, who were also subjected to the shock of the Iwakura experience in the West, were courageous in taking long-term decisions that would eventually lead Japan into the modern world. The industrial enterprise on which Meiji leaders like Okubo and Kido embarked created the cultural bridges that were to flourish long after their deaths. The demand for Japanese products, created by the exotic pavilions at exhibitions of various kinds, resulted in the modernisation and expansion of the Japanese pottery, lacquer, basket ware and other industries. The future lay with export ware, cheap and cheerful products eagerly bought by Western housewives to enhance their homes.

## Notes

- 1 See A. Ando, *Okubo Toshimichi Tominyo Shorei* [Okubo Toshimichi and the Encouragement of Private Industries], Tokyo, 1999. See also S.D. Brown, 'Okubo Toshimichi, his political and economic policies in early Meiji Japan', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 21 February 1962.
- 2 *Okubo Toshimichi Monjo*, Vol. 4 (1927–9), letter to Saigo Takamori, 15 November 1872, p. 4, with thanks to Norio Tamaki.
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- 4 See 'Economists in government', 'Okubo Toshimichi', pp. 211–21. C. Sugiyama and H. Mizuta, *Enlightenment and Beyond*, Tokyo, 1988.
- 5 T. Hida, *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* [Establishing Manufacture and Commerce], Kyoto, 1987, p. 4 (copy in Keio University Library, No. A4.18A.15).
- 6 S.D. Brown and A. Hirota (trans.), *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, Vol. II, 4 May 1873, p. 322.
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- 8 Hida, *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha*, Summary in English, p. 4.
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- 12 T. Hata, *Meijiki no Kogeitsin Womeguru Yushitsu Shinkosaku Nitsuite* [Export Encouragement Policies of Industrial Art Objects During the Meiji Period], Kyoto, 1997, p. 42.

- 13 *Shoko Seisakushi* [Ministry of International Trade and Industry], Vol. 5, pp. 166–8. Bowes wrote in English, his words were then translated into Japanese, then (for this purpose) back into English.
- 14 Only after 1896, when the Chinese indemnity was to be paid to Japan in London after the Sino-Japanese War, would the Bank of England allow the Yokohama Specie Bank to become a customer and have an account.
- 15 A. Hotta Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition, 1910*, Folkestone, 1999, p. 220.
- 16 E.P. Conant, 'Reflections of the Rising Sun. Japan's participation in international exhibitions', in T. Sato and T. Watanabe (eds) *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue*, 1991, p. 83.
- 17 *Okubo Toshimichi Monjo*, Vol. 8, Tokyo, 1927–9, pp. 358–9.
- 18 C. Whitney, *Clara's Diary*, 1979, p. 146.
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- 21 V. Chirol, *Far Eastern Question*, 1896, p. 127.
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- 23 Hotta Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition, 1910*.
- 24 Conant, 'Reflections of the Rising Sun', p. 83.
- 25 *Okubo Toshimichi Monjo*, Vol. 7, pp. 76–7.
- 26 Another prominent leader of the Meiji Restoration was Saigo Takamori (1827–77), who did not go on the Iwakura Mission. He became the leader of the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 and committed suicide on 24 September 1877.



## 4 *Yokohama muki*

### Japanese export ware

#### *Yokohama muki*

*Yokohama muki*<sup>1</sup> – made in Yokohama style – was not a complementary term. It created a vision of the foreign traveller shopping in Yokohama where Japanese merchants sold art objects as high-quality Japanese goods when they were in fact cheap and shoddy items made specially for export. *Yokohama mono*<sup>2</sup> (Yokohama things) were considered typical of the treaty port, where unscrupulous dealings, by Japanese and foreigner alike, were considered normal behaviour.

In an age when foreign powers were keen to exploit both China and Japan there is a sense in which the availability of export ware, and the inability of the foreigner to distinguish it, gave the Japanese some measure of control. It was some sort of compensation for the Japanese, otherwise at the mercy of the West, to be able to fight back against these people, whom they labelled ‘barbarians’. The confusion between items that were made as export ware and Japanese art works, designed for the ‘discriminating’ Japanese themselves, was, and remained, an issue that was never to disappear.

Lord Elgin’s party, the first official British expedition of the period, which landed at Nagasaki in the summer of 1858, were offered and bought export ware: As Laurence Oliphant wrote:

lacquer and china ware, bronzes and delicate basket-work, were arranged in a tempting display. The beauty and elegance of all we saw delighted and astonished us: it was only when we had shopped at Yedo [Tokyo] that we came to hold Nagasaki workmanship at a proper estimation, and to appreciate the difference between those articles which are manufactured and exhibited there for the European market, and those which are made for the Japanese themselves. As a rule, Nagasaki lacquer is of a most inferior description; the shapes and patterns are nearly all of Dutch suggestion, and the mother of pearl with which they are so abundantly and gorgeously inlaid is purely a Western invention. The egg-shell china is also manufactured for the European

market; it is an exquisitely delicate fabric, made principally in the provinces of Fizan [Hizen] and Satsuma and not used by the Japanese themselves.<sup>3</sup>

After 1859, when the Japanese had been forced into trading with the West, they looked at a whole range of industries for products that could be exported. For the purpose of this brief survey china, lacquer ware, *cloisonné* ware, fans and folding screens will be considered. It should be stressed that, at this period, these were the only categories of trade goods then listed in the official Japanese figures for foreign trade.

From the sixteenth century the Chinese had made porcelain designed specifically for export to Europe. Porcelain, itself a fine translucent ware, was at this time made only in East Asia, where the technique of using special fine clays, and firing the pots and dishes in an exceptionally hot kiln, was a speciality. Japan had intermittently taken part in this type of export trade.

Oliver Impey, writing about Japanese Arita ware of the first half of the seventeenth century, notes that:

Every great European house had its garnitures of vast Imari jars and a complement of smaller and usually more beautiful porcelain, often including the delicate Kakiemon enamelled ware and the vigorously painted blue and white. This was porcelain made specially for export, in a variety of tastes, largely dictated by European customers, it was not intended for use by Japanese within Japan.<sup>4</sup>

The process of making lacquer ware is an ancient one in Asia, which depends on applying the sap from the lacquer tree, *Rhus verniciflua*, to various objects. After collecting from the tree, the sap is cleaned and refined before various dyes are added. Then the lacquer, a protective varnish, is added to a wide variety of objects. These can, most commonly, be of wood, but basket ware, bamboo and other substances also can be decorated with lacquer. The use of this special varnish makes attractive small bowls and boxes, and also larger pieces of furniture, tables and so on. During the late nineteenth century efforts were made, successfully, to speed up the laborious and time-consuming process of painting on many coats of lacquer. Later, large numbers of lacquer decorated boxes, of all shapes and sizes, were available on the British market.

*Cloisonné* ware, as an original Japanese handicraft, involved attaching enamel glass to metal. This was a long and laborious process (involving pouring enamel into ready prepared apertures), but one that had been practised in Japan for centuries. European methods of producing *cloisonné* ware were probably introduced into Japan, from Europe, in about 1875, by Gottfried Wagener (see below). These new processes allowed the manufacturing process to be speeded up.

Bamboo was used in various ways, for fans and folding screens which were also made in Japan for export. The use of either of these for decoration in any British sitting room added a touch of distinction or glamour.

For the purpose of this brief study some detail will be given of the production and manufacture of ceramics for export.

### **The Paris Exposition of 1867**

The Japanese government exhibited their wares, officially, for the first time at the great 'Exposition' in Paris in 1867. But in addition to a Japanese government display there was a separate and distinct Satsuma display. This remarkable state of affairs is a reminder of the weakness of the central government in Edo (Tokyo) before 1868, and the strength of the rebellious Satsuma clan led, in far away Kyushu, by the Shimazu family.<sup>5</sup> The display of Satsuma ware,<sup>6</sup> from what is now Kagoshima prefecture, astonished the artistic community in Paris and led to a wild demand for Satsuma products. This in turn led to the takeover of the famous Satsuma name and the production of Satsuma ware from potteries far removed from Kagoshima on the island of Kyushu. For many people in the West, the name Satsuma came to symbolise Japanese porcelain pieces.

### **Ubiquitous Satsuma**

That the Japanese porcelain industry was originally based on Kyushu island, in the south-west of Japan, reflects geographic realities, that is the proximity of Kyushu to Korea and China. Korean potters brought the techniques of mainland Asia to Japan.

In Japan it proved to be a laborious matter to locate fine, suitable clays, which were in the course of time brought together. As has been explained:

The pottery body is formed from a porcelain clay mixed from at least three different types all found at sources in the vicinity of Kagoshima, the capital of Satsuma. White clay would be brought from Mount Kirishima at Ibusuki or the gold mine at Yamagano. ... White stone would come from either Kanda or Kushiki and white sand from Kominato. A second type of clay called *bara* would also be supplied from Ibusaki. This was brittle and gave the finished product some of the characteristics of porcelain.<sup>7</sup>

Satsuma ware was originally produced primarily for the Shimazu family and for upper-class Samurai families. Early Satsuma pieces 'were simple and undecorated; their beauty lay in texture and self coloured glaze'.<sup>8</sup> From the seventeenth century these Satsuma pieces were rare and highly prized. As demand exceeded supply fake pieces were also made. These often deceived even the experts.

The upheaval of Japanese society in the mid-nineteenth century destroyed the traditional market for fine Satsuma pieces. Production from 'Satsuma' potteries, near Kagoshima, dropped as potters in and near Kyoto took over the business. By 1880 most Satsuma ware came from the Kyoto area. In particular potters in the Kyoto suburb of Awata (the east gate) were adept at producing Satsuma ware; potters such as Kinkozan, Seikozan and Ryozan operated from Kyoto, while Yabu Meizan worked from nearby Osaka.<sup>9</sup> There were others from elsewhere in Japan (far distant from Satsuma territory) who also produced what was labelled as Satsuma ware. Thus, to some extent, Satsuma ware became a generic name for Japanese export ware. This led inevitably to 'the rapid decline in quality, [and] the overproduction and consequent collapse of the Satsuma market can certainly serve as a warning to us today'.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, for the Japanese government the availability of cheap pottery products was a necessary move in the struggle to create an export trade.

### A primitive industry

The Japanese ceramics industry was in a primitive state when the new Meiji government began its exhibition promotion worldwide. There is no doubt that the old-style production of Satsuma, or any other kind of pottery in Japan, was, before modernisation, very heavy work. Ernest Satow gave a vivid account of the preparation process for clay, writing:

The clay and stone are well pounded, soaked in water and passed several times through a fine sieve. The minute particules [*sic*] which settle at the bottom are then taken up and dried on boards. To this process is given the name *midzu-boshi*, or water drying, and it is common to all branches of the manufacture. For fine white earthenware four kinds of clay, together with *bara* and white Kaseda sand, which have been previously subjected to *midzu-boshi*, are mixed in certain proportions known to the experienced workman. Lumps of the stuff are placed upon wooden blocks and pounded with hammers to the extent of about three thousand blows, by which it is brought into the state of raw material ... before being converted into clay for the potter's use it requires about three thousand more hammer blows. It is considered to improve in quality the longer it is kept.<sup>11</sup>

Everything about the process of manufacture was risky; nothing was more difficult than the arduous process of firing. As one scholar has noted:

The wood-fired kilns used were primitive and judging and maintaining the temperature must have been extremely difficult. Incorrect temperatures or kiln exposure for too long could result in a ruined batch of discoloured and misshapen pottery. So much effort went into the firing



Figure 4.1 Girl decorating export ware

process that weeks' worth of production were placed in the kiln at the same time. The loss of an entire firing must therefore have been a financial disaster.<sup>12</sup>

As the pressure mounted, so the labour force increased, with workers who were often younger, but production doubled. The ceramics were slipshod. Cups of a set were not by any means identical, and plates or bowls varied from piece to piece. Even more startling, when the pieces were painted and decorated, the new stencils were slapped on with blithe disregard for symmetry. Such pieces as survive do have a special charm, which stems from their idiosyncrasies.

### **The Western romantics**

Western commentators who took a special interest in the manufacture of porcelain and china were highly critical of what they saw as the decline in standards as manufacturers struggled, still using the old methods, to increase their production so that they could take part in the flourishing trade.

Edward S. Morse (1838–1925), an American expert, in Kyoto in 1879, watching the painting of cheap Japanese ware, fulminated at the process, as:

many outsiders are employed, boys ten years old, splashing on the decorations of flowers, butterflies and the like, motifs derived from their mythology, but in sickening confusion, so contrary to the exquisite reserve of the Japanese in the decoration of objects for their own use. Previous to

the demands of the foreigner, the members of the immediate family were leisurely engaged in producing pottery refined in form and decoration. Now the whole compound is given up to a feverish activity of work, with Tom, Dick and Harry and their children slapping it out by the gross. ... 'Put on all the gold you can' is the order. ... [A]nd the roughness of the work, which is exported to America and Europe, confirms to the Japanese that they are dealing with people whose tastes are barbaric.<sup>13</sup>

Herbert Ponting, a British geographer and photographer, in Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century, felt passionately about 'Awata' ware, which masqueraded as 'Satsuma'. As he wrote:

Awata is the centre from which highly decorated ware, called 'Satsuma' in American and European shops, is shipped in immense quantities all over the world. It is a cream-coloured faience, covered with a minutely-crackled glaze, an imitation of the famous pottery produced at Kagoshima in the province of Satsuma.<sup>14</sup>

And he continued:

This Awata ware is decorated in many different styles, and for exportation in quantity nothing more hideous is produced in all Japan. At a dozen large establishments the whole floors of rooms are littered with vases and urns. Here men and women, boys and girls, working side by



Figure 4.2 View of workshop for export ware



side, quickly brush in the ground work and trace designs, each finishing many pieces daily, and having no scruples in using the aerograph in the process – so debased have modern methods become in the race for wealth by catering for the most atrocious foreign taste.<sup>15</sup>

Ponting also explains that:

Near by the potters' sheds are the drying rooms, where the pieces are left for several days to dry out without artificial aid. Then there are the dripping-rooms, where the glaze is applied after the first, and before the second firing. The kilns are always interesting. Some of them are open, either receiving or being relieved of their fragile store, whilst others are being carefully watched by those who continually poke fresh sticks of fuel through tiny loop-holes into the sealed-up fires.<sup>16</sup>

The remarkable thing about these craft industry potteries, which knocked out so many pots for the mass market in the West, was that they also produced beautiful hand-crafted pieces on the same site. Again Ponting notes that a different group of artists work in little houses in the gardens, where weeks, and sometimes months, are spent in the minute embellishment of a single vase. Lovely landscapes, and scenes from legend and history, appear in ovals and vignettes on a background of deep and lustrous blue, and gold is only used to give enrichment.<sup>17</sup>

But Mortimer Menpes, an artist himself, was less concerned and more tolerant, and was particularly intrigued by the hand-painting of the porcelain. After becoming known to a porcelain painter, Menpes was allowed 'to sit among the men as they worked'. He writes:

I ended painting a whole dinner service in blue and white. It took me a week to do. ... I can safely say that I have never worked in a more congenial atmosphere than when sitting on a mat in that little porcelain shop surrounded by those twelve little artists. I shall never forget the anxious moments when my products were being fired. Sometimes I have gone on for twelve or fourteen hours, eating and resting with the men, taking my turn at keeping the furnace alight and hanging about after the kilns had cooled to see my valuable porcelain dug out.<sup>18</sup>

It seems certain that the Japanese porcelain painter, flattered by Mortimer Menpes's interest, was happy to indulge a British enthusiast.

At this time in Japan there was little or no understanding of production being a continuous process, and that there should be a production line, on which the pots progressed from one process to another. Pots were often thrown and fired in one place before being packed and transported miles away, sometimes to a distant island, where they were glazed and decorated.

The built-in inefficiencies of the arrangements could not last, given the pressure on the industry to increase production. Modernisation came, despite the Western romantics, from a capable but quiet, self-effacing German chemist.

### **Gottfried Wagener, the moderniser of the Japanese ceramics industry**

Gottfried Wagener (1831–92)<sup>19</sup> was a man of thirty-seven years when, in 1868, he arrived in Nagasaki to set up a soap factory. Wagener, born in Hanover, had graduated as a chemist from Georg-August University in Göttingen. He had been involved in various ventures (which had failed) in his native Germany. The soap factory in Nagasaki also failed, but he remained in Japan and, in his quiet way, gradually became indispensable to the Japanese.

At this time pottery making was widespread in Japan. After being made, pottery was sent on to a warehouse where a variety of middle men undertook to sell it. Kunitake Kume, the chronicler of the Iwakura Mission, remembered that ‘when Wagener came to look at the ceramics warehouse in Oita, I invited him. ... At that time many people visited my house, which was in fact the office for the warehouse for some time.’<sup>20</sup>

When he arrived in Japan as a chemist Wagener had a lot of knowledge that the Japanese, if they were to transform their ceramics industry, needed. However, he ‘was a shy and modest man who did not impose his help upon others but waited to be asked before sharing his knowledge so generously’.<sup>21</sup> From 1878–81 Wagener was in Kyoto working at the School of Industrial Art. It was reported that:

Dr. Wagener is busy in his school and factory from nine to two. ... He is almost a magician, who understands everything and is helpful to the Japanese in many ways. In his house he has a lithographic press and a laboratory.<sup>22</sup>

In 1871 the new Japanese government in Tokyo requested Wagener to move to Tokyo to teach science at the South College (*Daigaku Nanko*) and *Tokyo Kaiseisho*. He quickly became a valued adviser to the Japanese government. It was Wagener, already engaged as an adviser to the Austrian government, who encouraged the Japanese government to involve themselves with the great Vienna Exposition<sup>23</sup> of 1873 (see Chapter 2). For a German scientist it was a great opportunity and Wagener seized it with both hands. He remained in Japan for the rest of his life, and with enthusiastic Japanese support he was the man who modernised the Japanese ceramics industry. Wagener made possible the production of huge quantities of export ware.



Several of the techniques eagerly explored by the Japanese, which were commonplace in Europe, involved modernising the kiln and firing it efficiently. Another innovation was concerned with the application of a modern glaze. It has been suggested that this (new to Japan) technique was learnt by Kajiro Notomi (1844–1908) and Chujiro Kawahara (1849–89) (both from Arita in Saga prefecture) at the Vienna Exposition in 1873. Possibly these men went on to study at Elbogen,<sup>24</sup> in Bohemia, perhaps at the Haidinger factory, where they learnt new techniques of porcelain painting and porcelain casting in gypsum moulds.

Gottfried Wagener made an enormous contribution in Japan to the modernising of the Japanese ceramics industry. He was adviser and co-ordinator, for Japan, at the Vienna Exposition of 1873, and the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876. He was in attendance at both Vienna and Philadelphia. He was also much involved with the first National Industrial Exposition in Tokyo in 1877. In fact Wagener was responsible for much of the new technology introduced into a wide variety of Japanese industries including ‘ceramics, cloisonné, glass-making, weaving and furniture making’.<sup>25</sup> He died on 8 November 1892 and is buried at Aoyama Cemetery, Tokyo.

### **The ‘litmus test’ of foreign trade**

Behind the Japanese policy of using the international exhibitions to stimulate demand was the urgent need for Japan to build up her foreign trade. Any nation must aim to have a favourable balance of trade. That way lies success, a strong currency and a prosperous people. Although, as will be seen, her trade in export ware to Britain was rising constantly, Japanese trade balance with Britain remained unfavourable because the Japanese were importing huge quantities of manufactured products from Britain.

For the purpose of this brief study, the export of Japanese art objects to Britain, Australia and the United States of America will be discussed. The Australian states, British colonies until the new constitution of 1901, aroused great interest in Japan, which was partly because of proximity, both countries being on the Pacific rim. The United States was a huge and expanding market with which, because of export ware, the Japanese could achieve a favourable balance of trade. The Japanese, despite an enormous trade in export ware, could not reverse their unfavourable balance of trade with Britain, at least until the middle of the 1914–18 War.

### **Australia and export ware**

There were three colonial exhibitions in Australia, two in Melbourne in 1875 and 1880, and one in Sydney in 1879, which brought the wonders of Japan to public attention in Australia. At these exhibitions Japanese expenditure was minimal.

Table 4.1 Exhibitions in Australia, in Yen

1875	Melbourne	20,229
1879	Sydney	39,817
1880	Melbourne	33,014

Although the role of the Japanese government in the Australian exhibitions is not clear, a small group of officially sponsored Japanese did explore Australia during the course of the Melbourne exhibition, in 1875.

There is no doubt that Japanese commercial priorities were obvious in Melbourne. Indeed the *Melbourne Punch* was scathing. As they wrote:

The Japanese court is a bit of a humbug. The Japanese merchants have got good times of it. They have two fine sale rooms free of rent, their insurances carefully attended to, every assistance from the Customs Authorities and no need to advertise – the catalogue does that for them, but with far greater potency than the catalogue – every paper in Victoria has either told us or been told, this is *the* feature of the exhibition ... it is damping to the poetic mind, when you fix your mind on an earthenware gem ... to be told you can purchase it at one and eight pence, and take it away in your pocket.<sup>26</sup>

Table 4.2 Australian imports of china and lacquer ware from Japan, in Yen

	<i>China</i>	<i>Lacquer ware</i>
1882	6,207	6,314
1887	21,862	14,410
1892	75,501	6,980
1897	77,035	27,126
1902	83,650	52,001
1907	135,948	56,349
1912	185,066	35,547

Source: Extracted from Ministry of Finance, *Dai Nihon Boeki Nenhyo* [Chronological Tables of Japan's Exports and Imports], Tokyo, 1882–1928.

Table 4.3 Japanese trade with Australia, in Yen

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
1900	2,531,000	2,456,000
1910	6,552,000	7,602,000

Note: These figures reflect the growing imports of Australian wool into Japan.

Source: Extracted from *Historical Statistics of Japan* (in English and Japanese), Vol. 3, Management and Co-ordination Agency, Tokyo, 1988, pp. 72–6.

### The United States of America

Japan paid homage to the United States by investing heavily in exhibitions there. Japan also had a presence at several other small specialist exhibitions. These small shows attracted little Japanese investment, but may have had displays of Japanese china and lacquer ware.

*Table 4.4* American imports of china and lacquer goods from Japan, in Yen

	<i>China</i>	<i>Lacquer ware</i>
1882	166,340	88,499
1887	295,580	664,818
1892	604,613	67,587
1897	620,376	27,126
1902	913,396	59,861
1907	3,816,889	273,767
1912	2,586,340	119,821

*Source:* Extracted from Ministry of Finance, *Dai Nihon Boeki Nenhyo* [Chronological Tables of Japan's Exports and Imports], Tokyo, 1928.

Although American industries were growing throughout the late nineteenth century, their manufactured goods had, initially, to struggle to find overseas markets. As a result the Japanese were able to export huge quantities of china and lacquer, and maintain a favourable balance of trade. The American trade was in all respects astonishing.

*Table 4.5* Japanese trade with the United States, in Yen

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
1900	52,566,000	62,761,000
1910	143,702,000	54,699,000

*Source:* Extracted from *Historical Statistics of Japan* (in English and Japanese), Vol. 3, Management and Co-ordination Agency, Tokyo, 1988, pp. 72–6.

### Japanese trade with Britain

Table 4.6 shows how the value of the export trade to Britain, in terms of china and lacquer ware, expanded over the years. It is worth noting that these exports from Japan rose until 1907, the figures for 1912 being considerably lower than those for 1907. The inference might be that after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, during which the Japanese overwhelmed the Russians by land and sea, Japan's popularity faded as the British wondered what sort of genie had been let out of the bottle in East Asia.

Table 4.6 British imports of china and lacquer ware from Japan, in Yen

	<i>China</i>	<i>Lacquer ware</i>
1882	165,741	144,283
1887	259,056	144,683
1892	242,988	138,029
1897	237,347	230,945
1902	262,678	191,140
1907	475,204	313,726
1912	376,182	113,607

*Source:* Extracted from Ministry of Finance, *Dai Nihon Boeki Nenhyo* [Chronological Tables of Japan's Exports and Imports], Tokyo, 1928.

Despite the heroic efforts of the Japanese 'fancy-goods' manufacturers, the trade balance with Britain remained unfavourable. With other nations, before 1914, the Japanese could achieve a favourable balance of trade. With Britain things remained unfavourable to Japan.

The figures from Japan are shown on Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Japanese trade with Britain, in Yen

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
1900	11,263,000	71,638,000
1910	25,781,000	94,701,000

*Source:* Extracted from *Historical Statistics of Japan* (in English and Japanese), Vol. 3, Management and Co-ordination Agency, Tokyo, 1988, pp. 72–6.

There was no way round this; the Japanese were still importing huge quantities of railway equipment, steam engines, steamships and naval vessels from Britain. Only the outbreak of war in 1914, which caused Britain to withdraw from international markets, forced a change. The war years, between 1914–18, proved an enormous stimulus to Japanese manufacturers, and enabled them, at last, to eliminate at least temporarily that unfavourable balance of trade with Britain.

The extraordinary success of the Japanese in using the Great Exhibition to create a craze for 'things Japanese' has been amply demonstrated. In one sense the cultural bridges that they built were commercially strong. The British housewife revelled in her Japanese ornaments.

The triumph of export ware was the first major success of modern Japan. The determination of those Japanese engaged in the job of bringing Japan into the modern world ensured that, through the great exhibitions, demand was stimulated and, through the development of a new factory-based export ware industry, demand could be satisfied.

It was an astonishing achievement.

Table 4.8 Total worldwide exports of 'industrial art objects' from Meiji Japan, in Yen

Date	China	Lacquer ware	Cloisomé ware	Fans	Folding screens	Total exports
1868	23,000	17,000	none	none	none	15,500,000
1878	169,000	149,000	none	155,000	12,000	25,988,000
1888	1,295,000	590,000	29,000	338,000	304,000	65,706,000
1898	1,991,000	783,000	137,000	54,000	346,000	162,903,000
1908	5,078,000	958,000	96,000	834,000	281,000	375,403,000
1912	5,452,000	1,137,000	82,000	1,022,000	246,000	524,615,000

Source: Extracted from Ministry of Finance, *Dai Nihon Boeki Nenhyo* [Chronological Tables of Japan's Exports and Imports], Tokyo, 1882–1928.

## Notes

- 1 With thanks to Richard Wilson, of International Christian University, Tokyo. See Frederic A. Sharf, Dean Lahikainen and William T. LaMoy, *A Pleasing Novelty: Bunkio Matsuki and the Japan Craze in Victorian Salem*, Peabody and Essex Museum, Salem, MA, 1993, p. 94.
- 2 Sharf *et al.*, *A Pleasing Novelty*, p. 94.
- 3 L. Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the years 57, 58 and 59*, Vol. II, 1859, pp. 52–3.
- 4 O. Impey, *Early Porcelain Kilns of Japan*, p. 1.
- 5 See M.B. Jansen and G. Rozman, *Japan in Transition from Tokugawa to Meiji*, Princeton; 1988, and W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, Oxford, 1973.
- 6 See L. Lawrence, *Satsuma, Masterpieces from the World's Most Important Collections*, 1991.
- 7 Lawrence, *Satsuma*, p. 39.
- 8 Lawrence, *Satsuma*, p. 15.
- 9 Lawrence, *Satsuma*; for Yabu Meizan, see pp. 55–97.
- 10 M. Fairley, 'Foreword', in Lawrence, *Satsuma*, p. 5.
- 11 Lawrence, *Satsuma*, quoting E.M. Satow, p. 40.
- 12 Lawrence, *Satsuma*, p. 41.
- 13 'Japan day by day', in *An Exhibition in Honour of Edward S. Morse*, Salem, Peabody Museum, 1977, p. 30.
- 14 H. Ponting, *In Lotus Land Japan*, 1910, p. 50. Herbert Ponting's account explains that:

At Yasuda's or Kinkozan's one may see the whole process of pottery making from the mixing of the clay to the packing of the finished product....In turn one sees the grinding-wheels, the mixing-vats, where the clay is stacked and cleansed, and made ready for the potters; the throwing wheels, kilns and painting-rooms.

- 15 Ponting, *In Lotus Land Japan*, p. 50.
- 16 Ponting, *In Lotus Land Japan*, p. 51.
- 17 Ponting, *In Lotus Land Japan*, p. 52.
- 18 M. Menpes, *Japan, A Record in Colour*, p. 172.
- 19 G. Avitabile, 'Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892)', in M. Fairley and O. Impey (eds) *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, 1995, pp. 98–123.

- 20 K. Kume, *Kume Hakase Kye Junen Kaikoroku* [Dr Kume's Memoirs of Ninety Years], Tokyo, 1934, pp. 541–2.
- 21 Avitabile, 'Gottfried Wagener', p. 98.
- 22 Avitabile, 'Gottfried Wagener', p. 100.
- 23 C.T. Marshall and J.Z. Bowers, *Letters from Meiji Japan, 1878–1881*, Josiah Macy Foundation, New York, 1980, p. 90.
- 24 T. Hata, *Meijiki no Kogeitsin Womeguru Yushitsu Shinkosaku Nitsuite* [Export Encouragement Policies of Industrial Art Objects during the Meiji Period], Kyoto, 1997, p. 45.
- 25 Avitabile, 'Gottfried Wagener', p. 98.
- 26 *Melbourne Punch*, 9 September 1875, p. 351, with thanks to P.F. Kornicki.



**Part II**

**In Japan**





## 5 Maruzen and the foreign book trade

### **Fukuzawa Yukichi, the catalyst**

Fukuzawa Yukichi<sup>1</sup> made three visits to the West, as a young man, under the auspices of the old regime. From these experiences he recognised that one way for the Japanese to learn about the developed world was by studying books in European languages. As he had written, when in London in 1862, ‘there is no way but to buy books. I have already bought many volumes in London, and shall do the same when we go to Holland.’<sup>2</sup> Fukuzawa recognised that his countrymen, who could not hope to visit in person the countries of Europe or America, would have to learn by reading books from the West. In this sense Fukuzawa, with his strong commitment to using foreign books, was the inspiration for the enterprise of Maruzen.

Fukuzawa was not alone in his commitment to learning through Western books. Other Japanese leaders, who had travelled abroad, were of similar mind. Indeed one could say that ‘the teaching of talented young men by means of Western books’<sup>3</sup> was government policy. This was especially the case with books about the law and about economics. Young Japanese bureaucrats had no option but to learn through the medium of Western texts. A list of economics books that were translated into Japanese, before 1912, is given here (p. 68–70).

For the educated Japanese there were two choices, either to learn to read English, German or French, or to have translations available in Japanese. Both courses were followed. Fukuzawa himself wrote extensively, in Japanese, books that were best sellers, and which made him rich. Others translated a wide range of European texts into Japanese. The account here is primarily concerned with books in English imported into Japan by the bookstore Maruzen.

### **Maruya to Maruzen**

For the foreign visitor in Japan today Maruzen occupies a special place because of the range of foreign books, many in English, which it stocks. Maruzen, perhaps above all others, epitomises the store in Japan that has prospered exceedingly from a policy of buying and selling foreign goods.

The original store was founded as *Maruya Shosha* (Maruya Trading Company), a pharmacy at Benten-dori, 2 chome, in Yokohama in January 1869, immediately after the Restoration, and nearly a decade after Yokohama had been opened as a treaty port. The founder, Hayashi Yuteki (1837–1901),<sup>4</sup> was born in Gifu province where he had studied medicine through *rangaku* (Dutch studies). He started practising medicine in Tokyo in 1859. Despite his medical background he enrolled in Fukuzawa's school in March 1867. He remained directly under Fukuzawa's influence for one year and a half, until August 1868, but this was sufficient to inspire him with entrepreneurial zeal. Dr Hayashi founded Z.P. Maruya & Co. to sell pharmaceutical products, as the first name-board of his shop announced, 'Chemicals, drugs and surgical instruments'. Maruya were also 'Wholesale agents of sulphuric acid manufactured by the Imperial Mint.'<sup>5</sup>

In order to simplify the company's financial arrangements, Maruya Bank was set up, in September 1879, with a capital of ¥50,000. The shareholders included:

Maruya Zenpachi – 100 shares  
 Fukuzawa Yukichi – 100 shares  
 Hayashi Yuteki – 40 shares  
 Okudaira M. – 37 shares

Okudaira, the former lord of Fukuzawa's domain of Nakatsu, Kyushu, was the first president. Although the bank absorbed two smaller banks in 1883 it closed in 1889, almost certainly due to bad management.<sup>6</sup> In any case the Maruya Bank never did foreign business. The bookshop company did its foreign banking through the Yokohama Specie Bank.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 5.1 Maruzen in Yokohama, c.1880

One unusual aspect of Maruya's launch was the prospectus which asserted that Japan must abandon her policy of seclusion and promote foreign trade, as this was necessary to improve the welfare and prospects of the Japanese people.<sup>8</sup> In addition Maruya was advertised as a business that would train its Japanese staff as well as a College of Commerce. It was widely believed that Fukuzawa himself either wrote the prospectus, or supervised its preparation.

Fukuzawa's involvement was important, and his interest personal. During a visit to Kobe, he wrote to the manager of the Maruzen shop in nearby Osaka:

How is your business doing? Let me know which is selling better, Western books or books on medicine or is it translated books? Did the translated books you ordered from Tokyo arrive safely? How many copies of these did you sell between April and July? How do you judge the business in the Osaka shop, including the translated books? Do you have enough shop assistants? Let me know.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning Hayashi stocked foreign books, which, until 1871, were ordered directly in Japan – from foreign merchants in Yokohama – as well as other foreign-made products. It seems likely that it was Fukuzawa, and other government officers, who inspired Hayashi to import such curiosities. The strangeness of Maruya's foreign goods – from overseas – brought notoriety, and large crowds of curious Japanese, to his shop. Journeys were made from Tokyo to Yokohama by families eager to see the strange foreign goods on sale. Hayashi moved his premises several times but, by 1881, in Yokohama, he had a pharmacy and, separately, a bookshop. The pharmacy continued in Yokohama until the Second World War. The bookshop business, which was originally known as Maruya Shosha and later as Maruzen, opened in Tokyo in February 1870. Other branches of Maruzen opened as follows:

January 1871 opened in Osaka

August 1872 opened in Kyoto

August 1874 opened in Nagoya

From 1872 Maruzen was ordering books from Roman and Company in San Francisco; by 1874 London booksellers, including Short & Short, and Wayland, seemed to be supplying books.

But Maruzen was more than a bookseller. For a time, Western suits for Japanese gentlemen travelling abroad were available; Japanese gentlemen could be measured for their Western suits and have them made up at Maruzen.<sup>10</sup> Fukuzawa's own work on *Book-keeping* was published in two parts in 1873 and 1874.<sup>11</sup> Immediately Maruzen organised taught courses on book-keeping.<sup>12</sup> Astonishingly Maruzen was, from the beginning, trying to keep proper business accounts in a manner then becoming common in Britain.

**Books in English available from Z.P. Maruya in 1876**

By 1876, that is within eight years of the Meiji Restoration, Maruzen was offering seventy titles<sup>13</sup> of books in English to the Japanese public in Yokohama and at its branches elsewhere. Eighteen of the works offered were part of an International Scientific Series, the price of each being \$2.00 or under. The titles of books included sixteen titles by John Stuart Mill, nine by Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the works of Lord Macaulay, in nineteen volumes, four works of Alexander Bain, Jeremy Bentham's *Theory of Legislation*, four volumes of David Hume as well as five works of Professor Fawcett. The only female author to be found in the list was Mrs Fawcett, whose *Political Economy for Beginners, with Questions* was popular in Japan and a 'best-seller' elsewhere. There were also a few books in this early Maruzen list that were devoted to scientific and technical subjects.

What is noticeable is the preponderance of books relating to the organisation of society and political economy, or economics. On this first Maruzen list were those books that would have been currently under discussion amongst intellectuals of the day in Britain. John Stuart Mill (1806–73), a philosopher and economist, had been educated privately, and somewhat painfully, by his father James Mill (1773–1836). J.S. Mill was also in part a Utilitarian, but also something of an idealist. He was, for the Victorians, a radical, who upheld the Utilitarian maxim of seeking social policies that would achieve 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Education of the people was the panacea that would, if applied faithfully to all, eliminate social evils. There were three editions (in English) of J.S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*. The difference seems to have been in the way the work was printed and bound, the cheapest edition, in one volume, was priced at \$2.50. One of Mill's most famous works was *On Liberty*. Freedom for the individual, for his thought and for his speech, was a basic axiom. No doubt the Japanese discussed this, although the concept of personal liberty was not something seriously considered in Japan at that time. In 1869 Mill had published *The Subjection of Women*; this remained a controversial book for its time in Victorian Britain. Anyone reading it in Japan would have been incredulous at J.S. Mill's arguments about women's rights.

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), a social philosopher, who did much to promote the study of the discipline that became sociology, became famous for applying Darwin's principle of evolution to society in general. Importantly, Spencer promoted the idea of gradualism in society, that the principles behind government action were of necessity related to the then state of society. This reasoning was popular in Japan where the sanctity of national objectives, as distinct from individual aims, was traditionally accepted.

These books (see Table 5.1) could be bought from all Maruzen's branches.<sup>14</sup> It seems likely that these books had to be ordered specially.

Table 5.1 List of foreign books available from Z.P. Maruya &amp; Co. (Maruzen), 1876

Mill (J.S.)	<i>Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy</i>	\$4.50
	<i>Dissertations and Discussions</i> , 4 vols	15.00
	<i>Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy</i>	2.00
	<i>Three Essays on Religion</i>	3.25
	<i>Auguste Comte and Positivism</i>	2.00
	<i>On Representative Government</i> , 4th edn, crown 8vo	2.25
	<i>On Liberty</i> , 1 vol	1.25
	<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> , 2 vols	6.00
	<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> , cheaper edition	4.00
	<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> , 1 vol.	2.50
	<i>Subjection of Women</i>	1.25
	<i>Utilitarianism</i>	2.00
	<i>Autobiography</i>	2.25
	<i>System of Logic</i>	3.25
Mill (J.)	<i>Analysis of the Human Mind</i> 2 vols, 8vo	8.00
	<i>History of British India</i> , 10 vols	15.00
Montesquieu's	<i>Esprit des Lois</i> , 12 mo	1.75
Spencer (Herbert)	<i>Education</i>	1.25
	<i>First Principles</i>	2.50
	<i>Essays: Moral and Political</i>	2.50
	<i>Illustrations of Universal Progress</i>	2.50
	<i>The Principles of Biology</i> , 2 vols	5.00
	<i>The Principles of Psychology</i> , 2 vols	5.00
	<i>Social Statics</i>	2.50
	<i>Philosophy of Style</i>	0.50
	<i>Recent Discussions in Science, Philosophy, and Morals</i>	2.00
de Tocqueville's	<i>Democracy in America</i> , 2 vols, 8vo	5.00
Woolsey's	<i>International Law</i>	2.50
Carey's	<i>Manual of Social Science</i>	2.25
	<i>Principles of Social Science</i>	2.25
Darwin's	<i>Origin of Species</i>	2.00
Lieber's	<i>Civil Liberty and Self-Government</i> , 1 vol.	3.50
	<i>Political Ethics</i> , revised edn, 2 vols	6.00
	<i>The Complete Works of. Edited by his Sister, Lady Trevelyan</i> , 8 vols, 8vo, cloth	32.00
Macaulay (Lord)	Cheaper edn complete in 4 vols., small 8vo, cloth	9.00
	<i>Essays, Critical and Miscellaneous</i> , good edn. 7 vols, small 8vo, cloth	8.75
	<i>History of England</i> , new edn, complete, 5 vols, cloth	7.50
Bain's	<i>Moral Science</i>	1.75
	<i>Mental Science</i>	1.75
	<i>Senses and Intellect</i>	4.75
	<i>Deductive and Inductive Logic</i> , new edn	2.00

Table 5.1 continued

Fawcett's (Mrs)	<i>Political Economy for Beginners, with Questions</i> , 18mo	1.00
Hume's	<i>Treatise on Human Nature</i> , 2 vols, 8vo	9.00
	<i>Essays Moral, Political, and Literary</i> , 2 vols., 8vo	9.00
	<i>International Scientific Series</i>	
1. John Tyndall	<i>Forms of Water</i> , 1 vol., cloth	1.50
2. Walter Bagehot	<i>Physics and Politics</i> . 1 vol., cloth	1.50
3. Edward Smith	<i>Foods</i> , 1 vol., cloth	1.75
4. Alexander Bain	<i>Mind and Body</i> . 1 vol., 12mo, cloth	1.50
5. Herbert Spencer	<i>The Study of Sociology</i>	1.50
6. Josiah P. Cooke Jnr	<i>The New Chemistry</i> , 1 vol., 12mo, cloth	2.00
7. Balfour Stewart	<i>The Conservation of Energy</i> . 1 vol., 12mo, cloth	1.50
8. J. Bell Pettigrew	<i>Animal Locomotion</i> , 1 vol., 12mo, fully illustrated	1.75
9. Henry Maudsley	<i>Responsibility in Mental Disease</i> . 1 vol., 12mo, cloth	1.50
10. Sheldon Amos	<i>The Science of Law</i> . 1 vol., 12mo, cloth	1.75
11. E.J. Marcy	<i>Animal Mechanism</i> , with 117 illustrations	1.75
12. John Wm Draper	<i>The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science</i> , author of 'The intellectual development of Europe'	1.75
13. Oscar Schmidt	<i>The Doctrine of Descent, and Darwinism</i>	1.50
14. Dr. Hermann Vogel	<i>The Chemistry of Light and Photography</i> , 100 illustrations	2.00
15. M.C. Cooke	<i>Fungi. With 109 Illustrations</i> , ed. Berkely	1.50
16. Whitney	<i>The Life and Growth of Language</i>	1.50
17. Dr Eugene Lommel	<i>The Nature of Lights. With 188 Illustrations and a Plate of Spectra in Chromo-Lithography</i> (in Press)	
18. Henry Jevons	<i>Money</i>	1.75

By 1883 Z.P. Maruya were publishing a catalogue of foreign books that ran to fifty-three pages. It is astonishing to see the range of books available, but it is not known how the list was compiled, or indeed how many copies of any one title were sold. Under the title 'History' there is Henry Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England* in two volumes and also Mrs Markham's *History of England*. But there were also American titles including G.P. Quackenbo's *History of United States for Schools*.

Curiously, perhaps, 'Physics' books came under the heading of 'Natural Philosophy', very much Scottish terminology. Within this category there were two works by Clerk Maxwell (a Scot who did most of his work in Cambridge). W.J.M. Rankine (Professor of Engineering at the University of Glasgow) had three volumes listed including *A Mechanical Text Book; Useful Rules and Tables; and Applied Mechanics*, while books by P.Q. Tait (of



the University of Edinburgh), *Lectures on Some Recent Advances in Physical Science* and *A Treatise on Dynamics of a Particle*, were included.

Military and naval textbooks abounded and there were many books listed on Western medicine.

There was also a small section of books on 'Penmanship'. These included P.R. Spence's books on how to write, universally used in North American schools. There were also oddities including, for example, *A Book about Dominies* (which would be about the Scottish school masters) and another work on temperance.

There were separate lists of books available in French and German.

The assumption would be that any one of the books listed in the Maruzen 1883 list could be ordered. No doubt very popular books like Samuel Smiles's *Thrift and Self-help* were probably kept in stock. There were not many novels listed, partly because this was a serious-minded reading Japanese public.

It should also be noted that books in English included many books from the United States of America. These, being in English, were not listed separately. There were nearly fifty books in French, and some 125 titles in German. These were listed separately at the end of the catalogue.

### Maruzen's foreign book trade, 1912–41

In the twentieth century there has been a steady demand from educated Japanese for books in foreign languages, especially English. In 1981 Maruzen published a centenary history, *Maruzen Hyakunenshi*. Included in this is a memo by Yamazaki Tamio on the books in English imported by Maruzen between 1912–41, covering some thirty years of the Taisho period and the early part of Showa. The books are listed under their publishers' names. Unfortunately Mr Yamazaki died in 1945; his work stopped at the letter N, with the publisher Nelson. Books imported from British publishers with names that begin with the letters A–M are listed; no details are known of imports from publishers whose names began with the letters N–Z.

Despite the partial nature of the information much can be discovered about the books that were imported into Japan before 1941 (see Appendix III for the publishers' names, the number of titles ordered from Japan by any one publisher and the books that sold 1,000, or more, copies).

The largest supplier of books to Japan (between 1912–41) was the Macmillan Co. Ltd, who supplied 295 titles. Of these, thirty-seven books listed each sold more than 1,000 copies, J.C. Nesfield's *English Grammar* and L. Aveling's *The Use of Life* each sold 10,000 copies, while H. Bradley's *The Making of English* sold 8,000 copies, as did F. Hooper and J. Graham's *The Import and Export Trade or Modern Commercial Practice*. A.V. Dicey's *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England* sold 5,000 copies, as did Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and



Redesdale's *Tales of Old Japan*. Four of I. Todhunter's titles (on trigonometry, equations and integral calculus) each sold 3,000 copies, as did F.G. Rowe and W.T. Webb's *Guide to the Study of English*. Books selling 2,000 copies related to scientific subjects, including two of J.B. Cohen's titles on chemistry and J. Duncan's engineering textbooks. T.W. Fox's *The Mechanism of Weaving* and H.E. Hadley's *Magnetism* also sold 1,000 copies.

If 10,000 copies of a book were sold over a thirty-year period, then that amounted to some 330 copies a year. It is likely that the scientific books were sold over a relatively long period; as far as the Japanese were concerned these engineering and scientific textbooks were the best-sellers.

Perhaps the top seller in Japan was Everyman's Library which, through J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, sold over 100,000 volumes. But these could have been any of the hundreds of titles that were on Everyman's list.

One of the top-selling books for Maruzen in Japan was from an Edinburgh publisher, W. & R. Chambers Limited. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* appears to have been selling some 1,000 copies per year, totalling nearly 30,000 volumes over the thirty-year period. Chambers also sold their *Seven Figure Mathematical Tables* at a rate of 1,500 copies each year. To complete the Chambers list they supplied at least one set of *Chambers Cyclopaedia of English Literature* (3 volumes), one set of *Chambers Encyclopaedia* (10 volumes) and a copy of *Chambers Scots Dialect Dictionary*.

It should be remembered that, in the spring of 1862, in London, Fukuzawa had not only spent much time browsing at W. & R. Chambers bookshop, at 47 Paternoster Row, but he had been taken around London, and shown, among other famous places, St Paul's Cathedral by Robert Chambers. William and Robert Chambers were Edinburgh publishers but the London bookshop had been opened 'in the early 1860s' shortly before Fukuzawa and his party arrived.<sup>15</sup> It is also worth noting that when Fukuzawa came to write *Conditions in the West*, he chose to translate the anonymous writing on economics, as published by W. & R. Chambers. This was in fact written by John Hill Burton of Edinburgh.

Over 1,000 copies of several books relating to science and technology were sold, while books by Shakespeare, Kipling, H.G. Wells and Thomas Hardy all featured in the Macmillan list.

Longman's, Green & Co. sold 185 titles through Maruzen in Japan between 1912–41. Of these D.A. Low's *Pocket Book for Mechanical Engineers* sold 10,000 copies, while D.A. Low's other works, *Manual of Machine Drawing and Design*, *Heat Engines* and *Applied Mechanics*, sold 4,000, 1,000 and 1,000 copies respectively. G.S.A. Newth's *Manual of Chemical Analysis* also sold 10,000 copies, while his *Smaller Chemical Analysis* and *Qualitative and Quantitative* sold 4,000 copies. Eleven other scientific titles sold either 1,000 or 2,000 copies while P.M. Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* sold 2,000 copies. Three thousand copies of W. Ashley's *Economic Organization in England* were sold.

William Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd also sold 20,000 to 30,000 copies of Collins Illustrated Pocket Classics but there is no detail of the actual titles that Maruzen sold.

In this category of British publishers – from A–N – whose books were sold by Maruzen, there are eleven titles published and marketed by the Independent Labour Party Publication Department. The titles sold in Japan were:

M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, 2 volumes

G. Benson, *A History of English Socialism*

H.N. Brailsford, *Socialism for Today*

J.B. Glasier, *The Meaning of Socialism and William Morris and the Early Days of Socialist Movement*

K. Kautsky, *Thomas More and His Utopia*

A. Loria, *Karl Marx*

J.R. McDonald, *Parliament and Democracy and Parliament and Revolution*

P. Snowden, *The Economic Case for Socialism*

D.J. Williams, *Capitalist Combination in the Coal Industry*.

The publisher John Lane sold only nine titles but these included thousands of copies of Anatole France's novels as well as some copies of works by Aubrey Beardsley, Oscar Wilde and Stephen Leacock, the Canadian humorist.

William Heinemann Ltd sold thousands of copies of Dostoevsky's novels, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Possessed*, all of which had been translated into English by C. Garnett. Also in the Heinemann list was a book by P. Kropotkin called *Mutual Aid*, which had sold 5,000 copies in Japan.

The task of selling English-language books that Maruzen undertook must, judging by the large number of books sold, have been a profitable venture. British publishers, who dispatched thousands of copies of books in English to Japan, must also have marvelled.

Individuals may have bought these books for themselves but some were purchased by around thirty government or official departments. In the catalogue of the Diet library there is reference to *Catalogues* of foreign books, including those in the Imperial Naval Library (1893), the Library of the House of Peers, in English, French, German and Italian (1893), and Osaka Library (Osaka, 1895). The library of the Imperial School of Art, Tokyo, issued a catalogue of foreign books of fifty-four pages in 1906.

Academic institutions also made catalogues of the foreign books they held. These included *Tokyo Daigaku* (the University of Tokyo), *Kyoto Teikoku Daigaku* (Kyoto Imperial University), *Sapporo No Gakko* (Sapporo Agricultural College) and *Kobu Daigakko* (Imperial College of Engineering), which became the Faculty of Engineering at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1886. Keio University Library (1906 and 1912) and Waseda University Library (1903) also prepared catalogues.

It may be that the largest sale of foreign books prior to 1941 was to libraries including libraries of government departments rather than to individuals.

### Foreign books translated into Japanese

Foreign books translated into Japanese were clearly more accessible to most Japanese than those in English, French or German. This brief comment is primarily concerned with books on economics that were translated into Japanese between 1867–1912, that is during the Meiji period.

### Western economics books translated into Japanese, 1867–1912

This is a list of translations published in book form only. Articles that appeared in periodicals have been excluded, as have books by authors then living in Japan. Most places of publication are Tokyo. Books marked with asterisks are abridged translations.

#### United Kingdom

- Anon. (Burton, John Hill), *Chambers Educational Course: Political Economy, for Use in Schools, and for Private Instruction*, 1852, trans. Fukuzawa Yukichi, 1869.
- Bagehot, Walter, *Lombard Street*, 1873; trans. Koike Seiichi, 1883; by Kasai Tamotsu, 1911.
- Bastable, Charles Francis, *The Theory of International Trade*, 1887; trans. Tsuchiko Kinshiro and Tajima Kinji, 1897; by Kawasaki Naoe, 1901.
- *The Commerce of Nations*, 1887; trans. Hakodate Zeikan (Hakodate Customs House), 1904.
- *Public Finance*, 1892; trans. Inoue Tatsukuro and Takano Iwasaburo, 1899.
- Byles, John Barnard, *Sophisms of Free Trade and Popular Political Economy Examined*, 1849; American edn, 1872, trans. Wakayama Norikazu, 2 vols, 1877.
- Cairnes, John Elliot, *The Character and Logical Method of Political Economy*, 1857, 1875 (2nd edn), trans. Ban Naonosuke, 2 vols, 1884; by Komai Shigetada, 3 vols, 1884.
- Caldecott, Alfred, *English Colonization and Empire*, 1891 (with a supplementary chapter by F.A. Kirkpatrick, 1901), trans. Mizusaki Motokazu, 1909.
- Cunningham, William, *Politics and Economics*, 1885, trans. Anon., 1894.
- Dawson, William Herbutt, *The Evolution of Modern Germany*, n.d. [1908], trans. Azumo Jozaburo, 1910.
- Ellis, William, *Outlines of Social Economy*, 1846 [H.H. Graafland, *Groundtrekken der Staatshuishoudkunde*, 1952], trans. Kanda Takahira, 2 vols, 1867; 1 vol., 1868.
- Fawcett, Henry, *Manual of Political Economy*, 1863, trans. Nakakuma Keizo, 1884; by Yano Tsunetaro, 1887; by Amano Tameyuki, 1888.
- *Pauperism; Its Causes and Remedies*, 1871. Tr. By Ono Naosuke, 1887.
- *Essays and Lectures on Social and Political Subjects* (with M.G. Fawcett), 1872, trans. Shibuya Soji, 2 vols, 1883.
- *Free Trade and Protection*, 1878, trans. Komai Shigetada, 1880.

- Fawcett, Millicent Garrett, *Political Economy for Beginners*, 1870, 1876 (4th edn), trans. Hayashi Masaaki, 4 vols, 1873; by Nagata Kensuke, 5 vols, 1877; by Kanazaki Shigeki, 1885; by Suzuki Shigetaka, 1905.
- *Tales of Political Economy*, 1879, trans. Katayama Heizaburo, 1885.
- Gibbins, Henry de Beltgons, *The History of Commerce in Europe*, 1891, trans. Hayashi Sotokichi, 1892; by Nasgata Kensuke, 1896.
- Goschen, George Joachim, *The Theory of Foreign Exchanges*, 1861, trans. Tajiro Inajiro, 1882; by Komai Shigetada, 1883; by Naruse Masayasu, 1895.
- Hobson, John Atkinson, *Problems of Poverty*, 1891, trans. Endo Juro, 1897.
- Ingram, John Kells, *A History of Political Economy*, 1888, trans. Abe Toranosuke, 1896.
- Jevons, William Stanley, *Money and the Mechanism of Exchange*, 1875, trans. Tajiro Inajiro, 1883; by Oshima Sadamasu, 1883; by Hayashi Takeichi, 1884.
- *Primer of Political Economy*, 1878, trans. Yasuda Genjiro, 1882; by Watanabe Shujiro, 3 vols, 1884; by Saga Shosaku and Furuta Shinroku, 1889; by Sugiyama Shigetaka, 1889.
- *The State in Relation to Labour*, 1882, trans. Suita Tairoka, 1893.
- Keynes, John Neville, *The Scope and Method of Political Economy*, 1890, trans. Amano Tameyuki, 1897.
- Levi, Leone, *History of British Commerce*, 1872, trans. Taguchi Ukichi and Fujita Shizuka, 17 vols, 1879; by Tsuchiko Kinshiro, 1887.
- Macleod, Henry Dunning, *The Principles of Economical Philosophy*, 2 vols, 1872–5 (2nd edn), trans. Taguchi Ukichi, 2 vols, 1885, 1887.
- *The Elements of Banking*, 1876, trans. Goto Hiromi, Kanaya Akira *et al.*, 12 vols, 1883–90; by Tajiro Inajiro, 1883.
- Malthus, Thomas Robert, *Parallel Chapters from the First and Second Editions of an Essay on the Principles of Population, 1708: 1803*, ed. W.J. Ashley, 1895, trans. Oshima Sadamasu, 1877; by Mikami Masaki, 1910.
- Marshall, Alfred, *The Economics of Industry* (with M.P. Marshall), 1879, trans. Takahashi Korekiyo, 2 vols, 1885–6.
- *Elements of Economics of Industry*, 1892, trans. Inoue Tatsukuro, 1896.
- Mill, John Stuart, *Principles of Political Economy*, 1848, trans. Hayashi Tadasu and Suzuki Shigetaka, 27 vols, 1875–85; by Amano Tameyuki (Laughlin's ed., 1884), 1891.
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Indeed Isabella Bird, in 1878, in Niigata, a sizeable port on the north-west coast of the main island Honshu, found a Japanese bookseller with a reasonable trade in foreign books in Japanese. As she wrote, 'This bookseller, who was remarkably communicative, and seems very intelligent, tells me that there is not the same demand as formerly, for the native works on the history, geography and botany of Japan.'<sup>16</sup>

### Understanding Western books

How far did Japanese readers understand the Western books that they read in English? The ideas expressed by Jeremy Bentham, or John Stuart Mill on Utilitarianism, were complex and demanded a freedom of expression that was completely alien to Japan. Herbert Spencer, writing about modern society, was also advocating changes that might have sounded alarming in Japan. Must one conclude that few of the books, in English, bought were really understood?

Whatever the achievements in understanding of the Japanese reader, the Japanese government, until after 1945, was opposed to anything that could have been labelled as 'free speech'. One Japanese commentator<sup>17</sup> refers to a 'politically absolutist establishment' that consisted of 'a mixture of feudal lords, hereditary court noblemen and lower *bushi* (warrior) class-oriented meritocrats'. From 1875 repressive legislation made liberal journalism difficult if not impossible. Further laws in 1886 were aimed at both Japanese nationalists and liberals generally, while the Public Order Police Act of 1900 severely curtailed civil rights. It is probably not unfair to suggest that attitudes to personal freedom in Japan became, in early Meiji, and remained so, until 1945, repressive.

There is no doubt of Maruzen's importance as a resource, providing an enormous variety of books. Many Japanese including civil servants, students and teachers used the books in English or other foreign languages. Some Japanese, working in an unfamiliar language, may have had difficulty in understanding these.

Nevertheless the growth of the foreign book trade, which was originally inspired by Yukichi Fukuzawa, was an astonishing triumph for Maruzen. Although the Japanese government was sensitive on many political matters, and censored the newspapers rigorously there is no suggestion that foreign books imported into Japan were censored in any way.

## The profitability of Maruzen

There are apparently no reliable figures of the profits which Maruzen made before 1900. Until 1908, when the capital was increased to ¥500,000, it had remained at ¥200,000. As will be seen from Table 5.2 in 1900 the profits were just over ¥8,000. For the first time, in 1907, profits peaked at over ¥112,000. Only from 1911 did profits reach over ¥131,000. After 1912, at the end of the Meiji period, the business did appear to become much more profitable.

In 1918, the last year of the First World War, Maruzen's profits soared to over ¥455,000. Clearly during these war years, with few books being available from Britain, Maruzen's profits were remarkable. One might conclude that foreign book selling was not the most profitable area of Maruzen's business.

Table 5.2 Maruzen's profits

<i>Year</i>	<i>Net profit (in yen)</i>
1900	8,242
1901	12,827
1902	15,216
1903	38,552
1904	45,426
1905	74,292
1906	96,882
1907	112,053
1908	97,395
1909	66,066
1910	91,040
1911	131,218
1912	163,578
1913	180,755
1914	198,704
1915	231,594
1916	269,430
1917	339,724
1918	455,263
1919	250,902

*Source: Maruzen Hyakunenshi, Volume of Tables, Tokyo, 1980–1, p. 215.*

## Notes

- 1 N. Tamaki, *Fukuzawa and the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Meiji Japan*, 2001.
- 2 *Fukuzawa, Yukichi Zenshu* [Fukuzawa Yukichi Collected Works], Vol. 17, pp. 7–8. Dutch, the language of the long-established Dutch settlement in Nagasaki harbour was, in the end, to be squeezed out. In 1862 this was not apparent.
- 3 S. Sugihara, 'Economists in government. Okubo Toshimichi, the "Bismark of Japan" and his times', in C. Sugiyama and H. Mizuta (eds), *Enlightenment and Beyond*, Tokyo, 1988, p. 221.
- 4 See *Maruzen Hyakunenshi* [100 years of Maruzen], Tokyo, 1980–1.
- 5 See early picture of Maruya, Yokokama in Figure 5.1.

- 6 *Maruzen Hyakunenshi* [100 years of Maruzen], Vol. 1, pp. 76–9.
- 7 *Maruzen Hyakunenshi*, Vol. 1, p. 286.
- 8 S. Sugihara, ‘Economists in government’, pp. 220–1.
- 9 *Fukuzawa, Yukichi Zenshu*, Vol. 17, pp. 137–8. Letter dated 15 August 1872.
- 10 Keio College had set up a department to provide men’s tailoring; see Chapter 1. In 1873 this was transferred to Maruzen.
- 11 *Choai-no Ho* [Book-keeping, part I], Tokyo, 1873; *Choai-no Ho* [Book-keeping, part II], Tokyo, 1874.
- 12 It was probably Michita Nakamura who was responsible for the teaching of this book-keeping course. See Tamaki, *Fukuzawa*.
- 13 With thanks to Suzuki Yoji, at Maruzen, Tokyo.
- 14 Maruzen, Tokyo, at 14 Nihonbashi-dori, Sanchome; Maruzen, Yokohama, 5 Benten-dori, Nichome; Maruzen, Osaka, 14 Shinsaibashi-dori, Kiuhozimachi; Maruzen, Sakai 538 Termachi Sanjio, Agaru; and Maruzen, Nagoya, Hommachi Hattioime.
- 15 N. Tamaki, ‘Fukuzawa Yukichi’, in *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Vol. III, 1999, p. 40.
- 16 Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, Vols 4 and 5, Ganesha edn, 1997, p. 225.
- 17 M. Kimura, ‘Japanese interest in Ruskin, some historical trends’, in R. Rhodes and D. van Janik (eds) *Studies in Ruskin, Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd*, Athens, Ohio, 1982, pp. 215–16.



## 6 Western architecture and Japanese architects

### **Brick and stone, stone and brick**

Nothing signalled new beginnings more clearly than the Western-style buildings that arose in Meiji Japan, designed either by foreign architects or by the first generation of Western-trained Japanese architects. It should be stressed that for the Japanese, especially those Meiji oligarchs who had journeyed in the West, Western architectural models were symbols of a new era, one that would in the course of time demonstrate Japan's modernity.<sup>1</sup> The first foreign architects were British, but later others from Germany, France and the United States were influential. But the involvement of these outsiders was only a passing phase. The first generation of Japanese architects were trained in Japan but, later, spent months and sometimes years working in and studying architecture in Britain, France, Germany or the United States.

There was amongst some members of the Japanese elite a strong preference for the British. Perhaps Iwasaki Yanosuke, of Mitsubishi, would be the best exemplar of this tendency. As has been explained 'Yanosuke's Anglophilia was no affectation. He publicly urged his country to adopt British politeness, dependability and good business sense, as well as its technology. He spoke excellent English.'<sup>2</sup>

### **Josiah Conder as 'O Yatoi'**

Of the many 'O Yatoi's', hired foreigners, employed by the Japanese government none was more successful than Josiah Conder (1852–1920),<sup>3</sup> who came to personify, for the government, and the coterie of the wealthy and influential Japanese who were his clients, the Western architectural achievements of Meiji Japan. One of Conder's strengths was his life-long commitment to Japan. Importantly he was an admirer of traditional Japanese architecture, including the great stone castles, and he admired the craftsmanship that produced wonderful wooden shrines and temples.

Conder was not only competent as an architect but he was sympathetic to things Japanese, especially art. His wife was Japanese and he settled himself permanently in Tokyo. There is no doubt he committed himself to learning



all he could about his adopted country. He wrote, in English, several books that interpreted Japanese imperial costume, gardens and flower arranging for Western readers.<sup>4</sup> He became a pupil of the Japanese artist Kawanabe Kyosai and worked with him diligently, in his spare time, over the last eight years of Kyosai's life (see Chapter 15).

It has not proven possible to discover much information about Conder's income. As Professor of Architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering (ICE) from January 1877 he was paid ¥350 per month, which was, for the time, a very high salary.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conder in London**

Josiah Conder was born on 28 September 1852 at 22 Russell Grove, North Brixton, London, the son of Josiah Conder, gentleman, and Eliza Conder, formerly Willsher. He died in Tokyo on 20 June 1920 after living in Japan for some forty-four years. He had married, in 1880, Kumeko Mayeba; she died on 10 June 1920.<sup>6</sup>



*Figure 6.1* Josiah Conder in Japanese dress

Josiah Conder first came to public notice in 1876, when at the age of twenty-four he won the Soane Medallion,<sup>7</sup> a prestigious architecture prize, for his design for an English gentleman's residence. This award signalled the end of his education. He had been at school in Bedford before becoming a student 'at the South Kensington Art Schools, and at the Slade Life Classes of University College London'.<sup>8</sup> As a young 16-year-old, in 1868, having studied under his cousin T. Roger Smith at University College, London, he entered the offices of, and later became an architectural assistant to, William Burges (1827–81).<sup>9</sup>

Burges was above all a Victorian medievalist who carried his taste for the Gothic Revival to the verge of eccentricity. His aim was to recreate new 'medieval' buildings in Victorian Britain.<sup>10</sup> Burges seems to have set up his architectural practice in about 1856, when he was aged thirty. Conder certainly kept in touch with Burges until the latter's death in 1881, sending him a gift of porcelain in 1880. Kingo Tatsuno, one of Conder's students, also worked in Burges's office in 1880.

Burges had been inspired by the Alcock collection, the first large display of Japanese art, shown in London at the International Exhibition of 1862, and had thereafter begun to collect Japanese prints. For Burges the appeal of the Japanese artwork was in its apparent relationship with the medieval. As Burges wrote:

To any student of our reviving arts of the thirteenth century an hour or even a day or two spent in the Japanese department will by no means be lost time for these hitherto barbarians appear not only to know all that the Middle Ages knew but in some respects are beyond them as well.<sup>11</sup>

In 1876 Conder was recruited by the Japanese, almost certainly because of his success in winning the Soane Medallion, to become Professor of Architecture at the ICE, a privileged institution under the guidance of the Ministry of Public Works. Conder arrived in Tokyo in January 1877 and he remained based in Tokyo for the rest of his life. In the 1880s he sent several articles to the Royal Institute of British Architects in London for publication in their *Journal*. He came home in 1885–6, in 1890 and in 1901 but, as far as is known, he never attempted to find another job in England.

Given the extraordinary stir that Japanese art and artefacts had made in London in the 1860s and 1870s it is not surprising that Conder, especially as a young man working for Burges, should have been encouraged to aim for a well-paid post in Japan. Conder was an architect, but he was also an artist and the attraction of working in Japan must have been strong.

Shortly after his arrival in Japan Conder submitted a paper to the Royal Institute of British Architects, 'Notes on Japanese architecture', which was read to the Society by his relative, T. Roger Smith, on 4 March 1878. On the evening of 8 April 1878 there was a discussion of Conder's paper.<sup>12</sup> Both paper and discussion were published in *Transactions*. Ten years later, Conder

produced a mammoth paper, entitled 'Further notes on Japanese architecture', which was read by his brother, Roger T. Conder, on 31 May 1886. Within a year Conder had presented 'Domestic architecture in Japan', which, when printed, covered twenty-four pages.<sup>13</sup>

Conder's attempts to keep his name in the public eye amongst fellow architects in Britain may have reflected his nervousness concerning his employment prospects, in the long term, in Japan. The Japanese were, especially in the engineering industries, keen to cast off the mantle of tutelage and so rarely renewed the contracts of consultant engineers. From Conder's personal point of view it might have appeared that he had no worries because, in 1886, with the re-establishment of the ICE as the Faculty of Engineering of the Imperial University of Tokyo, he had been appointed Professor of Architecture at the University.

It seems likely that Conder remained in Japan partly because of his status and success as an architect in Japan, but perhaps also because he recognised the difficulty of re-establishing himself in London.

### **The Imperial College of Engineering**

Josiah Conder started to teach architecture at the ICE in Tokyo in 1877. It is possible that a Frenchman, Charles Alfred Chastel de Boinville (1850–97),<sup>14</sup> may have been responsible for earlier teaching but, if he spoke in heavily accented English, this would have been an intolerable burden on Japanese students. It is not known precisely how many students opted for architecture between 1877 and the transference of the College to the Imperial University in 1886.

The men who applied to study at the ICE were pioneers in every sense. In applying to enter the College they were committing themselves to the future and opting for the new scientific world of the West. Not only that, but before entry to College, they had to have acquired enough fluency in English so as to be able to receive, appreciate and understand their teachers, who spoke only in English.

The courses at the ICE<sup>15</sup> covered a study period of six years, arranged in three sections of two years each. For the first two years students learned English and elementary mathematics, mechanics, physics, chemistry and drawing. After completing the first two years students had six options, one of which was architecture.

For the next two years students concentrated on learning more about their chosen subject, before going on to practical 'work experience' in the final two years. The College was primarily an Engineering College and facilities for laboratories and workshops, then unknown in Japan, were good. It is not known precisely how the architectural students were trained, but their education had a strong background in engineering.

In March 1878, little more than one year after his arrival, Conder gave a lecture on architecture. It was a marvellous opportunity for the young

professor, not only to sort out his own ideas, but also to present them to this pioneering group of Japanese architectural students. He recommended that art and sculpture had a place in decorating, particularly, those buildings 'devoted to any great National purpose' (p. 2, Lecture). These grand buildings were 'looked upon as part of the national wealth; dear as the soil upon which they stand' (p. 3, Lecture). Conder also spoke of the need for a building to be 'substantial' so as 'to secure protection from the elements, and from all probable destructive forces'<sup>16</sup> (p. 3, Lecture). He regretted the lack of stone, in Japan, such as limestone, oolite and sandstone, all of which were easily worked. The granite, in which Japan was rich, Conder regarded as exceptionally heavy and expensive to work. Inevitably, being a Londoner born and bred, Conder praised brick as the most useful building material, even in Japan.

Conder commended the broadest education in the art, history and architecture of their country to these young Japanese. Conder demanded that the young aspiring architects look at indigenous Japanese architecture, 'the appreciation of which I am forever urging you' (p. 14, Lecture). The change in Japanese architecture, which was, Conder knew, already coming, the students should welcome, 'so that the endurance and beauty of your cities may contribute to the soundness of the Empire' (p. 15, Lecture).

Conder's admiration for indigenous Japanese architecture was one of the startling things about him. Unlike so many of the hired foreigners, who saw Japan through the eyes of a narrow-minded Westerner, Conder recognised the beauty of many of the buildings, including the shrines and temples that he saw in Japan. This, and his emphasis on the close relationship between architecture, art and sculpture, singled him out as one wholly sympathetic to Japanese aspirations. His sensitivity to the Japanese may have determined in large measure his remarkable success as an architect in Japan.

Conder had a high profile in Japan. He was the architect for the *Rokumeikan*, a state-owned guest house and club designed to attract Japanese and Westerners, both. The *Rokumeikan* was in 'Renaissance villa' style, and an attractive building. Conder was also involved in designing the first Ueno National Museum, the Navy Department office and much of Mitsubishi 'London town'. Conder was, especially in the case of the *Rokumeikan*, caught in the crossfire between the modernisers, who had commissioned the building, and the traditionalists, who hated the rush to copy the West. In the end the *Rokumeikan* was sold, and was used as a hotel for several more years.<sup>17</sup> None of Conder's public buildings survive, except for the Russian Orthodox Nikoraido Cathedral, the building of which he supervised, from plans supplied from Russia<sup>18</sup> at Surogodai 4-1-3, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.

Conder was a favourite architect with several of the great entrepreneurs of Meiji Japan.<sup>19</sup> Of the buildings that were designed and built directly under Conder's own eye, the following remain and can still be seen today in Tokyo: the Iwasaki house at Yushima 4-6, Bunkyo-Ku; another Iwasaki house and garage, both at Takanawa 4-25-33, Minato-Ku, and the Iwasaki

tomb at Okamoto 2–33, Setagaya-Ku. There is also a Furukawa house at Nishigakana 1–27–29, Kita-Ku; the Mitsui Club at Mita 2–3–7, Minato-Ku, and Shimazu House, now the administrative building of Seisen Women's College at Higashi-Gotanda 3–16–21, Shinagawa-Ku.

### **The first generation of Japanese architects**

The careers of at least five of Conder's students can be identified. These men were Tatsuno Kingo (1854–1919), Sone Tatsuno (1853–1937), Katayama Tokuma (1854–1917), Tsumaki Yorinaka and (George) Shimoda Kikutaro (1866–1931). It will be noted that, in age, these men were Conder's near contemporaries, and some of them became his friends.

Tatsuno Kingo was well known to the Japanese public, partly because of the famous Japanese buildings that he designed. Sone Tatsuno was said to be Conder's favourite pupil, and he was to design buildings that owed the most to British designs. Katayama Tokuma was the advocate of French architecture and was himself enthusiastic about the beauty of the buildings of Paris. Tsumaki Yorinaka found himself attracted by continental Europe and particularly by German styles. He became the Japanese architect who was particularly pro-German.

### **Tatsuno Kingo**

Tatsuno was the best known of Conder's pupils, followed him as Professor of Architecture and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Tokyo, and was responsible for the design and construction of some famous Japanese buildings. He could, perhaps, have been regarded as Conder's successor.

Tatsuno had entered ICE in 1873, and, after his last two years of study under Josiah Conder, graduated in 1879. He then travelled to London for further study and was attached to William Burges's office at least until Burges's death in 1881. Through his introduction to T. Roger Smith, Tatsuno spent some time as an assistant with Cubitt Construction Company. He also registered at University College, London, where he is believed to have studied engineering, and from where he graduated in 1882.

He is most famous for his Bank of Japan Building, Tokyo (1896), a splendid building that is still in use. Into this, perhaps because of Tatsuno's own training in engineering, as has been explained, he:

put tons of British steel, into roof trusses, beams and flooring. Between floors and in the load bearing walls he specified copious amounts of mortar and brick, and he kept the central dome small and low relative to the buildings 2,684 square metre area. These measures saved the bank from extensive damage in the great quake and saw it safely through World War II.<sup>20</sup>

Tatsuno also designed the Bank of Japan's office at Kyoto (1903) and Osaka where 'conventional classicism mingled with restrained Baroque'. He was the architect for Osaka City Hall and the famous Tokyo Station (1914). As one commentator has noted:

Designing a grand central station was a project suited to Tatsuno's talents – and his King-sized ego. ... he proposed one long three storey building with domed octagonal pavilion at either end, and a towering pavilion in the centre for the emperor and guests of state.<sup>21</sup>

In accordance with Tatsuno's training the station construction was reinforced and strong. There was 'a frame of British and American steel, heavily reinforced masonry to carry the weight of the building, concrete in the foundation and between floors'. The building was 'three storeys high, nearly 335 metres long and 24,000 square meters in area', a huge and imposing building. The station took six years to build and used '10,800 pine logs for the base underpinnings, 2,700 tons of steel, 8 million bricks for masonry, 900,000 more for cladding and enormous quantities of slate and copper for roofing'. Six-hundred thousand workmen were employed on the site.<sup>22</sup>

Tatsuno's success as a practising architect led him to resign (1902) from his position at the University of Tokyo in order to set up his own architectural firm. He was the first Japanese architect to do so; he also opened an office in Osaka (1905). He was, despite his distinction, believed to be something of a tyrant, controlling his partners Kasai Manji, in Tokyo, and Kataoka Yasushi, in Osaka, as if they were underlings.

## Sone Tatsuno

Sone Tatsuno was perhaps the Japanese architect who could most readily be labelled 'English' in his work. Did this affinity with English ideas of architecture develop because of his relationship with Conder or because of his work for the Iwasaki family? Iwasaki Yanosuke was an Anglophile who had employed Conder as well as Sone.

The founder of Mitsubishi had been Iwasaki Yataro who died at the age of fifty-five in 1885. The company was to develop many interests but its prime concern was with ships and shipping. By the end of the nineteenth century the Mitsubishi shipyard at Nagasaki was large and successful. Yanosuke, Yataro's younger brother, then president of the company, resolved to build a suitable mansion adjacent to the Nagasaki shipyard. This was started in July 1903 and was completed in 1904. It was named *Senshokaku* or 'View-Commanding Pavilion' by His Imperial Highness Prince Higashifushime Yorihiro, who was captain of the warship *Chiyoda*, itself built on the Clyde, in Scotland.<sup>23</sup> The Prince stayed in the house in January 1905, when the *Chiyoda* was in dry dock, immediately below the house.



The house has been described as follows: 'The two storey mansion built on a steep hill with an unassuming entrance to the west, balconies to the south, halls and stairway at the back, main rooms toward the bay, wooden shutters, painted clap-boarding and stone chimneys.' Inside, the house had been furnished and equipped like a comfortable English house: Royal Doulton china, complete with Mitsubishi crest, silver cutlery by Mappin and Webb, the billiard room contained a British table, British cues and cue rack.<sup>24</sup>

Iwasaki, himself an Anglophile, had sent Sone to London in 1901 to breathe in the British air and familiarise himself with the requirements of a British residence. Iwasaki, himself, spoke beautiful English, and enjoyed doing business with the British. Notwithstanding, the house does not look British, with its roof of Japanese tiles, a copper turret, south-facing balconies and three small 'semi-circular dormers'. *Senshokaku* has never been lived in on a regular basis but it is used for company hospitality when Mitsubishi have a ship launch. Mitsubishi employees and their guests are thus familiar with the house, especially as everyone retiring from the company is honoured with a send-off party at *Senshokaku*.

The interior of the house has been retained in its original form, with original furniture and fittings. Mirrored over-mantels, complete with over-elaborate decorations, knick-knacks and gewgaws, produce an effect of fussy opulent rooms reminiscent of Edwardian England. By contrast the traditional Japanese room in the house, calm, and free of clutter, and redolent of the simplicity of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, seems a haven of peace.

Another of Sone's achievements, which still survives, is Keio's University Library (1912). Keio had been raised to university status by the government and it was decided to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Fukuzawa's 'school' by building a grand new library. Fukuzawa died in 1901 but the library was finished a decade later. The architects were Sone Tatsuno and his partner, Chujo Seiichiro. The money came from the Japanese industrial grandees who had attended Fukuzawa's school and had long supported him. In addition Fukuzawa Momosuke, a Keio graduate (who had been adopted years earlier as a husband for Fukuzawa's daughter, Fusa) and a successful and rich son, made a large contribution.

The style of the library is Gothic, as favoured by the Keio colleagues on the committee, and so the building is basically of 'rich red brick', with 'white stone outlines' and 'pinnacle gables'. This late Meiji building used the latest technology, 'steel beams and reinforced concrete floor slabs, as well as electricity, gas and steam heat'. The Gothic library has now been replaced by a new university library, not far away. The old library building is still used for Keio's ceremonial occasions; the upper central hall and the main staircase, destroyed during the war, have been rebuilt, and make a suitably impressive setting. The Fukuzawa Memorial Centre is also housed in the old library.<sup>25</sup>

Sone, and Conder, were also responsible for Mitsubishi's<sup>26</sup> 'London-style' buildings at Maranouchi, Tokyo, where the Iwasakis had purchased over



*Figure 6.2* Keio University Library (1912)

‘one hundred empty acres’ from the government (in 1890). Conder himself designed No. 1 building; Sone Nos 2–7 inclusive, which were completed by 1907. These buildings, now long gone, were reminiscent of streets such as Lombard Street in London, a fine compliment to the then money capital of the world.

Katayama Tokuna, a Choshu man, who had been supported by Yamagata Aritomo from an early age, was one of Conder’s most interesting pupils.<sup>27</sup> He had long had a connection with the imperial household when, in 1887, he became an officer in its construction office. As part of his duties, in the 1880s, Katayama was sent on long expeditions to consider the architecture and also the styles of furnishing and of interior decorating of the West. The country that aroused his interest was France, and, as a result of Katayama’s work, the architecture of buildings ordered by, and intended for, the imperial household was reminiscent of contemporary buildings in France. Over his life-time Katayama paid six visits to Europe, which ensured that his knowledge of European palaces was unrivalled in Japan. Conder used Katayama as his assistant in designing and building a ‘lavish Western residence’ for Prince Taruhito Arisugawa in 1884 and thereafter on the new palace for the Emperor.

In Nara the Imperial Museum shows Katayama’s commitment to France, while the Kyoto Imperial Museum (1895) remains one of the great Meiji buildings of Japan. This building,



a commanding mass of red brick trimmed with white granite, is often described as neo-baroque with touches of neo-classicism, the most obvious one being the arcaded pavilion with Corinthian pilasters and a classical pediment that projects in the centre. Above it rises a cavetto roof, the largest of the seven mansards which give the building the air of Second Empire, Paris.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast the *Hyokeikan*, 'Celebration of Joy Hall', a national gallery, built under the guidance of Katayama, was partly the work of his junior, Takayama Kojiro. This building, originally over decorated, was eventually erected in restrained baroque style, reminiscent of Vienna; it is of two storeys and is not far from 100 metres long. Katayama was keen to underpin his buildings, as has been noted: 'Underneath are thick masonry walls set on a base of gravel and concrete five metres deep. The granite exterior blocks themselves are secured by heavy iron clamps.'<sup>29</sup>

Tsumaki Yorinaka was another student of Conder's who graduated from the ICE in 1879. He went on to take an architectural degree from Cornell University, United States, before being sent to study in Berlin. The choice of Germany reflected changing priorities for the Japanese government, which had come to prefer Germany, with its powerful Kaiser and strong centralised government, to Britain, as its role model.

In the early 1880s Hirobumi Ito had gone to Berlin to study the German constitution and soon afterwards Wilhelm Boeckmann from the Berlin firm of Ende-Boeckmann was in Tokyo (1886) to sign contracts for the new Diet Building, the Great Court of Cassation and the Ministry of Justice. Tsumaki, as architect, and a group of technicians, thereafter went to study in Germany as part of this German-Japanese agreement.

Tsumaki Yorinaka's most famous 'building' is the *Nihonbashi*, 'Bridge of Japan', in central Tokyo, which was completed in 1911. The first such bridge had been opened in 1603 and had been declared the place at which the five national highways of Japan began or ended. Road measurements in Japan centre on the bridge. The new bridge, a handsome European-looking structure, is built of granite blocks and features two low arches, stone plinths and balustrades. The bridge is still there, but, sadly, overshadowed, literally, since the 1960s by an elevated expressway.<sup>30</sup>

Another Tsumaki building that has survived is the steel-reinforced red brick Building No. 2 (1911), which has a Japanese tile roof, and which stands amongst the old Customs Warehouses, now preserved along the water-front at Yokohama.

Large numbers of foreign-style buildings were designed by Japanese 'Western' architects during the Meiji years. It was a profitable business for the architects, and it enriched Japanese cities. But there were always dissenting voices from those who deplored the abandonment of traditional Japanese style.

Curiously it was Yorinaka Tsumaki, the Conder-taught, Cornell graduate, pro-German architect, who designed the head office of the Hypothec

Bank (*Kangyo Ginko*), which opened in 1899. The basic construction and the interior were Western, but 'the exterior was much like Nara Kencho, tile roofs, *irimoya* gables with pedants, *Karahafu* over the entrance and second floor balconies and *shibi* fish tails at the ends of the ridge'.<sup>31</sup>

The emergence of Japan Revival style, towards the end of the century, reflected the emergence of authoritative Japanese architects who were their own men and no longer dependent on Western architects.

### The 'Black Sheep', (George) Shimoda Kikutaro, architect

Shimoda came from Akita, in northern Honshu. He arrived in Tokyo in 1881 at the age of fifteen, and signed up at Keio University before deciding to apply to the ICE.<sup>32</sup> For several months before taking the entrance examinations he 'crammed', working hard with various tutors. He was admitted to ICE and opted for the architecture course under Conder.<sup>33</sup>

Shimoda seems to have won prizes and to have been a good student, yet, one year before graduating, in September 1888, having succeeded in earning some money, he set sail for San Francisco and abandoned his student career without graduating. Shimoda, surprisingly, in view of the later treatment of Japanese in California and elsewhere in the United States, was welcomed warmly by the architectural professor. He worked in San Francisco for David Hudson Burnham (FAIA), primarily as an architectural draughtsman, and during his employment worked on the Western Union Telegraphy Building, the Great Northern Hotel and the Marshall Field department store. It is worth noting that Burnham also employed men from a wide range of nationalities including Belgian, Italian, English, German and Scandinavian. Over sixty people were engaged.<sup>34</sup>

George Shimoda moved to Chicago, perhaps to work on buildings for a Chicago exhibition. There, in 1895, he is listed as exhibiting design for a Japanese garden, at Lincoln Park, and design for a church. His office was at 4939 Lake Avenue. In 1895 Shimoda became a naturalised American and voted for William McKinlay as President of the United States of America. In 1897 the State of Illinois passed new legislation demanding strict accreditation rules for practising architects. George Shimoda was successful in being registered (as No. 471) in 1897. But his business suffered severely as a result of the Spanish American War and after much thought he and his wife returned to Yokohama in 1898.<sup>35</sup>

There is no doubt that Shimoda had learned a great deal during his decade in the United States. He was especially well informed about the use of iron and steel to reinforce new buildings. He also had experience of reinforced concrete. And he was a self-publicist, given to preparing and submitting unsolicited reports. But Japanese architects, who had worked continuously in Japan, perhaps with working visits to Europe, did not take kindly to this fellow countryman, who made emphatic suggestions about their work.<sup>36</sup>

During the course of the next few years, Mr Shimoda involved himself in controversies regarding the prestigious buildings then being planned in Japan. The basis of Shimoda's dissatisfaction was the use of cast iron as the frame of buildings, when he knew, from his American experience, that mild steel had far greater elasticity, and was more likely to resist 'shakes and quakes'. Shimoda seems to have been successful in persuading Dr T. Katayama, the architect of the Imperial Palace for the Crown Prince, to use mild steel. In fact the structural engineer E.C. Shankland (who worked for D.H. Burnham in the United States) was ultimately responsible for the reinforcing of the palace.

But Shimoda's biggest vexation came with the preparations for the construction of the Diet Building. From start to finish he did not think that his ideas were seriously considered, despite at least one committee that voted in favour of the Shimoda design. As Shimoda explained, 'Mr. Shimoda was not allowed to appear in such a committee meeting, and the Government Architect was the only giant to swagger against Mr. Shimoda's voiceless plan.'

Shimoda also submitted a design for the League of Nations building in Geneva in 1926 and for this he was proud to have been awarded an honourable mention.

Shimoda published in 1928, in English, an account of his career and his tribulations. His account details the frustrations of all those, and they are many, who take a bold step in their youth, and who may live to regret it. By going to the United States of America, Shimoda disassociated himself from his contemporary architects in Japan. On his return, as he thought with a broader experience, his Japanese confrères massed against him, regarding him as an upstart and an outsider. He was, as he himself said, the black sheep.

The role of the British architect, particularly of Josiah Conder, was an important one in early Meiji Japan. As a sympathetic British architect he responded enthusiastically to the many, sometimes conflicting, pressures on him. Inevitably Japanese architects would take over, and the Japanese would be influenced by architects other than the British. Nevertheless Conder's achievement as the 'father of Western architecture in Japan' was in making, and strengthening, the cultural bridges between Japan and Britain.

## Notes

- 1 See W.H. Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, 1996.
- 2 D. Finn, *Meiji Revisited, the Sites of Victorian Japan*, New York and Tokyo, 1995, p. 130.
- 3 *Josiah Conder*, Tokyo Station Gallery, 1997; T. Kinoshita, 'Josiah Conder, the father of modern Japanese architecture', MA Dissertation, London, 1996.
- 4 See bibliography for details of Conder's books and articles.
- 5 See O. Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan, 1868–1912*, 1989, pp. 206–9, 300–1.

- 6 They are buried together at Gokokuji Temple, Tokyo. The grave is tended regularly by Dr Kawanabe Kusumi, Kyosai's great granddaughter.
- 7 See J. Conder entry in *New Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004.
- 8 Obituary, *Japan Times and Mail*, 23 June 1920.
- 9 See J.M. Crook, *William Burges and the High Victorian Dream*, 1981.
- 10 William Burges was responsible for the Protestant cathedral of St Finbar at Cork, Ireland (1862–76), the restoration of Cardiff Castle (1865), the mansion at Castle Coch (c.1875) and the Speech Room at Harrow School (1872).
- 11 See W. Burges, 'The International Exhibition', *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1862, pp. 3–12 and 'The Japanese Court at the International Exhibition', *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1862, pp. 243–54.
- 12 'Notes on Japanese architecture', *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architecture*, 1877–8. During the discussion of Conder's original paper 'Notes on Japanese architecture' (8 April 1878) R. Phené Spiers, a Fellow of the Society, stated, with some confidence, that 'with regard to the architecture of Japan, there is no architecture, as we understand it'.
- 13 J. Conder, 'Domestic architecture in Japan', *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 1886–7, Vol. III, New Series, April 1887, pp. 103–27.
- 14 See Obituary, Charles Alfred Chastel de Boinville, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Vol. IV, 3rd Series, 1897, pp. 359–60.
- 15 See Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*.
- 16 A copy of the lecture is held in the University of Tokyo Archives.
- 17 E. Seidensticker, *Low City, High City, Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake*, 1983, pp. 68–70, 97–100.
- 18 Nikoraido is the principal church of the Greek Orthodox Church in Tokyo. Archbishop Nikolai was only twenty-four when he committed himself to its construction.
- 19 See Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, 1995.
- 20 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, pp. 101–3.
- 21 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 248.
- 22 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 248.
- 23 H. Jentschura, D. Jury and P. Michel, *Warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy*, 1977, pp. 71–2.
- 24 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 130.
- 25 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 184.
- 26 See W.D. Wray, *Mitsubishi and the N.Y.K., Business Strategy in the Japanese Shipping Industry*, Cambridge, MA, 1984.
- 27 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 114.
- 28 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 115.
- 29 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 186.
- 30 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 149.
- 31 Finn, *Meiji Revisited*, p. 198.
- 32 Shimoda Kikutaro wrote and published a *Memoir* that was entitled *Ideal Architecture*, in Tokyo in 1928. The copy used here can be found in Keio University Library, Tokyo.
- 33 Shimoda, *Memoir*; see conversation with James Main Dixon (MA, St Andrews, Scotland), p. 18.
- 34 Shimoda, *Memoir*, p. 23.
- 35 Shimoda, *Memoir*, p. 42.
- 36 Shimoda, *Memoir*, p. 66.

## 7 Christopher Dresser and industrial design

### Design and industry

In the spring of 1877 Christopher Dresser (1834–1904)<sup>1</sup> spent over three months in Japan at the invitation of the Japanese government. Dresser was, in the eyes of his hosts, a particularly welcome guest because he was employed in London by the South Kensington Museum, which had, in 1857, grown out of the Museum of Manufactures, which in its turn had been set up with the aid of some of the profits of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Almost certainly Dresser was of the party that had welcomed the Iwakura Mission to the South Kensington Museum in 1872.

The enthusiastic reception of Dresser in Japan reflected Japanese thinking at the time.<sup>2</sup> The British had started the ball rolling in 1851 with the first great exhibition. Thereafter they had flourished economically, and were then the great manufacturing nation of the world. The new Japanese regime, which had, in 1877, been in power for less than a decade, had already embarked on a policy of major involvement in the exhibition movement, which it was hoped would benefit Japan equally. It was appropriate that Japan should give a specially warm welcome to Christopher Dresser.

Christopher Dresser was one of the ‘most radical and prolific’<sup>3</sup> designers representing a new profession, which was a sign of the new manufacturing age. His remit in mid-Victorian Britain was to ‘aspire to influence the standards of design in British manufacturing to make available to the working population displays of works of art, and to serve as an instrument in the education of public taste’.<sup>4</sup>

The Japanese were interested in Dresser particularly because of his industrial contacts. Dresser was artistic director of the Alexandra Palace Company, which produced a variety of goods, until possibly 1880. Before he visited Japan he was advising and designing for companies making carpets, linoleum, electroplate objects, ironmongers, metalwork manufacturers, porcelain, silk damask cloth, silverware and wallpaper.

## Decorative art, Japan and Britain

Dresser was also writing about design. As a young man, in his late twenties, in 1862, he published *The Art of Decorative Design* and *The Development of Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition*. After he had visited Japan he addressed the Royal Society of Arts on 'The art manufacturers of Japan'.<sup>5</sup> In 1882, his principal work was published, *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*. The excitement engendered by the arrival of Japanese art and artefacts in Britain was brought to a wider public in several other important books. Thomas W. Cutler published *A Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design* (W. Batsford, London, 1880) and George Ashdown Audsley (1838–1935) offered *The Ornamental Arts of Japan* (Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, London, 1882). Given the demand for novel, new designs for all sorts of products, including lace curtains and such like, it seems that there was an increasing demand from manufacturers.

Thomas William Cutler (d. 1909)<sup>6</sup> based his work, and his title, in part on Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856).<sup>7</sup> In fact Rutherford Alcock's display of Japanese art and artefacts in 1862, in London, gave authenticity to both Cutler and the Audsley books.

Cutler, who had worked for eighteen years on his study of Japanese decorative art, gives a preface, followed by a brief description of various aspects of Japanese art under the headings architecture, sculpture, painting, lacquer, textile fabrics, metal work, enamel and decorative art. But the real attractions of the book are the plates, absorbing studies of Japanese designs. It is not difficult to imagine British designers studying some of these wonderful birds, fishes or geometrical designs and incorporating them into the work they were doing for British companies.

Thomas Cutler devotes part of his book to a description of various types of Japanese artistic work. As he explained, 'Japanese architecture is an architecture of wood, a material which does not convey the idea of grandeur or duration.'<sup>8</sup> He explains that the wooden architecture was necessary because of the frequency of earthquakes in Japan. Cutler knew about, and comments on, the use of stone, usually granite, for castles, moats and boundary walls, but does not explain why these have remained in place for so many hundreds of years.

Sculpture he found was associated with either Buddhism or Confucianism. The *Dia-butz* [*sic*] of Kamakura is 'an outrage on anatomy'<sup>9</sup> but nevertheless 'possesses a certain beauty'. But the tiny ivory carvings, *netsuke*, attracted his admiration. Cutler found Japanese painting difficult to appraise. Inevitably he tried to look at Japanese painting as if it were Western. 'Of all the art manufactures of the Japanese, their lacquer must certainly stand in the foremost rank ... no nation has originated lacquer ware to be compared with that of Japan.'<sup>10</sup> Although Cutler praises Japanese lacquer ware, he is also critical of what he sees as the same sad decadence in its manufacture as in other Japanese craft work. Could this be a reference to the rush to make 'export ware'? Ceramics in Japan 'is an art at which the Japanese excel'.<sup>11</sup>

Cutler also quotes from an account in the *Japan Mail* of an exhibition held at Kyoto in 1873:

Three or four women and a couple of men were engaged in moulding, glazing and ornamenting saucers and basins of a coarse grey earthenware. There was a single potters' wheel, but the women were fashioning saucers without its aid, and in a way that was novel to me. Taking up a piece of clay the work woman flattened it with her fingers into a crude disc; then, bending her left arm, which was covered with calico, till her hand rested on her shoulder, she held the flattened piece of clay in her right hand, and striking it several times against her left elbow, while at the same time giving the clay a half turn, she quickly succeeded in making a crude vessel, half basin, half cup. I suppose that only moderately young women could thus dispense with the wheel and only a rounded elbow would answer. One of the men brushed on the glaze, and another, armed with a hair pencil, dashed on a spray or two in a rough style. The sides of the building were open. ... There were a couple of small portable kilns, in which the vessels were seen to be baking.<sup>12</sup>

George Ashdown Audsley (FRIBA), also, like Cutler, an architect, was a prolific writer. His work, *The Ornamental Arts of Japan*, was published in 1882 within two years of the appearance of Cutler's *A Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design*. It seems likely that two such expensive publications saturated the market.

Audsley's treatment starts with the bold statement that 'of all the countries of the Orient, Japan holds a pre-eminent position in all matters connected with the Ornamental and Decorative Arts'.<sup>13</sup> Audsley's work also contains a large number of beautifully produced plates that one can easily imagine British designers studying closely. In addition to Cutler's headings Audsley also discusses, and illustrates, *cloisonné* enamel, carving of ivory, embroidery and what is called 'encrusted work'.

Christopher Dresser's involvement with Japanese art and artefacts was part of a wider curiosity among artists and designers in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe and America. But the interest in Japan was rooted in the strong desire for better design in Britain and elsewhere in the Western world. Despite the eagerness of designers like Dresser they knew very little about the real Japan. They admired Japanese artefacts laboriously produced by meticulous hand labour; by their helpful intervention, which is what the Japanese government wanted, they hastened the day when most Japanese pots were produced, in cheap and cheerful mood, specifically for the export market.

### **Dresser, the botanist and designer**

Christopher Dresser, born in Glasgow, claimed to be a Yorkshireman, who lived in or near London. He was trained in the Government School of



Design in the 1840s. Dresser's father, also Christopher (1807–69), was an Excise Officer, who moved from one location to another in the course of his duties. In or around 1846, the family left Ireland for Sussex.<sup>14</sup> Young Christopher apparently joined the School of Design, at Somerset House in London, some time in 1847 at the age of thirteen. In the course of time he set up an office, or studio, and there, with the help of several assistants, he designed a wide range of products, including ceramics, glass and metalwork. In his office there were always men making designs for lace, carpets, linoleum and wallpapers. The point about all this productivity is that it was geared to the new manufacturing industries in Britain. These designs were not for craft industries but for the large-scale production to meet demand from the increasingly prosperous Victorians.

Although it is as a designer that Dresser is remembered, it should be stressed that although little is known about his training, he was also a botanist. It is not clear how important were the botanical papers that he submitted, and for which he was, *in absentia*, awarded a doctorate by the University of Jena,<sup>15</sup> in Germany. In 1860 he appears to have been a serious contender for the Chair of Botany at University College, London. His field of study was said to have been morphology, the external shape and design of the plant. Although Dresser did not become a professor of botany, he always retained his botanical interests. On 3 March 1855 Dresser was 'accredited to provincial schools (of Design) as a competent person for botanical lectures'.<sup>16</sup> It would appear that Dresser continued to lecture on botany and art botany until the late 1860s. 'Art botany' was clearly an important subject for study for those who were intending to be teachers, or designers. By the late 1850s Dresser was writing a series of eleven articles in the *Art-Journal*.

Christopher Dresser was an artist who, in the spirit of the original Great Exhibition in London in 1851, worked with manufacturers to improve the design of a wide variety of household objects. Dresser's interest in Japan developed from his work. When an exhibition of Japanese Art was held in London, at the premises of the Old Watercolour Society in 1954, Sir Henry Cole (1808–82)<sup>17</sup> bought it as a whole so that, subsequently, students might become familiar with Japanese art and artefacts. Dresser was twenty-eight when, in 1862, after visiting the London International Exhibition, he published *The Art of Decorative Design*. As Dresser explained, 'The designer's mind must be like the vital force of the plant, ever developing itself into forms of beauty, yet while free to produce, still governed by unalterable laws.'<sup>18</sup>

The themes behind the Great Exhibition of 1851, as worked out by Prince Albert and Henry Cole, were publicity for the achievements of the Industrial Revolution and the development of further research and good design. In 1857 Commissioners were appointed to administer the £186,000 profit made from the 1851 Exhibition. They bought an 86 acre site at Exhibition Road, South Kensington, and there, in the course of time, opened the South Kensington Museum, and later the Science Museum. It



was the Prince Consort's aim to have 'museums, colleges and learned societies to make an educational centre which would stimulate the interest not only of students but also of the general population'.<sup>19</sup>

### **Dresser and Japan**

Christopher Dresser was interested in Japan as part of a wider interest in Eastern and exotic design elements of which could be used to enliven design in Britain. The Vienna Exhibition of 1873 with its many Japanese exhibits had directly juxtaposed Eastern handicrafts with Western manufacturers.<sup>20</sup>

In 1874 Dresser addressed the Royal Society of Arts in London on the subject of 'Eastern art and its influence on European manufactures and taste'. During the course of the lecture Dresser showed his audience a dazzling Japanese kimono. As Dresser explained, 'the pattern ... consists of many coloured flowers and butterflies arranged irregularly on a cloth-of-gold ground'. Dresser believed this design successfully evoked visions of summer. The theme of Dresser's message at this stage was the exuberance of Eastern hand manufacture, compared with the less attractive items produced by machine. Later, in May 1874, there was a Japanese village built at Alexandra Palace, by Japanese craftsmen. This had previously been on display in Vienna, at the Exposition of 1873. Dresser, by this time seriously interested in Japan, and its arts and crafts, almost certainly talked to the Japanese craftsmen.

At the Exhibition in London in 1862 Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British Consul General in Japan, from 1859, displayed a variety of Japanese art objects that he had collected during the period of his service in Japan. When Dresser lectured to the Royal Society of Arts on 30 January 1878, after his return from Japan, Rutherford Alcock was in the Chair and Dresser made much of Alcock's role in introducing him, Dresser, to Japanese art.

As Dresser said:

You, Sir Rutherford, first gave me a love for Japanese art. You first showed me what works Japan could produce. In 1862 you kindly permitted me to make sketches of whatever you possessed, and I made about 80 drawings, such as they were, in the Exhibition from the various objects which you brought over, and at the close, through your goodness, I became the possessor of a fair selection of the objects which formed your interesting collection; and to the treasures which I thus became possessed of I have almost constantly been adding, till now my house is rather a museum than a comfortable abode for civilised beings.<sup>21</sup>

### **Dresser in Japan**

Dresser sailed from Liverpool for New York, where he had commitments, on 26 October 1876. He gave three lectures in Philadelphia<sup>22</sup> and visited the

Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition just before it closed. In San Francisco he met up with General Saigo, then Japanese Commissioner for the Philadelphia Exhibition. The two men travelled together across the Pacific and became good friends.<sup>23</sup>

Once he had arrived in Japan he was enthusiastically received and given a wonderful tour of some of the great sights of Meiji Japan.

Dresser's itinerary<sup>24</sup> was as follows:

1876

29 December visited the Shiba Mausoleum of the *Tokugawa* family

1877

6 January	Toshu-gu at Ueno
16 January	Confucian temple in Tokyo
18 January	Daibatsu, Kamakura; theatre in Tokyo
3 February	the Kofuku-ji, Todai-ji, Great Buddha Hall, Shosoin (the treasures) and the Grand Kasaja Shrine in Nara and pagoda in Osaka
15 February	Ki Mii-dera Temple
18 February	the Koya-san region, several temples in the Kyoto environs
7 March	Ise Shrine, Nagoya Castle and temples in and near Nagoya
25 March	the Shiba mausoleum of the Tokugawas (return visit)
30 March	the region of the Toshu-gu at Nikko
3 April	sailed from Yokohama

Not only did Dresser visit the great temples and places of pilgrimage for tourists in Japan. Dresser visited potteries at 'Awaji, Sanda, Kishiu, Sakai, Awata, Banko, Owari (now called Mino), Seto, Shiba and Makudzu'.<sup>25</sup>

Widar Halén believed that Dresser 'probably did more for the enlightenment of Japanese art, than any other European scholar and designer during this period'.<sup>26</sup> On the occasion of the visit to England in 1880 of the then Minister of Commerce, Kawase Hideharu wrote to Dresser, 'This is simply a mark of respect to you, whose intelligent suggestions have done so much to promote the art and manufactures of Japan'.<sup>27</sup>

The enthusiasm of Dresser's hosts had him visiting some sixty-eight different potteries and porcelain makers. It was an extraordinary opportunity for so dedicated a man. Dresser also visited and advised at various metalwork and iron companies in Osaka and nearby Sakai. His itinerary also included visits to bamboo and basket works, furniture lacquer, textiles, embroideries, enamels, *cloisonné*, toys and paper. The official invitation to Dresser, as representative of the South Kensington Museum, reflected governmental concern with the Japanese 'craft' market overseas. This allowed Dresser 'to achieve the twofold purpose of giving information about European taste in order to promote Anglo-Japanese trade and advising on new industrial developments'.

As Dresser reported on his return to London:

I visited, while in Japan, sixty-eight potteries, and the most interesting ware were generally made in the following way: In a lovely little room, the floor of which was covered with mats, dwelt the potter. I may tell you that in a Japanese living room there is not one particle of furniture – no chair, no table, no cabinet. The floor is covered with thick mats, each of which is six feet by three (their foot and their yard are each of the same length as ours, but the inches are longer, as there are but 10 inches to the foot, and every room in Japan is of the size of a certain number of mats). One mat being removed from the floor, a potter's wheel is exposed to view, but the wheel is of the simplest character, as it is a mere circular stone of the form of a Cheshire cheese, level with the uncovered floor, and working on a vertical axis which is fixed in a log of wood beneath the floor. At one side of the wheel is a clean tray bearing a lump of clay. At the other side is another tray – often well lacquered, on which the vessels, when shaped, are placed. The operator now kneeling in front of the wheel, and sitting more or less back on his heels, sets the disk in motion by whipping it with the tips of his fingers till the necessary speed is attained in its rotations. He now places a piece of clay upon the wheel and gives to it form in the usual manner, stopping to whip the stone whenever it is necessary that its speed be re-quickened, and in this way he shapes his wares.<sup>28</sup>

Notwithstanding the care with which Christopher Dresser described the potters' work he was unable to resist the temptation to romanticise about the role of the Japanese worker. As he explained:

I have watched the poor artisan labouring at his work with an earnestness and love such as I never beheld outside Japan, and the very features of the workmen testify to their happiness, and to the love with which they perform their painstaking labour. No thought of gain appears to enter their minds and no touch is spared which will make the work more lovely; this is how the beautiful works which we delight to look upon are produced.<sup>29</sup>

Dresser's extraordinary eulogy to the Japan workmen continues, castigating the British workman, 'who is always unhappy'. Comments such as 'If our workmen could but see the dear old men of Japan engaged in their various handicrafts they could not fail to learn that happiness is not found in short hours and high pay' did him no credit. In the lively discussion that followed Dr Dresser's lecture, Mr H.W. Freeland tried to retrieve the speaker from his romantic vision. Could Dr Dresser, he asked, 'give any information in regard to the wages received by Japanese workmen?' And he continued:

The lessons of contentment he had taught to the English workmen they would all appreciate; but if he could give any information with regard to the wages received by skilled workmen there, from which that state of contentment sprung, and if he could further give any general idea as to the cost of living, which had to be provided out of those wages, it would add largely to the benefits which he conferred upon his hearers.<sup>30</sup>

Although Christopher Dresser in his final remarks attempted to answer Mr Freeland's questions on wages and standard of living he was, in effect, unable to do so.

Dresser's writing *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures* is a notable report on all that he did and all that he saw in Japan. Nevertheless, despite his interest in Japanese art work, it can hardly be said that in the course of a three-month visit Dresser could have had much influence on the Japanese ceramics industry, then a 'cottage' industry. It was not Dresser who helped the Japanese develop a mass-produced pottery industry. His relatively short visit may have been helpful but it did not lead in itself to large-scale factory production.

Christopher Dresser's visit to Japan, when he was forty-three years old, lasted ninety-eight days. During this period he enjoyed, at his own insistence, and to the gratification of his hosts, an intensive introduction concerning those businesses of Japan that come under the general umbrella of craft industries. Because of his sympathy with and understanding of these matters he was able to advise and guide Japanese manufacturers. Because of his status as an industrial designer in Britain he was able to absorb from Japan some of the values of the East and allow them to influence the designs he later prepared for his clients in the West. Because of the excitement engendered by his visit to Japan he was, on his return to London, to enter into the most fruitful years of his career during which he served in a wide variety of capacities. His Japanese interests remained strong. While in Japan he had seriously studied Zen Buddhism and Shintoism, so paying a compliment to his hosts by seeking to understand the ideas and reasoning behind their art and artefacts.

Nevertheless Dresser was not by any means a total convert to the Japanese style. Writing in *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*, about drawing:

I do not wish to destroy our national art and substitute for it the Japanese style. I merely wish that we should avail ourselves of those methods which are in advance of our own, not minding where they originated. Art to be of value must be national ... we may borrow what is good from all peoples but we must distil all that we borrow through our own work.<sup>31</sup>

Christopher Dresser's visit to Japan in 1877 gave great encouragement to those who were determined that Japan should catch up with the West. His status as an industrial designer, and his interest in all that he saw in Japan,

were, for his hosts, heart-warming. Christopher Dresser did not modernise the Japanese ceramics industry, but he did give support and strength to those Japanese who were labouring to do so.

For the Japanese Christopher Dresser was committed to the Great International Exhibition. As Widar Halén has explained:

Dresser participated in the International Exhibitions held in London in 1871, 1872 and 1873, in Vienna in 1873, in Philadelphia in 1876 and in Paris in 1878. He wrote perceptively on those exhibitions, served as a juror, on wallpapers in Paris, and lectured on 'Art Industries, Art Museums and Art Schools' in Philadelphia in 1876. He was responsible for arranging the Japanese stand at the International Exhibition in London in 1873 and for bringing the Japanese village from Vienna to Alexandra Palace Park in 1873.<sup>32</sup>

No wonder the Japanese respected him as an adviser.

## Notes

- 1 See W. Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, Oxford, 1990 and S. Durant *Christopher Dresser*, 1993.
- 2 See Chapter 3, 'Affirmative action, abroad and in Japan' and S. Sugihara, 'Economists in government, Okubo Toshimichi...', in C. Sugiyama and H. Mizata, *Enlightenment and Beyond, Political Economy Comes to Japan*, Tokyo, 1988, pp. 211–21.
- 3 Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 9.
- 4 O. Impey and M. Fairley (eds) *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, 1995, p. 152.
- 5 C. Dresser, 'Art manufacturers of Japan', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 1 February 1878, pp. 169–78.
- 6 T.W. Cutler was an architect, particularly known for his work in designing cottages and country buildings.
- 7 Owen Jones's book was an early response to the new industries, managers of which were eager buyers.
- 8 T.W. Cutler, *A Grammar of Japan Ornament and Design*, 1880, p. 19.
- 9 Cutler, *A Grammar of Japan Ornament and Design*, p. 21.
- 10 Cutler, *A Grammar of Japan Ornament and Design*, p. 25.
- 11 Cutler, *A Grammar of Japan Ornament and Design*, p. 28; Cutler also discusses textiles (p. 30), metalwork (p. 31), enamel (p. 32), and decorative arts (p. 33).
- 12 Cutler, *A Grammar of Japan Ornament and Design*, p. 29.
- 13 G.A. Audsley, *The Ornamental Arts of Japan*, 1882, 'Introduction'.
- 14 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, pp. 9–11.
- 15 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 13.
- 16 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 11.
- 17 E. Bonython, *King Cole, a Picture Portrait of Sir Henry Cole*, Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d., p. 40.
- 18 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, 1993, p. 7.
- 19 Bonython, *King Cole*, p. 7.
- 20 E.P. Conant, 'Reflections of the Rising Sun. Japan's participation in international exhibitions', in T. Sato and T. Watanabe (eds) *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue*, 1991, pp. 82–3.

- 21 Christopher Dresser, 'The art manufacturers of Japan, from personal observation', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 26, 1 February 1878, pp. 169–78.
- 22 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 29.
- 23 Saigo Yorimichi (1843–1902) was the younger brother of the rebellious Saigo Takamori (1827–77).
- 24 Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, Chapter 2, 'Christopher Dresser and the cult of Japan', pp. 33–66.
- 25 Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 43.
- 26 Halén did not know of the contribution of Gottfreid Wagener.
- 27 Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 42.
- 28 Dresser, 'The art manufacturers of Japan', p. 178.
- 29 Dresser, 'The art manufacturers of Japan', p. 177.
- 30 Dresser, 'The art manufacturers of Japan', p. 177.
- 31 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 31.
- 32 Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 17.

## 8 Paintings, photographs and prints

An attempt is made here to take a general view of the cultural bridges that were made by painters, photographers and print-makers. By necessity it is only possible to use one or two examples to illustrate the whole. In this way some general points can be made. Many in Japan, proud of the Japanese painting tradition,<sup>1</sup> resisted practices coming in from the West. No such difficulties faced the new art of photography, which the eager Japanese embraced with enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the Japanese *Ukiyo-e* print,<sup>3</sup> which had earlier helped to bridge the gap between East and West, and which had served Japan well but which was labour intensive, was doomed to disappear.

### Paintings

In Japan the introduction of Western-style painting methods, and the ideas that inspired it, was controversial. While there was, and had been for many years, a genuine curiosity about Western art, there was also a feeling that, given the importance of Japanese art, it was disloyal, and indeed unpatriotic, to borrow ideas about art from outside Japan.

In some ways the great divide between the painters of East and West was the attitude to nature. Those in the West, including painters, had, even if they were not conscious of it, a more informed, scientific approach than those in Japan. Western painters brought the scientist's eye to their work. In some senses they observed nature as did the student of zoology or botany. Although the painting itself is lost, there was an important link made between West and East by Shiba Kokan (1747?–1818) in the form of a rendition of an old Greek painting, *Zenxis's Painting a Picture of Grapes*. The legend goes that Zenxis' painting was so lifelike that the birds flew into his studio eager to peck at the grapes.<sup>4</sup> This theme also embraces a painter/naturalist such as John Ruskin<sup>5</sup> (see Chapter 15).

### Resisting the West

There were several antithetical emotions driving the Japanese painter in the turbulent years of the mid-nineteenth century. Yes, Japanese painters were

eager to know more about, and perhaps learn to use, the techniques of the Western painter. No, Japanese painters had, over the two hundred years of seclusion, perfected a technique that was Japanese, and honourable, with which one should not tamper.

As a result of blowing hot and cold the Japanese establishment first encouraged, and then, with equal determination, repulsed, Western influences. In the end, however conservative, the Japanese did not have the choice. Western painting techniques would, inevitably, make their way into Japan. The two groups were known as *Nihon-ga*, those who cherished and remained loyal to Japanese painting, and *Yo-go*, those who embraced the new Western ideas and techniques.

Even during the period of seclusion, until the 1850s, a few Japanese painters were curious about Western art and its techniques. Occasionally, if rarely, from the tiny Dutch enclave in Deshima, in Nagasaki harbour, a book on Dutch art emerged. Such work was studied and pored over by the inquisitive Japanese. This build-up of curiosity was, at this time, more like a trickle than a flood. The flood came in due course after the upheaval of the Restoration in 1868.

In 1876 Antonio Fontanesi came from Turin, Italy, and for two short years taught Western art in Tokyo. Fontanesi was a revelation; he was systematic, students progressed in stages, and he was well informed. For the Japanese art student, Fontanesi did not arrive in Japan empty handed. He brought models and other necessary teaching aids, photographs and copies of famous European art works, as well as plaster figures and other models of the human figure, with joints that moved. He also brought 'pigments for oil painter and watercolour, charcoal and couté crayons, drawing paper, anatomical charts and books',<sup>6</sup> without which even the most enthusiastic Japanese could not pursue Western art. The methodical Fontanesi insisted that his students worked, first of all, on studying and copying Fontanesi sketches, then making drawings sketching from plaster casts and finally working with a live human model in front of them.

Fontanesi also tried to bring the classical, Italian approach to art, that while nature was all-important, it was nevertheless 'imperfect'. In order to make the perfect picture it was necessary to improve upon nature. It is not clear that his Japanese students understood this. Fontanesi was an important role model but he lectured in his native Italian and his words were then translated (imperfectly?) into Japanese. There was a strong reaction to all this Western art education. Fontanesi left. The Technical Art School at which he had worked was closed in 1883.

The battle to bring in, officially, Western art<sup>7</sup> was finally won in 1896 when the 'extremely traditionalist' Tokyo School of Fine Art (founded in 1887) capitulated. The newly established Department of Western Art, in the Tokyo School of Fine Art, appointed Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924) as Senior Professor. Kuroda had returned to Tokyo after no less than nine years of studying art in Paris. The acceptance of Kuroda marked a sea change.



There is a sense in which those working to repel the tide of Western and British art, its techniques and its methods were on a hopeless mission. For on Japanese territory itself, in the treaty port of Yokohama, there was a Trojan horse, in the form of Charles Wirgman (1832–91).

### **Charles Wirgman, British art and the Japanese painters**

Charles Wirgman<sup>8</sup> was the catalyst, the man who, through his connections and contacts, himself taught, or at least influenced, a first generation of Japanese painters. Wirgman, born in London, and perhaps a military man, was one of those adventurous characters who had arrived in Yokohama in the early 1860s. He flourished in the rather hectic treaty port atmosphere. Wirgman, excited by Japan, married into Japanese society in 1863, and remained resident there for the rest of his life. He became an influential builder of cultural bridges by interpreting the upheavals in Japanese society in his pictures for the *Illustrated London News*. The British mid-Victorian obsession with Japan was in part created by an idiosyncratic British painter working out of Yokohama.

Wirgman was a skilled linguist, fluent in French and German, competent in other languages, and soon, after he settled in Japan, well able to make himself understood in Japanese. As has been explained by a contemporary, Wirgman was thought odd ‘because he wore Japanese clothes and he went around in summer with neither tie nor waistcoat’.<sup>9</sup> He could also play the samisen. As *Ekakisan*, the English painter, he went around unarmed and was cherished by Japanese in Yokohama because of his eccentricity.

S.H. Parry Jones (1881) was proud to make the acquaintance of Charles Wirgman, whom he credited with persuading him to visit Japan because of his work for the *Illustrated London News*. Parry Jones subsequently visited Wirgman’s studio and ‘purchased a couple of spirited water colour drawings’.<sup>10</sup> In writing to his brother (Yokohama, 6 June 1878), Wirgman commented about his money and his income: ‘I am now quite at home with oils as well as waters [*sic*] in fact no one believes that the things I paint now are painted by the same man that tried to paint before.’ Wirgman later wrote:

Money is coming in, that is to say in small quantities; but 10 here, twenty five there, five in another place, fifteen in still another, together added up make nice little sums. Everything looks bright and cheerful, *Punch* [the Japan Punch] is out and *Punch* bills being paid with alacrity. The French mail is expected tomorrow also a letter from you, also remittances from the *Illustrated* [Illustrated London News]. I have sold all the pictures I had ... and got more than £25 each, and have several more orders.<sup>11</sup>

Goseda Yoshimatsu (1855–1915) was one of the painters who as a child, and a reputed infant prodigy, became Wirgman’s pupil, possibly in 1865 or

1866. It is said that Wirgman regarded him highly and that Goseda's paintings had, under Wirgman's direction 'a freshness and a keen sense of observation'.<sup>12</sup> Goseda had studied with Fontanesi in Tokyo before leaving for France, in 1887.

Takahashi Yuichi (1828–94) also became Wirgman's pupil after training initially as a traditional, Japanese, Kano school painter. But he was so impressed with the realism in Western art that he approached Wirgman. All his life he continued to paint and work to familiarise the Japanese with Western-style painting. His painting school was called Tenkairo (1873), Tenkaisha (1875) and Tenkaigakusha (1879). His paintings were exhibited in Paris (1867) and in Vienna (1873).<sup>13</sup>

In 1869 Takahashi Yuichi wrote to the Tokyo Prefectural Office as follows:

Most respectfully I make a humble written plea.

My humble self has in the past entered study with the Englishman Wirgman, who lives in the Yokohama area, and has received training in painting. I consider my present relation with the said Wirgman to be one of master and student, and with regard to my applying as I wish him to live in my house, fortunately because I am as yet unskilled, I just daily sit in attendance on him, and want to receive instruction from him. If there is no restraint, I would like here to humbly beg that you may give permission for him to lodge with me.

[Takahashi Yuichi's seal]<sup>14</sup>

It would appear that this enquiry raised more questions than it answered. In any case it is not clear that Wirgman wanted to move.

### **Japanese painters in Britain**

Hosui Yamamoto (1850–1906), otherwise known as Yamamoto Tamenosuke, became a Western-style painter who may have studied with Charles Wirgman in Yokohama. He had started out learning Japanese painting in Kyoto, but soon gravitated to Tokyo where he was one of Antonio Fontenesi's pupils. Between 1878–87 he was in Paris working under Jean Léon Gérôme. Back in Japan, Hosui taught Western-style painting and set up his own private art school, known as the *Seikokan*. In his later years he became interested in theatre design work.

One of the features of the Mitsubishi house, *Senshokaku*, in a beautiful setting overlooking the Mitsubishi shipyard and Nagasaki harbour, is a series of twelve 'horary', paintings relating to the hours of the day or night, by Hosui. These were Western-style paintings using Japanese themes. Ten of these paintings are representations of the hours of the day, the rat, the ox, the tiger, the snake, the horse, the sheep, the monkey, the cock, the dog and the boar.<sup>15</sup>

Hyakutake Kaneyuki (1842–84) was closely involved with Nabeshima Naohiro, the last Saga feudal lord in Kyushu. Originally he went to Britain to study economics, but then, surprisingly, after returning briefly to Japan, worked in England as a pupil under Thomas Miles Richardson Jnr (1813–90), making the study of Western-style painting his first priority. Remarkably, in 1876, he had a painting *View near Yokohama in Japan* accepted by the Royal Academy. He also studied in Paris.

Miyake Kokki (1874–1954) was the exponent of watercolour painting in Japan after he had seen the John Varley Jnr Exhibition in Tokyo in 1891. In 1894 his determination was strengthened once he had seen the Alfred Parsons Exhibition. By 1898, after a visit to the United States, he was in Britain where he visited Alfred East (1849–1913) and Alfred Parsons.

Natural curiosity was bound to cause Japanese painters to seek out, among others, British painters. It was inevitable that contact would be made. Such interaction enriched both Japan and Britain, and strengthened the cultural bridges between the two countries.

### **British painters as visitors to Japan**

For the purpose of this study some account will be given of Alfred East's<sup>16</sup> travels in Japan in 1889. East had been requested by Marcus Huish of the Fine Art Society to visit Japan. East's landscape paintings were well known and much admired in London. When the exhibition of his Japanese work opened at 148 New Bond Street, London, at the premises of the Fine Art Society, it aroused much interest.

In his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition Dr F.A. Junker remarked that 'Mr. East is the first English artist to make Japan the field of an extensive and detailed exploration with palette and brush.'<sup>17</sup> As will be explained East, like the native Japanese painters, drew his inspiration from 'the giant Fuji-san, the mountain fastnesses, valleys and dales, the lakes, the streams and cataracts, the forests, woodland dales and flowery moors, the temples and holy shrines, and the towns, villages and homesteads'.<sup>18</sup>

East followed, in general, the tourist route through Japan, arriving in Nagasaki and moving eastwards via Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Nara and Lake Biwa, and then further eastwards to Tokyo, Hakone, Kamakura and Nikko. He left in the autumn of 1889 from Yokohama. He had arrived in the company of Arthur Lasenby Liberty and his wife Emma, who was a keen photographer, and Charles Holme (who had founded the art journal, *The Studio*) but because of the days he spent painting, he, for the most part, travelled alone.

East spent some days in Nagasaki, which he enjoyed. As he wrote:

I like Nagasaki. It is a picturesque place and at sunset most charming. One watches the shadows creeping up the hillside, its purple gloom replacing the rich rose and orange till all the mountain range has lost

the glow. Turning towards the sunset we see the hills on the other side of the harbour strangely dark against a saffron sky which graduates into varying shades of lemon, green and blue. The pale moon crescent, shaped like an upturned bowl, peeps over the purple ridge. As night comes on, the twinkling lights of the multitude of sampans mingle their reflections with the paler gleams of the reflected stars.<sup>19</sup>

In Kyoto, East noted:

a number of shops mainly offering toys and knick-knacks for sale to the poor country folk who come in crowds to see the sights of Kyoto and want presents to take home from the big city. We saw many of these good people in groups of four to a dozen walking up the steps, with their great straw hats slung over their backs, their gourds of water and their bundles. Most had a straw mat to keep out rain. The men were bareheaded; the women had a small towel over their heads. The girls all wore a skirt of scarlet silk crepe and *no* stockings. All wore clogs.<sup>20</sup>

At Hakone, East enjoyed:

the refreshment of a warm bath and a good dinner. The tea house is a very large square thatched building of wood. The thatch three feet thick keeps it cool in summer and warm in winter. ... It looks out over a garden to the lake. On the street side there is a garden of blossoming trees and scarlet maples make it look gay. There is a suite of rooms adjoining, opening into one another by sliding screens. You must trust the kindness of your neighbour in Japan. For you can be got at while asleep in any direction, through the sliding walls.<sup>21</sup>

In 1873 it took six hours, being bundled along in a *Jinrikishaw*, to reach Nikko. As East reported:

At length we reached the end of this noble avenue under whose branches we had been travelling for so long. The little town of Nikko, lit with sunshine, seemed the brighter for the vignette of sombre conifer green. A halt was made at the entrance when our men again washed their legs so as to present a respectable appearance as we entered ... at the end of the street we knew we were in Nikko for there was the famous red lacquer bridge and then a glimpse of a temple.<sup>22</sup>

East was a serious, hard-working artist while in Japan. The fact that he was working on his paintings meant that he often travelled alone rather than with his friends. This probably enabled him to see more of the country.

His Japanese paintings were elegant and restrained. They usually contained a small symbol, a building which indicated the scene was of

Japan. East's paintings were either watercolours or oils; they were never brash. The painters who visited Japan were all enchanted by the manners and customs at that time. It was a fashionable thing to do to visit Japan and paint there. Alfred East was one of many whose skills enabled him to indicate through his painting his enthusiasm. Behind the excitement of painting in Japan, there were sound economic pressures. This was also the case with the camera, which enabled the Japanese to become skilled photographers.

### **Photographers from afar**

The photographic camera was being developed in the Western world in the years before the opening of Japanese treaty ports to world trade. The daguerreotype, taken over and named by Louis Daguerre, was originally created by Nicéphore Niépce, and used a silver-covered copper plate that was sensitised with various chemicals to produce a vivid image. The daguerreotype could not be reproduced. The future lay with the alternative, 'a photogenic drawing', developed in England by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77) that used paper instead of metal plates. It was inevitable that enthusiastic Westerners, when visiting Japan, should carry with them the new equipment, and certain that the Japanese,<sup>23</sup> always curious about the wonders of the Western world, should want to know more about the new medium. The instant picture, which captured an immediate image of people and of their surroundings, seemed miraculous. This was an extraordinary advance on the hand-painted watercolour, or on the grander scenes painted on silk. In any case the black and white images made using the camera could themselves be hand-tinted by Japanese colourists so ensuring a pretty picture. And photography did not in Japan, as elsewhere, raise controversial religious issues.

When the emissary of the United States under Commander Perry arrived in Japan, he brought with him Eliphalet Brown,<sup>24</sup> a daguerreotypist who made his own pictures of Japan. Nevertheless, these, when transformed into lithographs, were published in Francis Hawke's *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and to Japan* (1856).

The photographer attached to Lord Elgin's expedition to Japan, in the summer of 1858, was a young amateur, William Nassau Jocelyn,<sup>25</sup> son of the third Earl of Roden. Young Jocelyn joined Lord Elgin's party in Shanghai, where he was requested to familiarise himself with 'the government apparatus using the collodion process'. Two of Jocelyn's photographs were used in Laurence Oliphant's *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, 58 and 59* (William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1860).

But the most interesting non-Japanese photographer was Felice (or Felix) Beato (1834?–1908?).<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, despite much research, Beato remains a shadowy figure. He was apparently born in Corfu and was, because of

British administration there between 1814 and 1964, able to claim British citizenship. How he became a photographer is not known but by 1854, as a young man, he was already taking photographs in the Crimea of the war there (1854–6). He later worked extensively for the colonial authorities in India, China, Korea, Burma and Japan where he was resident for several years. After Japan, which he left in 1884, he worked in the Sudan, before apparently settling in Burma, where there were photographic businesses bearing his name until the early years of the twentieth century.

### **Japanese initiatives**

As early as 1841 it is possible that a daguerreotype was taken of Shimazu Nariakira, the head of the Satsuma clan, with photographic equipment obtained from Ueno Shunnojo, at Nagasaki. Despite the expense, it seems that Ueno's intense curiosity had enabled him to obtain the new gadget through the Dutch merchants at Deshima.

It was Ueno Hikoma (1838–1904), the son of Shunnojo, who became one of the best of the early Japanese photographers. Ueno was born and brought up in Nagasaki and was educated in the Chinese classics before studying at a naval college in Nagasaki. It appears that the camera equipment originally used by Ueno was bought by the lord of the Tsu domain (now Mie prefecture). Ueno eventually, in 1862, set himself up as a photographer in Nagasaki where, until the end of the century, he remained in business. He was popular with foreign visitors and he remained 'a major figure in nineteenth century Japanese photography and a consummate artist'.<sup>27</sup>

Shimooka Renjo (1823–1914),<sup>28</sup> who had opened a photographic studio in Yokohama in 1862, is generally regarded as the father of Japanese photography. Shimooka was born in Shimoda, where for some years after 1856, Townsend Harris, the American Consul had been based. He later moved to Yokohama where he learnt photography, probably from an American, Captain John Wilson. When Wilson left Japan he may have sold on his photographic equipment. In the course of time Shimooka had a flourishing business, and, because of his early association with the Americans, spoke rather good English. This must have helped him in his dealings with the many English-speaking visitors to Yokohama. Few of his photographs, or photographic albums, are known to survive.

### **W.K. Burton and the Japanese photographers**

William Kinninmond Burton (1856–99)<sup>29</sup> was an Edinburgh man, who came to Japan in the late 1880s as a civil engineer to teach at the Imperial University, Tokyo. His particular professional expertise was in sanitary engineering; but, in addition, he was a keen photographer and it is his photographic interest that is relevant here. Burton wrote extensively on photography. His books on photography, published in London,<sup>30</sup> and widely

available in Britain, were reprinted several times and sold well for many years. Burton was an inspiration, helping to found the Japanese Society of Photographers; certainly he did much to publicise Japanese photographers in the photographic journals that circulated in Britain.

Between 1890 and 1894 Burton publicised two Japanese photographers in British photographic journals. He wrote important articles on Ogawa Kuzumasa (1860–1929)<sup>31</sup> and Kashima Seibei (1866–1924). The ‘series’ consisted only of these two Japanese photographers. It is not known why Burton’s articles on Japanese photographers came to an end.

As a small boy, Ogawa was said to have remembered ‘being on the battle field with his father and being wounded’<sup>32</sup> during the civil war of 1868–9, which ushered in the new Meiji regime. What is certain is that Ogawa was a resourceful young man. He, like many others, determined to learn English and to become a photographer. Somehow, in July 1882, as a 22-year-old, he hired himself as a sailor on the American vessel *Swatara*. In the course of time he was discharged in the United States, where, in Boston, he was able to study ‘portraiture, carbon printing, and collotype’.<sup>33</sup> He also lived in Philadelphia before returning to Japan in 1884. By good fortune Ogawa had met Viscount Okube Nagamoto (1855–1925) in the United States. Okube provided the finance for Ogawa to set up a photographic studio in Tokyo. Burton was much involved with Ogawa and recorded his indebtedness in the preface to one of his own books on photography.

I must on the whole, declare my indebtedness to Mr. K. Ogawa of this city than to anyone else. It has been my pleasure, and has certainly been to my profit, to be associated with him in much experimental work in connection with various photographic processes, mechanical among others. Mr. Ogawa has put in operation the greater number of the photo-mechanical processes described at the end of this book on more than an experimental scale, and he has made me free to publish all results whether of our joint work or of his own.

[signed] W.K. Burton, Imperial University, Tokyo.<sup>34</sup>

Burton also explained the career of Seibei Kashima, a wealthy young sake maker whose hobby was photography. There is no doubt that Mr Kashima’s enthusiasm and energy did much to transform the expectations of the photographic industry in Japan. Mr Kashima ordered materials from England, including a camera like that of W.K. Burton, but he did more, trying to manufacture similar cameras in Japan. As in other industries, those in Japan quickly tried to copy the photographic items that were imported.<sup>35</sup>

W.K. Burton also gave details of the help given by Kashima Seibei to the Photographic Society of Japan. The enthusiasm of the Japanese for photography was engaging, and resulted in small workshops turning out



photographic supplies, at much cheaper cost than similar items when imported. Fortunately for the Japanese photographer, as this was a new industry, there were no Japanese traditionalists to oppose progress.

### **The *Ukiyo-e* print**

Nothing aroused greater excitement in Western artistic circles than the arrival of the Japanese wood block print,<sup>36</sup> which did not conform to any Western artistic style and which seemed bizarre to Western eyes. As the French author Edmund de Goncour wrote in wonderment:

It is strange, this revolution brought by Japanese art in the taste of people who, in matters of art, are the slaves of Greek symmetry, and who, suddenly are becoming impassioned over a plate, on which the flowers are not set in the middle, over a fabric in which harmony is not achieved by a gradation of tints but by a knowledgeable juxtaposition of raw colours.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the Japanese, nor the Chinese, developed printing, as in Europe, by using movable print. But the East Asian nations did develop a printing technique using wood blocks.<sup>38</sup> Originally these small messages or prayers were related to Buddhism. On many occasions prayers were printed out on paper and circulated widely, especially in Japan. What Western enthusiasts could not know concerned the intricate process by which the wood block print came to be made.

The term *Ukiyo-e*, which is now usually taken to depict coloured prints, originally could also mean pictures. *Ukiyo-e* is usually translated as 'images of the floating world', which really means prints that illustrate the various pleasures associated with Japanese town life. These pleasures included the courtesans of the *Yoshiwara*, or pleasure quarter, the actors of the *kabuki* theatre and young men who became sumo wrestlers. Other subjects could be kimono materials and hairstyles.

But print-making was, above all else, labour intensive. It involved the paper maker, the artist who created the grand design, the publisher, the wood block carver and the printer. In between them several other men were involved. It could be argued that this extraordinary industry could flourish only in pre-Meiji, that is pre-industrial, Japan. The making-up process included the following procedures.

The paper used by the Japanese for making a wood block print, in several colours, was called *washi* and it was quite often made from a long careful process beginning with mulberry, a special type of paper mulberry. It was a long and arduous process. The stems of mulberry were first cut, and then the bark was carefully removed, before the stems were soaked. After this the best inner fibres were boiled, then pounded to make a pulp. Finally some starch was added and the resultant pulp was carefully drained leaving a



damp sheet of paper. This was then removed with care, stretched on a frame, and dried. This fine paper remained in use, although it was expensive, until the mid-nineteenth century.

The artist, usually in consultation with the publisher, then produced a design, in black, on this paper. Although the artist was important, the publisher was the key man, who not only supervised the many processes of production, but also dealt with the government censor. Censorship varied with the anxieties of the state. Many subjects were forbidden, from time to time.

The wood block itself was usually made from various kinds of wild cherry wood. This wood had a reasonably fine grain, and so was manageable for the carver, but it was hard enough to survive intact over a long period of repeated printings. It was also common for a wood block to be placed down so that it could be used again. The wood block carver was a highly skilled craftsman. Master carvers were at the core of the print-making industry. Only a few became sufficiently skilled to be entrusted with the task of rendering, on to the wood block, the face and features of the beautiful women.

The printer who took the wood block and actually made the prints, was of critical importance. Finally, the publisher had to choose competent craftsmen, and subjects that would attract purchasers. But above all the publisher was required to put his name and address on the print (or at least a sign that could identify him) and satisfy the censor, who was all-important. Anything that was 'not in line with the government and Confucian based social order'<sup>39</sup> was banned. The censor posed a formidable hurdle.

The British enthusiasts, artists who were fascinated by the prints knew, at that time, nothing about the background, or the history of the prints; but they knew and admired the shapes and designs that were strange and therefore fascinating. The Japanese print helped to create a cultural bridge as British artists succumbed to this new attraction.

Towards the end of the period of traditional *Ukiyo-e*, in the nineteenth century, artists began to expand their horizons. Hokusai Katsushika (1760–1849) captured the imagination of many with his *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*, printed from 1823, while Hiroshige Ando (1797–1858) embarked on his *Fifty-Three Stations on the Tokaido Road* in the 1830s. These prints, some of which have become very popular in the West, suggested the wider horizons of travellers and pilgrims. Kuniyoshi Utagawa (1797–1861) was well known for drawings of exotic beauties, but his 'warrior' prints, showing Japanese warriors in all their glory, also depicted the same warriors being destroyed by the great cannons of the West. The warlike Japanese Samurai, even when protected by the terrifying armour of medieval Japan, was no match for the intruding Westerners. Kuniyoshi's work, sometimes deliberately designed to outwit the censor, reinforced the message of change.

The market for the print industry was the urban population, particularly of Edo (Tokyo), whose artisans and workmen enjoyed the prints on a variety of subjects as a kind of contemporary commentary on local events.

It was a form of popular, urban art, which never reached, or affected, the bulk of the Japanese population, that is to say the peasants or the fishermen in the villages across Japan.

But in order to appeal to the citizens of Shitamachi, the Low City, as distinct from Yamanote, the High City, of Edo, the subjects of the print had to be readily understood by the patrons who would buy them, who were working people. These urbanites were, in comparison with village folk, sophisticated, and, with the benefit of a money economy, comfortably off. The patrons of the print were members of a new, but growing, urban middle class.

It is a curious reflection that the *Ukiyo-e* print, regarded as of no account by the governing classes, was freely sent out of the country. Because the *Ukiyo-e* prints were, for the Japanese, 'commercial products of little merit' Western artists were able to acquire them at relatively low prices.<sup>40</sup>

By the time of the First World War, Japan was denuded of *Ukiyo-e* prints. There is a remarkable story of Matsukata Kojiro, living in Europe during the 1914–18 period, buying up a collection of prints in France. Because of various problems relating to the war and post-war uncertainties this collection did not arrive in Kobe until 1925. Some of the prints were put on show. This was believed to be the first ever exhibition of *Ukiyo-e* prints held in Japan. This Matsukata Kojiro print collection, eventually, was gifted to the National Museum of Art in Tokyo. This meant that, for the first time, the Japanese could see a fine collection of prints in Japan. It was no longer necessary to go to the West to see Japanese prints.<sup>41</sup>

However reluctant the Japanese were to accept it, the influx of artists and photographers into Japan, after 1859, marked the end of the art of isolated Japan. Print-making survived, as part of the art and craft movement, but the days of the traditional *Ukiyo-e* print were over. How could the team of print-makers compete with the single photographer? It was the cultural bridges that mattered, originally built by the print-makers, but strengthened by the painters and photographers.

## Notes

- 1 J. Earle (ed), *Japanese Art and Design*, the Toshiba Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986.
- 2 T. Sato and T. Watanabe, *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850–1930*, 1991, pp. 43–52; T. Bennett, *Early Japanese Images*, Tokyo, 1996.
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- 4 See C.L. French, *Shiba Kokan*, 1974.
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**Part III**

**In Britain**



## 9 *Japonisme* for all

*Japonisme*<sup>1</sup> has always been thought of as a movement that involved the artistic classes, who were captivated by the strange art and art objects which poured out of Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. But, for the purpose of this study, *Japonisme* was a mild obsession with Japan that involved much of the British population. As has been amply demonstrated (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4) the Japanese government policy of encouraging the export of cheap ceramics, bamboo and lacquer ware had been only too successful. Everyone joined in. *Japonisme* became a prominent feature of popular culture at the opera, the comic opera and indeed the music hall. As far as the British were concerned *Japonisme* was inclusive.

### **The eager art world**

Who could have foretold that these enchanting Japanese art objects would transform the artist's world and lead the way into impressionism and other new painting styles? Therefore the political decision to close Japan off from the rest of the world, which encouraged Japanese artists and craftsmen to develop their artistic work free of influences outside Japan, must be regarded as having a positive side.<sup>2</sup>

It is now suggested that Western art was, by the 1850s, in the doldrums, unable to find a way forward. At this point the strange prints from Japan,<sup>3</sup> which were to transform Western art, arrived in Paris. This was 'a new visual language' and led, in a remarkably short time, to impressionism, and later to post-impressionism and art nouveau. The idioms and mannerisms of the Japanese print brought a whole new concept of the use of space in a picture that led directly to modern art.<sup>4</sup>

As J.T. Hatcher has pointed out, several designers and artists were born at about the same time as the Meiji Restoration (1868): Charles Ricketts (1866), Frank Brangwyn (1867), Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868), William Nicholson (1869), Aubrey Beardsley (1872) and Gordon Craig (1872).<sup>5</sup> All in their way were affected by Japanese art. Eventually, through the applied arts, including interior design and architecture, furniture and textile design, ceramics and metal work, a revolution in design would take

place. In addition both E.W. Godwin<sup>6</sup> and Christopher Dresser were influential figures (for Dresser, see Chapter 7).

Earlier there had been a period, in the mid-sixteenth century, when the Portuguese had arrived in Japan eager to trade (and to convert the Japanese to Christianity), during which Japanese art objects had reached the West. As a result sixteenth-century examples of Japanese art, although rare, were known in Europe. By the mid-nineteenth century it was part of the imperialist agenda to 'open up' Japan, whatever the Japanese thought, because of commercial imperatives. As early as 1813 Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, busy as an aggrandising imperialist in Java, and later in Singapore, was collecting Japanese, as distinct from Chinese, art objects. These are believed to have been exhibited in London in 1825. There was considerable interest in Japanese art objects shown when (in 1823 and 1842) items from Horace Walpole's collection were auctioned in London. Japanese shapes and designs were distinctive and, being distinguishable from those of China, were especially highly prized.

Initially artists, in response to *Japonisme* in Britain, added Japanese 'touches' to their paintings; Japanese fans, pots, screens and 'Japanese' ladies in kimonos all featured. The movement gathered pace after 1882, when Christopher Dresser's *Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufacture* was published.<sup>7</sup> Much later, Victorian design was affected by Japanese shapes. Mortimer Menpes<sup>8</sup> was by no means alone in shipping decorations back to London, for his new house near Sloane Square.<sup>9</sup> Charles Rennie Mackintosh,<sup>10</sup> the Scottish leader of the art nouveau movement, was quick to take up Japanese artistic ideas. Although men like William Burges<sup>11</sup> saw contemporary Japanese art and artefacts as a recreation of the medieval, *Japonisme* was in fact to lead the way into modern design in the twentieth century.

It was the International Exhibition in London in 1862, at which Rutherford Alcock's Japanese collection was shown, which first started the craze in 'things Japanese'. Popular British figures in the art world, including William Burges, the architect, E.W. Godwin,<sup>12</sup> artist and furniture designer, and J.M. Whistler, artist,<sup>13</sup> started shopping for Japanese goods with which to embellish their art. After 1862 many of the Japanese exhibits were displayed for sale at the Oriental Warehouse set up by Farmer and Rogers on Regent Street, adjacent to their Great Shawl and Cloak Emporium.<sup>14</sup> One of the two staff appointed especially to handle Oriental goods was Arthur Lasenby Liberty.<sup>15</sup> Earlier, in Paris, in the 1850s, the artistic world had discovered Japanese art and artefacts, and many artists, including J.M. Whistler, had congregated at Madame de Soye's *La Poste Chinoise* where they sought out Japanese porcelain and other Japanese items.

### **Rutherford Alcock, *Japonisant***

In 1859, Rutherford Alcock<sup>16</sup> (1809–97) was appointed Britain's first Consul General to Japan. When he arrived, at the age of fifty, he found a country

bristling with two-sworded Samurai, hostile and aggressive. It was without doubt a dangerous posting, but Alcock, with remarkable sang-froid, entered into his duties with enthusiasm. Alcock, part military man and part surgeon, had served as a Consul in Shanghai before moving to Japan. He was well aware of the hazards of such postings. Whenever Alcock travelled through Japan<sup>17</sup> – with a huge retinue, supplied by a nervous Japanese government – he searched out Japanese craftsmen at work and he bought, then and there, a wide range of Japanese art and art objects. He also tried to understand, and to appreciate, the values that motivated Japanese society. Alcock with his ‘adventurous spirit and a strong dynamic personality’<sup>18</sup> determined to undertake a remarkable series of journeys. These journeys included one to the north to Hakodate on Hokkaido and another to climb Mount Fuji.

Alcock’s final journey was an epic pilgrimage from Nagasaki to Edo (Tokyo) in the early summer of 1861. Alcock had been on official business in Hong Kong and, on his return to Nagasaki, he resolved to travel, by land and sea, back to the capital. After tiresome delays, they travelled by land through Kyushu, crossing to Shimonoseki, on the south-west tip of Honshu. From there they travelled by sea to Hyogo and Osaka, where Alcock found some treasures. As he wrote, ‘as we passed up one street, a quaint grotesque-looking piece of earthenware attracted my eye’. Alcock bought this and explored the shop further, before the guards dashed up to protest. He found ‘a perfect wealth of “palissy” pottery, with raised fishes, and fruit’.<sup>19</sup>

On his journey from Nagasaki to Edo:

Alcock bought everything from silks to lanterns, and even examples of different sorts of *hibachi* (braziers) found in Osaka and elsewhere. He must have also bought many things in Edo. We do not know how many things he collected in all, but it was probably in the order of hundreds, and even thousands of items. In 1861, he despatched to London a total of 614 pieces, including lacquerware, porcelain, iconware, woodcraft pieces, picture books, maps and toys, all of which were displayed at the International Exhibition in London, beginning in May 1862.<sup>20</sup>

This ‘Alcock collection’ was to form the basis for the Japanese exhibits in 1862 at the London Exhibition. Alcock prepared a *Catalogue of Works of Industry and Art Sent from Japan* (London, 1862). He also wrote *Art and Art Industries in Japan* (London, 1878). In this way the diplomat Alcock became an initiator of *Japonisme* and was of importance in the art world in London in the early 1860s.

In praising Japanese arts and crafts Rutherford Alcock found himself in some confusion. It was universally acknowledged, in the West, that Western methods of manufacture were superior to those of the East. Alcock tried to find a consistency by comparing handicraft workers in Japan with industrial workers in Britain.



As he noted:

Art in Japan, and the industrial Arts more especially, which have been brought to their present state of perfection by the application of principles mainly derived from their loving and patient study of Nature, may serve as an example full of encouragement to our own manufacturers and artisans. They may see in the unequalled success of the Japanese, artist and workman combined into one – how originality and the impress of individual genius may best be secured.<sup>21</sup>

### **The artist in London**

James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)<sup>22</sup> was the catalyst, whose own enthusiasm – and ostentation – brought a knowledge of ‘things Japanese’ to artistic London. As Frank Whitford has commented, ‘During the 1860s no other artist became so helplessly enamoured of the art and culture of Japan.’<sup>23</sup> American-born Whistler, long resident in Paris, moved to London in 1863. Paris, the original European centre of the remarkable vogue in Japanese art, was more innovative, and London, more hesitant and conservative, the place where Whistler could make the biggest impact with his *Japoniserie*.

As Whistler’s work developed, his earlier works made use of Japanese objects that he had collected; later he was using Japanese shapes and designs in creating his pictures. It has been argued that the inclusion of Japanese objects in Whistler’s paintings made his work more attractive to the Victorians. These pictures were easier to sell, and made the artist good profits, more speedily.

Whistler acquired a large number of Japanese objects. As his mother wrote:

The artistic abode of my son is ornamented by a very rare collection of Japanese and Chinese [porcelain]. He considers the paintings upon them the finest specimens of art and his companions who resort here for an evening’s relaxation get enthusiastic as they handle and examine the curious figures portrayed. ... He has also a Japanese book of paintings unique in their estimation. You will not wonder that Jemie’s inspiration should be of the same cast.<sup>24</sup>

As Robin Spencer<sup>25</sup> has made clear, by early 1864 Whistler’s studio in London was ‘ornamented by a very rare collection of Japanese and Chinese items’ according to his mother.<sup>26</sup> Although Whistler thought of himself as being interested in the art of Japan, in fact some of the artefacts, vases and so on which he utilised in his paintings were Chinese. In all the excitement of *Japonisme* it should be noted that the interpretation of ‘things Japanese’ was Eurocentric, and would not necessarily have been recognised as Japanese, by the citizens of that country. Whistler’s Japanese porcelain pieces feature in

many famous paintings of the 1860s, and then there are Japanese screens, beautiful Japanese kimonos, all vividly portrayed. Later, certain paintings, such as *Nocturne in Blue and Gold* (1872–5) and *Old Battersea Bridge*, are reminiscent of Hiroshige's *Kyobashi Bridge* (c.1857). The bridge theme is repeated in, for example, a painted screen of 1872.

For the artist, the interest in Japanese art was that it was different. It was not long before 'Japanese' shapes, angles and atmosphere were adopted by artists in Britain and Japanese art objects became an essential part of many pictures. This rejuvenation of European painting also proved to be a stimulus to those who bought pictures. Artists discovered a ready market for those pictures that had a subtle 'Japanese' flavour. To the British, Whistler's art seemed:

by occidental critics to be Japanese. To Japanese eyes he seemed demonstrably Western. Yet who ever views his work must agree, as one of his friends has put it, that Whistler 'grafted into the tired stump of Europe, the vital shoots of oriental art'.<sup>27</sup>

### **Equating medievalism with Japonisme**

William Burges (1827–81),<sup>28</sup> an architect, designer and medievalist, was thirty-four years of age when he visited the Japanese section of the London International Exhibition of 1862. He was entranced; for there in the Japanese section he found Japanese objects that, whatever their age, seemed to him to be medieval. His furniture designs showed mid-nineteenth-century 'medieval' pieces that incorporated both British medieval and Japanese themes. His principal buildings were Cork Cathedral and Cardiff Castle, as well as Castell Coch. The Marquis of Bute was his patron for the two later buildings, which created a kind of fairy-tale gothic.

As Burges wrote:

If however the visitor wishes to see the real Middle Ages, he must visit the Japanese Court, for, at the present day, the arts of the Middle Ages have deserted Europe and are only to be found in the East.<sup>29</sup>

Burges was carried away by his enthusiasm: 'Truly the Japanese Court is the real medieval court of the Exhibition.' Burges's enthusiasm led him to contribute another article to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In September 1862, he concluded:

I hope I have said enough to show the student of our reviving arts of the thirteenth century that an hour, or even a day or two spent in the Japanese department will be by no means time lost, for these hitherto unknown barbarians appear not only to know all that the Middle Ages knew but, in some respects, are beyond them and us as well.<sup>30</sup>

Edward William Godwin (1833–86)<sup>31</sup> was also an architect and designer, who was equally excited by the 1862 Japanese exhibits. He excelled as a designer for many projects, including furniture, textiles and wallpaper; what became the essence of *Japonisme*. Godwin's work became known as 'Anglo-Japanese'.

### ***Japonisme in Glasgow***

No one was more excited about Japan and Japanese art and crafts than the artistic community in Glasgow. The city was then, in the late nineteenth century, at its greatest, exulting in its industrial triumphs. There was a renaissance too in the art world as a group of active young men, intent on making their mark, were to prosper and to become known as the 'Glasgow Boys'.

On Friday 28 November 1889 there was a Grand Fancy Dress Ball<sup>32</sup> held in Glasgow organised by the Glasgow Art Club. On that occasion E.A. Walton (1860–1922) appeared dressed as Hokusai, another artist appeared as Whistler and a young lady charmingly portrayed herself as Whistler's *motif* 'Butterfly'. In addition John Lavery (1856–1941) appeared as Rembrandt. Lavery was a Belfast man who had been educated partly in Glasgow. He was trained under J.B. McNair and studied at the Glasgow School of Art. But by the early 1880s he was working in Paris. There he became interested in French painting but also absorbed the influence of *Japonisme*. But he returned to Glasgow in 1885 and to the leadership of the emerging group of 'Glasgow Boys'.<sup>33</sup>

Glasgow's involvement with Japan was well known; as one contemporary noted:

Japanese art too, was the hobby of those years in Glasgow among artists as well as the dilettante who could not afford to buy Whistlers, we could at least collect, for very little money, the Japanese prints of Hokusai Utemaro, Shigemasa, Hiroshige *et hoc genus omne* who had so influenced 'the Butterfly' himself. Local artists, far from wealthy, bought prints, embroideries, bronzes, ivories, vases of China and Japan much oftener than they sold their own paintings; a few years ago it took about a fortnight to dispense by auction the Oriental Collection of Mr. R.G. Crawford, an old Glasgow portrait painter.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed in 1891 the city of Glasgow had been persuaded, partly by pressure from a coterie of artists, to buy Whistler's portrait of Thomas Carlyle. This was the first purchase of one of Whistler's works by any public body. According to one authority the style and composition of the Carlyle painting reflects Whistler's involvement with the shapes and designs of *Japonisme*.<sup>35</sup> Whistler himself had first visited Glasgow, as a 15-year-old, in 1849. He was travelling with an aunt, to visit friends in Scotland. Whistler

was proud of his Scottish roots, and remembered that his mother, Anna, was descended from Daniel McNeill 'who had emigrated with some 60 of his clan from the Isle of Skye to North Carolina in 1746'. As a result of his Scottish ancestry, and his own preference, Whistler abandoned his middle name Abbott and substituted McNeill.

Indeed in the spring of 1903, when Whistler was suffering an illness from which he was not to recover, and the University of Glasgow offered him an honorary LLD, Whistler wrote as follows to Principal Story,

Chelsea,

20 April 1903

My Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge your personally kind letter of yesterday – and I trust that you will convey to the Senate, my keen sense of the rare indulgence they are extending to me, in yeilding [*sic*] to the peculiar circumstances, and so graciously conferring this high honour in my enforced absence. ...

I would like to have said to these gentlemen, as a reassurance, in their generosity, that, in one way at least, the Gods have prepared me for the reception of such dignity; inasmuch as they have kept, for me, the purest possible strain of Scotch blood – for am I not a McNeill – a McNeill of Bara?

And I have the honour to be my dear Sir, Your obedient Servant.

J. McNeill Whistler<sup>36</sup>

Another connection between Glasgow, Paris and *Japonisme* was that of the art dealer Alexander Reid<sup>37</sup> (1854–1928). Reid had been born in 1854, into the firm of Kay and Reid, art dealers in Glasgow. By 1870 Alex Reid was employed by the family firm. He had a keen interest in supporting local Scottish artists but also became much involved with French painting, being particularly intrigued by the Barbizon School.

In 1886, at the age of thirty-two, Reid<sup>38</sup> removed himself to Paris where he was fortunate to join the prestigious firm of Boussod Veladon et Cie. He was to work directly under Theo van Gogh, in the 'recent painting' section of the business, which operated from premises at 19 Boulevard Montmartre. Theo van Gogh was becoming interested at this time in impressionism and in *Japonisme*. In the early part of 1887 Reid was living at 54 Rue Lépici with Theo and Vincent van Gogh. During the course of this period Vincent van Gogh painted a portrait of Alexander Reid, executed in pointillist style. Because Vincent and Alexander Reid were thought to look alike, this

portrait was thought to be a self-portrait of Vincent. Only in 1929 did A.J. McNeill Reid realise it was a painting of his father. The Vincent van Gogh painting of Reid was bought in 1974, with financial help from various sources, by Glasgow Museums and Art Gallery, Kelvingrove (Room 25). But while in Paris, Reid was also strongly influenced by *Japonisme*. He was buying Japanese prints. The van Gogh brothers were deeply involved with Japanese prints, organising at one time an exhibition of them at the Café du Tambourin. Most of the exhibited prints had come from Samuel (Siegfried) Bing's shop in Paris.

Early in 1889 Reid returned to Glasgow and set up his own gallery at 227 West George Street, *La Société des Beaux Arts*, where he became a notable art dealer. There, Alexander Reid was *Le Directeur*, a 'French' dealer with a Paris address on all his letterheads. Despite this little vanity, Reid was extraordinary. The fact that he was working in Glasgow gave the 'Glasgow Boys', and the prosperous middle classes there, a chance to buy Japanese prints and impressionist paintings that they would not otherwise have had. Alexander Reid's own Japanese prints are still extant, as are E.A. Walton's.

Samuel Bing's art journal, *Artistic Japan*, was bought by someone in Glasgow in the late 1880s. The edition in English of *Artistic Japan*, a 'monthly illustrated Journal of Arts and Industry', was compiled by S. Bing with the assistance of:

Mr. W.M. Anderson, M.M.PH. Burty, Victor Champier, TH. Duret, Mr. Ernest Hart, M.M. Edmond De Goncourt, Louis Gonse, Eugène Guillaume, Paul Mantz, Professor Roberts-Austen, M.M. Roger Marx, Antonin Proust, Etc. The English Edition is under the Editorship of Mr. Marcus B. Huish. Published at London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, Ltd, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.

The *Scottish Art Review* was enthusiastic and itself produced articles on *tsubo* (sword guards) and *kakemono* (wall hangings).

As Siegfried Bing explained in the first edition in his article 'Programme' he wanted to interest 'the general public in the real and rare beauties of an art which has hitherto attracted by its superficial qualities'. Bing was also keen to attract those involved with the industrial arts, 'especially those,' as he explained, who, 'whether as manufacturers, or as artisans, have an active share in their production'.<sup>39</sup>

### **The design revolution in Glasgow**

Charles Rennie Mackintosh<sup>40</sup> (1868–1928), his wife, Margaret Macdonald (1864–1933), her sister, Frances Macdonald (1873–1921), and her husband, James Herbert McNair (1868–1955) made a quartet that created a revolution in Glasgow, much of which was inspired by the ideas of design and

style that became familiar as *Japonisme*. Between the four of them they aimed to create a building, with Mackintosh as architect, the sisters and McNair as designers, which would be complete in all respects.

The Margaret Macdonald designs emphasised the straight line, and may have been taken from the Japanese print. It has been suggested that Margaret Macdonald's Memo Card of 1901 was developed as a result of seeing a copy of Buncho's *Night Scene with Girl and Cuckoo* (c.1770). Certainly much of the scene and the development is different from, but somehow related to, the Japanese print.

Despite designing and supervising various buildings being completed in Glasgow, including the Glasgow School of Art and the Queen's Cross Church, Mackintosh was himself unsettled. In London, Mackintosh/Macdonald designs made no great impact. Matters were different on the Continent where 'in Munich, in Vienna (above all) and in Turin they enjoyed a positively sensational success'.<sup>41</sup> There is no doubt of the affinity between a Japanese interior and a Charles Rennie Mackintosh design with its understated simplicity. Mackintosh had helped to remove the Victorian clutter.

### A universal appeal

The all-embracing nature of the appeal of *Japonisme* to all classes of society in Britain is amply borne out by the wild success of *The Mikado*,<sup>42</sup> or the *Town of Titupu*, which was first presented to an enthusiastic audience at the Savoy Theatre, London, on 14 March 1885. It was an instant success, everyone chuckling over such choruses as:

If you want to know who we are,  
We are the gentlemen of Japan,  
On many a vase or jar –  
On many a screen or fan,  
We figure in lovely paint,  
Our attitudes queer and quaint –  
Your wrong if you think it aint, oh

In the course of time the Music Hall took up the Japanese theme. Marie Lloyd, in 1902, had a popular triumph on her hands when she rendered the song of the geisha. The chorus of this crowd-puller was:

Every little Jappy chappie's gone upon the Geisha,  
Trickiest little Geisha ever seen in Asia!  
I've made things hum a bit, you know, since I became a Geisha,  
Japanesey, free and easy tea house girl!<sup>43</sup>

Only with the first production of Giacomo Puccini's opera, *Madama Butterfly*, at La Scala in Milan on 17 February 1904, is there a recognition that Japanese could suffer tragedy like anyone else. The story came from



Figure 9.1 'The geisha'/Miss Marie Lloyd

*Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Loti. It is a classic tale of love, trust and betrayal. Set appropriately in Nagasaki, the original landing place for Westerners in Japan, it is the story of a Japanese girl who 'marries' an American naval lieutenant and has a son. The American leaves on naval duties and on his return brings with him a stiff, corseted American wife. The disgraced Japanese wife takes her own life, while the American Pinkertons leave for America, carrying with them *Madama Butterfly's* small Japanese-American son, *Sorrow*.

Puccini's heart-rending *Madama Butterfly* was first produced in London at the Royal Opera House on 10 July 1905. From that date it has remained one of the most popular operas, usually in production somewhere. But the theme of the opera reinforced the respective roles of the Japanese and the Westerner.



Figure 9.2  
Duke and Duchess of  
Connaught, *à la*  
*Japonaise*

Source: By permission of  
HM Queen Elizabeth II.





For the Scots, *Madama Butterfly*<sup>44</sup> has a special significance because it is believed that the story has its origin in events involving the life of the well-known son of Aberdeen, Thomas Blake Glover. Glover is now commemorated in Glover House at Nagasaki, but in the days of his youth in Nagasaki he is believed to have had various liaisons with Japanese women. Out of this came *Butterfly*.

### ***Japonisme* and imperialism**

Europeans,<sup>45</sup> including the British, regarded themselves as being at the centre of the world. They also regarded the achievement of nineteenth-century European industries as being of paramount importance. It was from this position of superiority that they regarded Japanese culture. By admiring Japanese culture the British were giving it credence and bringing it into the wider world. But they still retained their certain opinion that Japan, being an underdeveloped country, could not equal the British achievement. The romanticising of Japan was a form of condescension, implying British, and European, superiority.

Surprise has been expressed<sup>46</sup> that Algernon Mitford (later Lord Redesdale) should have assisted W.S. Gilbert (1836–1911) in his work on *The Mikado*. But Mitford was a member of the British ruling class. Although he had immersed himself, and become an authority on, Japanese culture, when he was on diplomatic service in Japan, he found no inconsistency in sending up Japanese customs and society.

If one ‘thinks sideways’ as Edward de Bono has advocated, then, one must link *Japonisme* with imperialism. The cultural bridges that were created by *Japonisme* at all levels of British society were above all those that emphasised the contrast between real life, in British industrial society, and life in another, pre-industrial world, Japan. Favouring Japan, smiling on her culture, was, it can be argued, part of the patronising attitudes then prevalent in the West. Nevertheless the universal appeal of *Japonisme* to all classes in Britain resulted in a wonderful reward for the Japanese. Despite the fact that there were no major international exhibitions in Britain, until the Japan British Exhibition of 1910, *Japonisme* became an important subject of enthusiasm for all in the pre-1914 period.

### **Notes**

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- 2 J. Earle, *Japanese Art and Design*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986.
- 3 J. Earle, *An Introduction to Japanese Prints*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1980.
- 4 J.T. Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, Oxford, 1996, p. 65.
- 5 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 65.
- 6 D. Harbron, *The Conscious Stone, the Life of Edward William Godwin*, 1949.

- 7 See also W. Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, 1991, Chapter 2, 'The cult of Japan', pp. 33–66.
- 8 M. Menpes, *Japan, a Record in Colour*, 1901, was a best-seller; see Chapter 12, 'The lovely flower land of the Far East'.
- 9 See 'Mr Mortimer Menpes' House, 25 Cadogan Gardens', *The Studio*, Vol. 17, 1899, pp. 170–8. The house was incorporated into the north-west corner of the premises of Messrs Peter Jones, Department Store, Sloane Square, London.
- 10 T. Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, 1952.
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- 23 F. Whitford, *Japanese Prints and Western Painters*, 1927, p. 131.
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- 38 F. Fowle, *National Art Collection Fund Quarterly*, Autumn 1999, pp. 42–5.
- 39 On 23 November 1894 someone, unknown, presented *Artistic Japan*, six volumes, covering 1888, 1888–9, 1889, 1889–90, 1890, 1890–1 to the Mitchell Library, Glasgow (the Mitchell Library Location Book) with thanks to Ian Gordon. It would appear that the journal was published in French and in an English version. Siegfried Bing wrote the first article, see p. 2 and p. 3.
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- 41 K. Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting, from Whistler to Matisse*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 262.
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- 43 'The Geisha', sung by Miss Marie Lloyd. See Sato and Watanabe (eds), *Japan and Britain*, p. 41.
- 44 The origin of the story has attracted much speculation; some believe the original 'Butterfly' was Tsuru Yamamura who married Thomas Glover. See M. Carnes, *Puccini*, 1974, pp. 125–6; see also J.P. Lehmann, 'Images of the Orient', English National Opera/Royal Opera House *Guide to Madam Butterfly*, 1984, pp. 7–14; and J.P. Lehmann, 'Japan and the West in the shadow of Madam Butterfly', in Scottish Opera programme for *Madam Butterfly*, 1987; the author is indebted to Roger Witts for his help.
- 45 J.M. Rosenfeld, 'Japanese art studies in America since 1945', in H. Hardacre (ed) *The Postwar Development of Japanese Studies in the United States*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998, pp. 169–70.
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## 10 Collecting Japanese art

From the mid-Victorian years there were in Britain a few ardent collectors of Japanese art and artefacts. They were the enthusiasts who went to much trouble to search out ‘good’ pieces. It was a rewarding if hazardous game, and, as will become clear, there could be pain as well as pleasure. For the purpose of this study the careers of a handful of British collectors including William Anderson,<sup>1</sup> Arthur Morrison,<sup>2</sup> Christopher Dresser<sup>3</sup> in London, Michael Tomkinson<sup>4</sup> in Kidderminster and James Lord Bowes<sup>5</sup> in Liverpool will be considered. There is also the exceptional situation in Glasgow<sup>6</sup> where, in 1878, the city was presented with a Japanese collection sent directly from Japan. Some of the collectors discussed have enriched the holding of Japanese art in British museums and art galleries. However, it remained difficult to authenticate and classify Japanese pieces.

### William Anderson

William Anderson (1843–1900) was a medical doctor who served the British legation and was head of the Naval Medical College in Tokyo from 1873–80. He had a life-long interest in art. Before he had entered St Thomas’ Hospital to train as a doctor in 1864 he had been a student at Lambeth School of Art. When lecturing on anatomy to his students he was famous for his clear and artistic blackboard drawings.

Once settled in Tokyo he indulged his artistic curiosity by acquiring over ‘3,000 items of Japanese pictorial art ... assembled with a desire for taxonomical completeness and informed by a taste for the illustrative and the well known’.<sup>7</sup> In 1881 the British Museum, represented by Augustus Wollaston Franks and his assistant Hercules Read, did manage to raise £3,000 to buy the mixed collection amassed by William Anderson in Japan in the 1870s. According to the inventory made at the time Anderson’s collection included 927 *kemeno*, wall hangings, 101 *Makimono*, twenty-seven albums, three screens, four framed pictures, usually *Ukiyo-e* prints, and 2,236 unmounted drawings. As has been explained ‘in addition 311 volumes on Japanese pictorial art (mainly wood block printed, illustrated books) were purchased for £360 for the Japanese library’.

At the request of the trustees of the British Museum, Anderson prepared a massive work, of 544 pages, entitled *A Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (1886). This, with few illustrations, by giving details of the lives of the Japanese artists and notes on the paintings, is still useful today. Also in 1886, Anderson published, in lavish form, *The Pictorial Arts of Japan*. Anderson was critical of some Japanese artists because of their 'incomplete scientific knowledge'.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless his praise was also lavish: Japanese painters had 'perfect appreciation of harmony in colour' and 'unequalled command of the pencil'.<sup>9</sup>

In his comprehensive historical survey, he demonstrated a far-reaching acquaintance with earlier painting traditions. Reproductions of paintings from the collections of the British Museum and private owners not only offered the most comprehensive and authentic assemblage of book illustrations available up to that date but also testified to extensive Western ownership of representative works of the Tosa, Kano and fifteenth-century Chinese school styles of painting.<sup>10</sup>

Anderson also made available to a much wider audience technical information about materials (paper, silk, and colour pigments and their preparation), painting techniques and scroll-mounting procedures. He also attempted a stylistic examination of the general characteristics of Japanese art on a simple superficial level that was more searching and encompassing than anything seen thus far, simply because it dealt with a greater and more complex range of examples.

Anderson, of 1 Harley Street, London, was much involved with the Japan Society of London from its foundation in 1891 until his death in 1900. Curiously, for a man supposedly so involved with Japan, he himself apparently had no collection of Japanese art to be disposed of at his death. In his will<sup>11</sup> his only reference was to his 'large bronze dragon'. The gross value of his estate was over £11,000, the net value £9,473, a considerable sum in 1900.

### **Arthur Morrison**

Another collector who also favoured the British Museum – but who never went to Japan – was Arthur Morrison (1863–1945). Morrison, a novelist, wrote 'unflinchingly realistic novels of working class and semi-criminal life in the slums of London's East End'.<sup>12</sup> The novels may be largely forgotten but the Arthur Morrison Japanese collection is still important. It is said that Morrison purchased some of his Japanese treasures from marine stores or similar places at the docks in Wapping or Limehouse, in London. He also operated through a friend, Sir Harold Parlett (1869–1945), a diplomat in Japan.

Morrison's collections were acquired by gift, or purchase, between 1906 and 1945. The British Museum paid £4,500 to Morrison in 1906, and had another Morrison Collection donated (by William Gwynne-Evans

(1845–1927) in 1913. This group consisted of thirty-five Chinese and 589 Japanese paintings. In 1927 Morrison gave three screens to the British Museum and in 1945, at his death, left his remaining Japanese holdings to the British Museum.

When Morrison died, in 1945, he left in his will:

All Chinese and Japanese pictures in my possession at the time of my death (if not presented to any Gallery) to the Trustees of the British Museum through the National Arts Collection Fund to be added to my collections already there.

Morrison left a total estate valued at £45,645.<sup>13</sup> Morrison must certainly be listed as one of the most important benefactors of the Japanese department of the British Museum.

### **Christopher Dresser**

Christopher Dresser (1834–1904), at the age of seventy, died suddenly at Mulhouse, Alsace, then part of Germany, on 24 November 1904. As has already been explained (see Chapter 7), he was well regarded by the Japanese as one associated with the Victoria and Albert Museum. He had travelled widely in Japan and made an extensive collection of Japanese items.

The gross value of Dresser's estate<sup>14</sup> was rather less than £4,000, the net value just over £2,000, a surprisingly small sum. Dresser had originally made his will in 1876 on the eve of his departure for Japan. At that time he was living at Tower Cressy, Notting Hill, London, a grand and expensive residence. It is possible that Dresser lived expensively. Certainly one articulated pupil, Frederick Burrows, believed this to be the case, commenting that 'Dresser lived beyond his means. He always gave us the impression of being hard pressed for money.'<sup>15</sup>

Dresser had always catalogued his holdings of art. These were listed in two bound volumes. When Dresser's family found that there was little money available after his death they sent a copy of the Dresser collection to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was hoped that some Japanese items could be sold. Dresser's Japanese items included:

a collection of Netsuke and metal buttons, Japanese cloisonné enamels, incense burners, vases, boxes, trays and a collection of Bamboo articles, a collection illustrating the porcelain and pottery manufacture of Japan, a collection of Japanese lacquer, Japanese and Chinese bronzes.<sup>16</sup>

Most of these items would appear to have been gathered by Dresser during his time in Japan in 1877; they were therefore authentic Japanese pieces. Notwithstanding the provenance of Dresser's Japanese collection, none of the items were bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**Michael Tomkinson**

Michael Tomkinson (1841–1921) made his first Japanese art purchases in 1878 when he was thirty-seven years of age. At that time he believed that:

the Japanese were more nearly a nation of artists than any the world has seen, if we except the Greeks. The refined taste of the educated Japanese keeps alive the old tradition of the country, the matchless lacquer, its beautiful enamels, and its marvellous metalwork.<sup>17</sup>

Tomkinson's interest in Japan never wavered, and he exhibited part of his collection widely.

Tomkinson, of Franche Hall,<sup>18</sup> Kidderminster, was a carpet-maker who went to New York where he bought the British patent rights of a carpet-weaving inventor, Halcyon Skinner. This enabled him to produce, in Kidderminster, the first Royal Axminster carpet. It was, as Tomkinson noted, 'the manufacturer's dream realised by a machine producing carpets with any number of colours and all the wool on the surface'.<sup>19</sup>

Tomkinson's Japanese interest continued. By the end of the century he had published *A Japanese Collection by Michael Tomkinson* (Gilbertson & Tomkinson, 2 vols, 1899). At the same time Tomkinson lent the City of Birmingham art gallery 195 'Japanese objects in various media'. These were on display in Birmingham from 18 January 1898 to 15 February 1899.

In 1901 Michael Tomkinson lent 169 Japanese objects to the Glasgow International Exhibition at Kelvingrove.<sup>20</sup> These were displayed in the Fine Art Section of the Art Museum department. The Tomkinson exhibits included swords, *tsuba* (sword guards), leather tobacco pouches, ivory items, *inro* and lacquer ware. The full descriptions given of each item suggest that Tomkinson may have had help from a Japanese national in cataloguing his collection. It seems unlikely that he himself would have had the expertise to do this.

Tomkinson was a very wealthy man with a profitable carpet business and a number of expensive hobbies, including buying Japanese art objects and growing orchids. His estate on his death in 1921 was valued at over £200,000 gross, and at over £135,000 net.<sup>21</sup> It was reported that the head gardener, who had heavy responsibilities for a range of greenhouses, went on his rounds in 'top hat, striped trousers, spats and tail-coat'.<sup>22</sup> Tomkinson's seven sons were educated at Eton and Winchester. In his will there is no reference to his Japanese art. Following Michael's death in 1921 the Japanese collection was sold off. A local firm, Edwards, Son and Bigwood was responsible overall, but the Japanese items were auctioned, in London, by Glendinings and Co. Ltd of 7 Argyll Street, Oxford Circus, W1. The sales took place over 5–9 December 1921, 24–8 April 1922 and 26–9 June 1922. Both the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum are believed to have acquired Japanese items from the Tomkinson holdings.



### James Lord Bowes

Several of the collections of Japanese art and artefacts were made by those who visited, and were enthralled by, the Japanese exhibits at the great international exhibitions. It was Japanese government policy to show the finest examples of Japanese ceramics, lacquer ware, fans, metal work, *cloisonné* ware and screens. After the exhibition closed, these items were sold off; this gave the amateurs, the collectors, the chance to start or augment their holdings. James Lord Bowes (1834–99) was one of these collectors.

James Lord Bowes<sup>23</sup> was born at Horsforth, Leeds, Yorkshire, on 24 July 1834, the second son of John Bowes and Elizabeth Lord. Following his education at Liverpool College, he, with his older brother, John Lord Bowes, set up a wool-broking firm at 11 Dale Street, Liverpool, in 1859. In the 1860s he lived at Streatlam Cottage, Woolton, and, in 1871, the success of his business enabled him to build Streatlam Tower at 5 Princes Road, Liverpool. This was a grand house, splendidly positioned close to Princes Park and not far from Sefton Park.



Figure 10.1 James Lord Bowes



Bowes became a local hero, famous for his Japanese collection. In 1888 he became Honorary Consul in Liverpool for Japan. This was extraordinary, but his appointment in some way reflected his enthusiasm. Bowes was a wool merchant in Liverpool. As he said, 'I have never done any business with Japan; my connection with it has been one of purely a sentimental and friendly nature.'<sup>24</sup> The consulate set up by Bowes was the first such outside London.<sup>25</sup> Later, consulates in Glasgow, Manchester and Middlesbrough were established.<sup>26</sup> It is not clear what business Bowes did for the Japanese. But it should be remembered that he had written a report, at the request of the Japanese, in 1876, on the prospect of sending Japanese ceramics to sell in Britain (see Chapter 4). In 1891, he was made a member, by diploma, of the Imperial Order of the Sacred Treasure.<sup>27</sup>

His passion for 'Japanese art and artefacts resulted in a collection of nearly 2,000 items'. Here, in an annexe to his home, Bowes exhibited his Japanese collection. There was no doubt that, in Liverpool, his fame was widely known and his reputation secure. As one commentator wrote:

Perhaps no man can fairly claim to have singly made Europe and America familiar with Japanese art: several simultaneously undertook to do so: but no one has seen his efforts so fruitful, and, using ordinary language, it is a fact that between 1867 and 1874 he [Bowes] accumulated a collection of Japanese curious objects unequalled at the time in reliability, extent and beauty, that, despite all the efforts since made by numerous monarchs and millionaires, is still the finest of its kind in existence; that his publications on the subject, and his readiness to show his treasures have had a large share in drawing the attention of the Western world to the subject and settling the canons of Japanese criticism; and consequently that the present universal admiration for Japanese ware, and fashion of ornamenting the interiors of houses with either originals or imitations, is chiefly due to him.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed Bowes's fame was such that there was an entry in Baedeker's *The British Isles* (4th Edn, 1897). Under the 'running head' of Bowes Museum, Baedeker wrote:

At Streatlam Towers, between St Margaret's and the Synagogue is the Bowes Museum of Modern Art formed by Mr J.L. Bowes, Honorary Consul for Japan, and probably the most comprehensive and valuable collection of the kind in the world, Japan itself not excluded (adm. Daily, except Sunday, 2-4, entry 1 shilling; proceeds devoted to charity). The contents include paintings (8-19 century), lacquer ware (10-19 century), cabinet made for Tokugawa Shogun, wrought iron-work, bronzes, pottery, Cloisonné enamels, wood and ivory carvings, embroideries, crystals, an Amethyst of great size, weapons and so on.<sup>29</sup>

There can be no doubt of Bowes's enthusiasm and dedication to the collection of Japanese art and art objects. From the late 1860s Bowes was in the market. His interest was primarily in Japan but it would appear that his taste was catholic and not solely related to Japan. One example is 'Case for holding the series of toping [*sic*] masks from Buitenzorg, Java, purchased from Messrs E.J. Brill, Leiden.' A 'fan of plaited reed' had been presented to Bowes by Stafford Heapy, Honolulu, Sandwich Islands. and a 'Wooden fetish figure (*mangaea*) with piece of mirror inlaid in the stomach and studded with nails' had been presented by M.A. Ridyard, of Landana, SW Africa.<sup>30</sup> These items, no doubt of considerable interest in themselves, in proper context, do suggest an eclectic collection.

A most important and interesting example by Kajekawa Kinjiro, by whom it is signed, the founder of the school of that name, and lacquer worker in ordinary to Iyetsuna, the 4th Shogun of the Tokugawa line, who ruled from 1650–1680 n.d. It was preserved in the capital until the year 1867 when it was sent to the Paris Exposition by Noiryoshi, the 15th Shogun and last of his line, from whom it was purchased direct. The example is conspicuous for the brilliance and perfection of its manipulation, and for the number and importance of the various processes introduced. It is of square form, fitted with 19 drawers, protected by open guards, the furniture is of chased silver and *shakudo* (Size, height 26 in, width 25 in, and depth 14 in).

The following is extracted from the *Catalogue of the Paris Exhibition 1867*

'Cabinet riche, a compartements de grand dimension en vieilles laques de toutes couleurs assemblage des plus belles laques de Japon. Très nombreuses et très delicates incrustations. Cette pièce exceptionnelle est remarquable par son ancienneté et le fini de son execution.'<sup>31</sup>

Amongst the many other lots is one 'presented to the late Mr Bowes by the Japanese government in 1890'.

#### 1884 Perfume Burner

In the form of a standing red-crusted crane, of natural size 39½ inches in height. A most exquisite example executed in various tints of gold, both *taka makiye* and *hira makikye*; the tail of the bird is of *togidashi* lacquer, in black and gold; the eyes are of crystal. In the back is a silver cup for the incense, with an extra cover in silver for the escape of the fumes, beautifully chased with cloud work. The workmanship throughout is most perfect, and affords an example of the best period of the art: that of the seventeenth century.

This perfume burner brought at auction £96 and 12 shillings.<sup>32</sup>

Bowes died (27 October 1899) on a train from Crewe to Liverpool at the age of sixty-five. It is not known whether attempts were made to keep the Bowes Collection together. The sole executrix was his widow, Charlotte Vickery Bowes. By the spring of 1901 she had authorised the sale of Bowes's Japanese collection. This took place in May 1901, in Liverpool, by Messrs Branche and Leete, piece by piece. At his death Bowes's estate was worth £10,000; following the sale of the Japanese Collection, its value doubled to £20,000.<sup>33</sup>

As Branche and Leete's catalogue proclaimed, the Bowes Collection was 'magnificent and unique':

acquired by the late Mr. Bowes author of several well-known works on Japanese Keramics, Enamels etc, who devoted the best years of his life to the study of Japanese Art in its varied branches, tracing its progress from the earliest and wide forms to the brilliant and most perfect attainment of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. The Collection illustrates in a series of choice examples of the object Mr. Bowes had in view; and from the peculiar opportunities afforded him through his official position, placing him at once in touch with the leading native Nobility, Connoisseurs and Collectors of the day, he was enabled to secure such specimens as were most desirable, either from their historical attachment or from their undoubted authenticity (Branche and Leete).

The sale was to begin on Monday 6 May 1901 at 1 p.m. Potential customers had been encouraged to view on the previous Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and private viewings could, if necessary, be arranged. The sale took place at the Museum Galleries, Streatlam Towers, Princes Road, Liverpool, and lasted for ten days, ending on Friday 17 May. A separate catalogue was issued for the 'Collection of Japanese Drawings, Kakemonas [*sic*], Makimonos, Books, etc', which were sold on Monday 20 May 1901.

A copy of Branche and Leete's Catalogue does survive and this gives in great detail the various objects sold. All items are numbered in lots, these being the auctioneer's numbers. But, in addition, the numbers to the right hand side of each item came from Bowes's own numbering in his volumes *The Ceramic Art of Japan and Japanese Enamels*. The information on each item is full, no doubt gathered from Bowes's own labelling, and also from his books. Someone has also written, in their own hand, the price which every item brought at auction.

Despite the Catalogue with its list of the prices paid for various items of the Bowes Japanese Collection, there is no information on the purchasers. It is believed that a Liverpool dealer, James Cross, bought some pieces. There is no evidence that pieces from the Bowes Collection were gifted to, or bought by, any public museum.

### Angst and acrimony

There was considerable ill-feeling over the authenticity of various Japanese (or Chinese) items offered for sale. No museum or art gallery was immune. In 1902, at the British Museum, Charles Ricketts, asked by Sir Sidney Colvin to advise on the Hart Collection, which the British Museum had just bought, reported that the prints were 'rubbish, flagrant reprints and tired old re-issues of those side issues of Jap art which all Englishmen seem to get hold of'.<sup>34</sup>

Frank Brinkley, who because of his long years of residence in Japan had become an expert on Chinese and Japanese porcelain, also expressed his frustrations:

The writers Audsley and Bowes unfortunately mar the soundness of their judgement by depicting in their plates and describing as 'a type in which Japanese treatment is most marked' a triple-gourd-shaped vase which is in every sense an offensive monstrosity and in no sense true to Japanese canons. The plain fact is that it fared alike with the Japanese in ancient and in modern times; by attempting to adapt themselves to the requirement of foreign markets they outraged their instincts and injured their reputation.<sup>35</sup>

In 1890 Bowes published *Japanese Pottery* (London, Edward Howell). In these two large volumes Bowes elaborated on what he believed he had learned, as he wrote:

It was, indeed, only in 1867 that the beauty and diversity of Japanese art, and of the Ceramic wares especially, were revealed to the outer world, when the treasures of the last Shogun were displayed at the Paris Exposition, and when, following his deposition in 1868, and the abolition of the feudal system three years later, the collections...were dispersed and thrown on the markets of foreign countries. ... And perhaps it may be that the Japanese of future generations will have to study the best forms of their art in foreign countries, for there is no doubt that many of the finest examples have been sent abroad.<sup>36</sup>

The man who took exception to Bowes setting himself up as an expert was Edward Sylvester Morse (1838–1925), an American zoologist who was in Japan from 1877–8 when he taught in the University of Tokyo. He returned to Japan in 1882–3, specifically to study Japanese pottery, and there is no doubt that he was a precise and careful observer. Morse had made a point of studying other aspects of Japanese culture including the Noh chanting and *chanoyu*,<sup>37</sup> the tea ceremony. From his interpretation of Japanese cultural society he understood that the Japanese treasured, especially perhaps through the tea ceremony, earlier pottery of the great Japanese masters. This was notable for the purity of its line, the asym-

metry of its shape and its austerity. Morse's seriousness over these matters cannot be gainsaid; while in Japan he had enlisted the help of a Japanese master potter, Ninagawa Noritane (1835–82)<sup>38</sup> who was himself a scholar, as well as a potter, trying to understand and interpret Japanese art.

When Morse came to review Bowes's Japanese Pottery in 1890 he was scathing: 'Any complete collection of Japanese pottery, which is to furnish material for a work on the subject, should include only those objects made for the Japanese, and representing, of course, only things in accordance with Japanese taste and tradition.'<sup>39</sup>

Morse pointed out the many mistakes made by Bowes in categorising his collection and the fact that 'more than a third of the specimens figured come under the category of export wares'. He ridiculed Bowes's idea that you could, from England, in this case Liverpool, study Japanese ceramics adequately. Bowes must have been severely shaken by such condemnation of his efforts. Nevertheless he quickly fought back with a piece in the *Boston Transcript*<sup>40</sup> (n.d. given). Morse plunged back into the fray with 'three spirited pieces'; see *Boston Transcript*, *The Studio* and the *Japanese Weekly Mail*.<sup>41</sup>

Bowes responded, and apparently ended the feud, with *A Vindication of the Decorated Pottery of Japan*, which he printed, at his own expense, in 1891.

### **The tea ceremony or *chanoyu***

In part the clash between Edward Sylvester Morse and James Lord Bowes related to the importance and rituals of the tea ceremony. The tea ceremony required a range of utensils including:

- 1 an iron kettle with a copper or iron lid, resting on a stand
- 2 a table or stand of mulberry wood, two feet high
- 3 two tea jars containing the finely powdered tea, and enclosed in bags of brocade
- 4 a vessel containing fresh water
- 5 *a tea bowl of porcelain or earthenware simple in form but remarkable for its antiquity or historical associations* [author's italics]

The tea bowl for the tea ceremony was revered in Japan for its age, its austerity and simplicity. It was a world away from the cheeky, cheerful pieces of export ware.

Bowes would have been heartened had he known of the response of (Sir) Alfred East, in Japan to paint landscapes in 1889, to some items from Frank Brinkley's famous ceramic collection. As East wrote:

When I take from the tender caressing hand of the collector [in this case Frank Brinkley] a rough earthenware bowl, whose only claim to our admiration is an accidental effect of a glaze, and am told that it is the most precious thing and of inestimable value ... I must draw the line here. This old rough tea bowl may have an interesting history ... it may have been admired in the very inmost circles of the most select of the aesthetic green tea ceremonial set, yet it does not make it beautiful.<sup>42</sup>

## **In Glasgow**

In 1878 the Glasgow City Museums<sup>43</sup> received the gift of a small but distinguished collection of Japanese art works. In return Glasgow collected industrial samples from a wide range of business concerns in the city and sent them to Tokyo. This eccentric exchange was done at the behest of Robert Henry Smith, then Professor of Engineering in Tokyo, who wanted to demonstrate, to his students in Tokyo, the current range of products of an industrial city, in this case Glasgow.

In some senses the Japanese art collection was premature. The Glasgow Museums Service was not set up until 1880 and the fine red sandstone Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum was not opened until 1901. Notwithstanding, an Oriental Art Exhibition was held at the Corporation Galleries in Glasgow between December 1881 and April 1882. At the same time Christopher Dresser, based in London, lectured in Glasgow on the collection. As was reported:

Last night, in the Corporation Galleries, Dr. Christopher Dresser of London, delivered a lecture on 'JAPANESE ART WORKMANSHIP' in connection with the Oriental Art Exhibition ... in the absence of the Lord Provost, Councillor Jackson occupied the chair, and briefly introduced the lecturer. Dr. Dresser first dwelt on the peculiarities of Japanese art, showing the manner in which it has been moulded and influenced by the two prevailing systems of religion – Shintoism and Buddhism – of the Japanese. The characteristic features of Japanese art were illustrated by numerous examples drawn from the cases in the Oriental Exhibition, as well as from a collection lent by Mr. Robert Balfour. Dr. Dresser finally gave a number of interesting particulars regarding the various manufactures, dwelling especially on the processes in making the cloisonné enamels, lacquers and the various classes of pottery and porcelain. On the motion of Mr. J. Wylie Guild a very cordial vote of thanks was awarded to the lecturer.<sup>44</sup>

Dresser had been in Japan at the invitation of the Japanese government between 26 December 1876 and 2 April 1877 to visit various pottery-making centres (see Chapter 7). It was through his good offices that the

Glasgow Collection was transported to London from Japan and then sent on to Glasgow. On 9 December 1878, the *Glasgow Herald* reported the arrival of thirty-one cases containing 1,150 items from Japan.<sup>45</sup>

The Oriental Art Exhibition, in Glasgow, 1881–2, attracted some 30,000 visitors. In the *Glasgow City Museum Annual Report* of 1882 it was noted that Glasgow School of Art students did attend regularly and ‘used the collection for the purpose of continuous study’. Eventually, the Japanese art work was moved into the storerooms of the new Kelvingrove Galleries where, for more than a century, it languished. The Japanese Collection of 1878 was finally exhibited in its entirety at Kelvingrove in 1991. The variety of material in the collection, which ‘evoked much surprise and pleasure amongst all those who have worked with it’, includes furniture, wood and lacquer, ceramics, metal ware, textiles and costume, and paperwork, the art of *washi*.

The ceramic collection has been described as follows:

the Japanese government gift to Glasgow contained over ninety ceramic items ... coming from twenty three different regional prefectures or city districts and covering a wide range of types of object, technique and style of manufacture. The crudest and cheapest is a small red earthenware teapot, and the most delicate and costly is a pair of tall porcelain sake cups painted with the scenes from the tales of the Genji on the outside and on the inside with the fifty four *waka* or short poems which introduce each chapter of the novel.<sup>46</sup>

In exchange West of Scotland industrial firms sent the following:

Contributions from Glasgow to the Industrial Collection for the Japanese Museum, Tokyo, 1878

*Series of 11 Specimens illustrating the manufacture of Alum, Red and Yellow Prussiate of Potash.*

Presented by The Hurlet and Campsie Alum Coy.

*Bichromate of Potash.*

Presented by John and James White, Shawfield, Rutherglen.

*12 Specimens illustrating the products of Gas Tar.*

Presented by George Miller & Co., 89 Rumford Street, Bridgeton.

*22 Specimens of Pottery.*

Presented by The Port-Dundas Pottery Co.

*23 Specimens illustrating the manufacture of Bar and Pig Iron.*

Presented by The Glasgow Iron Co.

*Glass Show Case, containing Specimens of Sewing Cotton.*

Presented by J. & P. Coats, Paisley.

*92 Illustrations of Alkali (Soda) manufacture and Collateral Industries.*

Presented by Charles Tennant & Co., St. Rollox.

*22 Specimens illustrating Asbestos Manufacture.*



- Presented by The Patent Asbestos Co. (Limited).
- 84 *Specimens illustrating the processes of Bleaching and Calico Printing.*  
Presented by Inglis & Wakefield, Busby.
- 6 *Varieties of Scotch Wools.*  
Presented by J. & W. Greig, Macalpine Street.
- 150 *Specimens of Woollen, Worsted, Angola, and Fancy Yarns.*  
Presented by David Sandeman & Co., 11 John Street.
- 367 *Illustrations of Linen Thread Making.*  
Presented by Finlayson, Bousfield, & Co., Johnstone.
- 3 *Illustrations of the Stereotyping of the Glasgow Herald.*  
Presented by the Proprietors of the *Herald*.
- 88 *Specimens of Colours, Varnishes, White Lead, and Sheet Lead.*  
Presented by Alexander, Fergusson, & Co., Macalpine Street.
- 41 *Specimens illustrating the manufacture of Fire-Clay Bricks.*  
Presented by James Dunnachie, Glenboig.
- 150 *Specimens of Steel Manufacture.*  
Presented by The Steel Co. of Scotland (Limited).
- 31 *Illustrations of Sugar Refining.*  
Presented by W. Connal & Co., 43 Virginia Street.
- 54 *Specimens of Lucifer Match and Match Box Making.*  
Presented by John Jex Long, Duke Street.
- 17 *Specimens of Artistic Chromo-Lithographs.*  
Presented by Maclure & Macdonald, St. Vincent Place.
- 18 *Specimens of Tapestry Weaving.*  
Presented by Barbour & Miller, Brook Street, Mile-End.

Source: *Glasgow City Museum Annual Report*, 1879.<sup>47</sup>

## Collecting Japanese art

The Japanese collections that at present grace our museums and art galleries originally depended on the ardent collectors, a few of whom are referred to here. There is no doubt that we are deeply indebted to these enthusiasts. The city art collection has often taken the role of Cinderella.

Local councillors have always been reluctant to spend money on cultural objectives such as art and libraries. Andrew Carnegie transformed the public library movement by his provision of fine library buildings nation-wide. Art galleries received no such support, being left to the local government authorities whose enthusiasms were, naturally, for clean water and sewage plants.

## Notes

- 1 William Anderson FRCS, *Who Was Who, 1897–1915*, 1915, p. 12.
- 2 T. Clark, 'Japanese paintings at the British Museum', *British Museum Magazine*, Vol. 13 (spring 1993), pp. 15–18.
- 3 W. Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, Oxford, 1990; S. Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, 1993.



- 4 M. Tomkinson, *A Japanese Collection*, 1898; G.S. Tomkinson, *Those Damned Tomkinsons*, 1950; K. Tomkinson, *Characters of Kidderminster*, 1985.
- 5 J.L. Bowes in B.G. Orchard, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, privately printed, Liverpool, 1893, pp. 192–4; K. Baedeker, *The British Isles*, 4th edn, 1897, Liverpool, p. 334.
- 6 A. Lovelace, *Art for Industry, the Glasgow Japan Exchange of 1878*, Glasgow Museums, Glasgow, 1991.
- 7 Clark, 'Japanese paintings at the British Museum', p. 15.
- 8 Clark, 'Japanese paintings at the British Museum', p. 15.
- 9 Clark, 'Japanese Paintings at the British Museum', p. 15.
- 10 E. Evett, *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art*, Ann Arbor, 1982.
- 11 Probate Registry, William Anderson, who died at 1 Harley Street, London, on 27 October 1900.
- 12 Clark, 'Japanese Paintings at the British Museum', p. 18.
- 13 Probate Registry, Arthur George Morrison died at High Barn, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire, on 4 December 1945. Gross value of estate £45,645, and net value £35,770.
- 14 Probate Registry, Christopher Dresser, registered 19 December 1904; gross value of estate £3,891, and net value of personal estate £2,157.
- 15 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 41, quoting Frederick Burrows.
- 16 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 42, quoting Frederick Burrows.
- 17 K. Tomkinson, *The Tomkinson Story*, Kidderminster, 1985, p. 37.
- 18 Franche Hall was enlarged in the 1870s. It thereafter included 'an observatory, and a special room for his famous Japanese collection', C.G. Nickson, article on Franche Hall, c.1966.
- 19 Tomkinson, *Those Damned Tomkinsons*, p. 1.
- 20 Letter from Glennys Wild, Senior Curator, Art Department, Birmingham, 25 February 1997; A list of Tomkinson Collection displayed at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901; Glasgow International Exhibition Official Catalogue of Art Objects, Charles P. Watson publisher, Glasgow, copy in Glasgow University Library.
- 21 Probate Register, Michael Tomkinson, 29 October 1921.
- 22 Tomkinson, *Characters of Kidderminster*, p. 19.
- 23 The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham, was co-founded by John Bowes (1811–85) who was not an immediate relative of James Lord Bowes. However John Bowes did live at Streatlam Castle, County Durham. James Lord Bowes used the name Streatlam Towers for his house in Liverpool.
- 24 'Japan as a field for English trade: an interview with the Mikado's Consul in Liverpool', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 December 1888, pp. 1–2. J.L. Bowes reprinted the article about him from the *Pall Mall Gazette*. A card with 'The best wishes of the Japanese Consul and Mrs Bowes for a Happy New Year' was circulated. No date was given.
- 25 The Japanese Consul at Liverpool seems to have been made because of Bowes's connection with one or more Japanese at the Trade Encouragement Bureau.
- 26 The Imperial government of Japan appointed Honorary Consuls in Liverpool (1 August 1889) and Glasgow (25 May 1889) 'in consequence of the increasing importance of the commercial relations between Japan and Britain'. See *Kakkoku-chuzai-Taikoku-Meioryoji-ninmen-kankei-Satsussen* [miscellaneous papers relating to appointments and dismissals of honorary consuls in various countries] – Glasgow File, M2–1–0, 14–30, Diplomatic Archives, Tokyo. There was also for a time an Honorary Consul for Japan in Middlesborough. See H. Mutsu, 'The Diplomatic and Consular Service of Japan', *Japan Society of London*, Vol. VII, 1907, p. 448.
- 27 Orchard, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, p. 192.

- 28 Orchard, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, p. 192.
- 29 Baedeker, *The British Isles*, p. 334, with thanks to Sylvia Lewis, the Gateacre Society, Liverpool.
- 30 Catalogue of Bowes Collection. Branche and Leete, Auctioneers, Liverpool.
- 31 Catalogue of Bowes Collection, p. 192.
- 32 Catalogue of Bowes Collection, p. 191.
- 33 Probate Registry, James Lord Bowes, died 27 October 1899, dated 2 February 1900; gross value of Estate £10,442, and resworn after the sale of the Bowes Collection, October 1901, £20,120.
- 34 J.T. Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, 1996, p. 75.
- 35 F. Brinkley, *Japan, its History, Arts and Literature*, Vol. 7, p. 121.
- 36 J.L. Bowes, *Japanese Pottery*, Liverpool, 1890, vii–ix.
- 37 R.L. Wilson, 'Tea taste in the era of Japonisme: A debate', *Chanoya Quarterly*, Vol. 50, 1987, pp. 23–39.
- 38 Wilson, 'Tea taste in the era of Japonisme', p. 26.
- 39 E.S. Morse review of *Japanese Pottery*, *The Nation*, New York, 13 November 1890.
- 40 J.L. Bowes, *Boston Transcript*, n.d. given but 1890.
- 41 E.S. Morse, *Boston Transcript*, 3 December 1890; *The Studio*, 10 January 1891; *Japanese Weekly Mail*, 10 January 1891.
- 42 A. East, *A British Artist in Meiji Japan*, ed. H. Cortazzi, Brighton, 1991, pp. 64–5.
- 43 Lovelace, *Art for Industry*, 1991.
- 44 *Glasgow Herald*, 2 March 1882, p. 4, col. f.
- 45 *Glasgow Herald*, 9 December 1878 and Lovelace, *Art for Industry*, p. 12.
- 46 Lovelace, *Art for Industry*, p. 23.
- 47 Lovelace, *Art for Industry*, p. 13, from *Glasgow City Museum Annual Report*, 1879.

## 11 Three painters, Menpes, Hornel, Brangwyn, and their patrons

Mortimer Menpes (1856–1938),<sup>1</sup> born ‘inartistically’ as he said, in Australia, but, from his arrival in Britain as a young man, determinedly English, was a painter, etcher and book illustrator, whose patron was, for a time, James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). Edward Atkinson Hornel (1863–1933),<sup>2</sup> also Australian born, but, after he had left the antipodes as a child, to return to family roots in Scotland, determinedly Scottish, had the good fortune to have the Glasgow art dealer Alexander Reid (1854–1928) as his patron. Both these men lived and worked in Japan, and both earned a painterly reputation – and a comfortable living – from Japan. Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956),<sup>3</sup> Belgian born, but of Welsh and English stock, was also a painter, who probably never visited Japan, and who did not rely upon ‘Japanese’ paintings for his livelihood, but whose patron was Matsukata Kojiro, the third son of Matsukata Masayoshi, the financial genius of Meiji Japan.

The experiences of these three men help to understand the relationships of painters to Japan and to Britain.

### Mortimer Menpes and Whistler

Menpes was a ‘follower’, that is student, adviser or assistant to Whistler in the 1880s. Until March 1887, when he left for Japan, Menpes made much of his decision to travel to Japan, without telling Whistler, on the grounds that he had ‘a career to make and was determined to succeed’.<sup>4</sup> Menpes’s visit to Japan was much resented by Whistler, who quickly ended his association with his former friend.

During the 1880s, and partly at least because of his earlier association with Whistler, Menpes became a popular and well-paid artist. He held a number of one-man exhibitions in London, under the auspices of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers. Skill as an etcher had been one of the bonds between Menpes and Whistler, and Menpes produced a large number of etchings.<sup>5</sup> In 1885 the Royal Society of British Artists sponsored his show, at which he was the sole exhibitor. In 1897 the Royal Institute of Painters of Water Colours held a Menpes-only show.

During 1896, Menpes, with some of his family, visited Japan again. Two letters from him from Tokyo, dated 15 July and 1 August 1896, were published in *The Studio* in 1896 and 1898.<sup>6</sup> These were addressed to 'Dear Holmes' and ended 'Yours faithfully', and appear to have been facsimile reproductions of the text of each letter. The page of each letter was illustrated with a Menpes pen and ink drawing. Some of the drawings were later used by Menpes in his own book on *Japan* published by A & C Black in 1901 (see Chapter 12).

Menpes first arrived in Japan in the late spring of 1887. He probably had an introduction either to Josiah Conder or to Frank Brinkley, one of whom presented him to Kawanabe Kyosai (see Chapter 15). Menpes thus learnt of Kyosai's work not long before the latter's death in the spring of 1889. In 1887 Menpes first met Kyosai 'at Captain Brinkley's' and then spent 'an entire day observing Kyosai at work'. As Kyosai explained to Menpes:

I watch my bird, and the particular pose I wish to copy before I attempt to represent it. I observe that very closely until he moves and the attitude is altered. Then I go away and record as much of that particular pose that I can remember. Perhaps I may be able to put down only three or four lines, but directly I have lost the impression I stop. Then I go back again and study the bird until it takes up the same position as before. And then I again try and retain as much of it as I can. In this way I began by spending a whole day in the garden watching a bird and its particular attitude, and in the end I have remembered the pose so well, by continually trying to represent it, that I am able to repeat it entirely from my impression – but not from the bird. It is a hindrance to have the model before me when I have a mental picture of the pose. What I do is a painting from memory and it is a true impression.<sup>7</sup>

On Menpes's return from Japan, Whistler greeted him sourly. 'Well Sir, excuse yourself,' he cried. Menpes advised Whistler that, in Japan, he had found another master. 'How dare you call this Japanese a master on your own responsibility? Give me your reasons. What do you mean by it?'

Menpes, then and there, began to explain Kyosai's methods as he had seen them. 'That is my method,' interrupted Whistler. 'No, that is Kyosai's method,' said Menpes. 'I told him that Kyosai displayed enormous facility and great knowledge. A black dress would be one beautiful broad tone of black, the flesh one clear tone of flesh, the shadows growing out of the mass forming part of the whole.'

'That is my method,' Whistler broke in volubly; 'that is exactly my method. I don't paint my shadows in little blues, and greens, and yellows until they cease to be a part of the picture. I paint them exactly as they are in nature, as a part of the whole. This Kyosai must be a wonderful man, for his methods are my methods. Go on Menpes, tell me more.'<sup>8</sup>

After Menpes's experiences in Japan, the friendship between Whistler and Menpes ended. Whistler was insulting, offensively addressing Menpes, as a 'careless kangaroo' and signing the same letter 'Tous mes compliments! Some one in Paris will translate this for you.' Another letter demanded 'You will blow your brains out – of course.' 'Piggott has shown you what to do, under the circumstances, and you know your way to Spain, goodbye.'<sup>9</sup>

### Edward Atkinson Hornel

Edward Atkinson Hornel (1863–1933)<sup>10</sup> is a good example of a painter who made a successful career out of his Japanese connection. He used Japan, and notably Japanese women, dressed in all their exotic finery, as models, to portray a romantic and idyllic society far removed from the *realpolitik* that was then determining Japanese attitudes to the world. Hornel's decision to exploit his foreign experiences – he painted in Ceylon and Burma as well as in Japan – to create and then paint the exotic scenes before him was without doubt a profitable business. When Hornel died in 1933 his estate was worth over £40,000, a remarkable sum at that time.<sup>11</sup>

Hornel was not an innocent abroad: he knew what he was doing. In the lecture that he prepared after returning from Japan (and which was given in Glasgow on his behalf on 9 February 1895), he wrote:

The present war with China has done, and will do more, to unveil for us the real Japan, than anything that has been, or is likely to be written. ... We realize now that it is not only a paradise of babies and pretty girls, a land of cherry blossom and seductive tea house life, but the home of a brave and warlike nation. ...

It is disagreeable, indeed almost impossible for me, to associate the Japanese with politics and their consequences, and in this paper I do not mean to do so. Rather do I associate and love to remember them as a large and happy family clattering along in the sunshine with smiling faces and no thought of the morrow, to spend the day 'mid plum or cherry blossom, or at night, joyous and elevated with saki [*sic*], amusing themselves with pretty geishas, dancing to the weird music of the Samisen.<sup>12</sup>

From this it can be seen that Hornel, the painter, deliberately opted to illustrate the romantic Japan. From his 1893–4 extended stay in Japan Hornel produced a collection of vibrant 'Japanese' paintings, glittering with vivid colour and authenticity.

### Two 'Glasgow Boys' in Japan

The fever of *Japonisme* was at its height when, in 1893, the 30-year-old Edward Atkinson Hornel and his friend, George Henry (1858–1943),<sup>13</sup>

members of the burgeoning group of painters, the 'Glasgow Boys', were given the opportunity of visiting, and living in, Japan. The pair left Liverpool by the steamer *SS Pegu* on 18 February 1893. They arrived in Nagasaki on 21 April 1893<sup>14</sup> and remained in Japan for over a year before leaving Yokohama on 19 May 1894<sup>15</sup> on the German steamer *SS Nürnberg*. They landed back on British soil on 11 July 1894. Both men were deeply affected by their experience; both produced evocative pictures of Japan, some of which are on view at principal art galleries in Scotland.

George Henry, an Ayrshire man, who had studied at the Glasgow School of Art became, for a time, a close friend of Edward Hornel. His Japan pictures are important but he did not continue the Japanese theme in later life. Some time after the Japan adventure Henry moved to London where he developed his work as a successful portrait painter.

Henry and Hornel settled themselves in Tsukiji, that part of Tokyo then reserved for foreigners. Until the following year, 1894, and a change of the law, they were required to live in a designated area.

Henry and Hornel were staying at the Metropole Hotel, which, although reputable enough, had an exotic air. As one writer described it:

a Japanese maiden playing a samisen in an iris garden in the foreign settlement, and the stained glass and the ivy of the church, and the veranda fragrant with lavender paulownia blossoms ... and the late cherries of St. Luke's and its bells, and the weird secret rooms of the Metropole, and opium.<sup>16</sup>

It would seem that shortly after their arrival Henry and Hornel wrote to Frank Brinkley, owner and editor of the *Japan Mail*, an English-language newspaper in Tokyo, asking for advice as to how to live outside the constraints of Tsukiji, the foreign settlement. Brinkley, an Irishman, had arrived in 1867, married a Japanese and settled in Japan. He and his newspaper were regarded as pro-Japanese, but he was 'an authority on Japanese art and on porcelain in particular'.<sup>17</sup> It would seem that the two 'Glasgow Boys' wanted to get out of what they considered the oppressive atmosphere of the foreign settlement. Could this have been related to their burgeoning friendship with two Japanese ladies?

Brinkley did not in fact make contact until the autumn of 1893, when he wrote:

Dear Mr Hornel,

I have a thousand apologies to make, first, for not coming to see you, and secondly for leaving your letter so long unanswered. As to the former points, I have been twice to look for you. Once I called at the hotel Metropole, subsequently I went to search for you in company with Mr Conder, but we failed to find your house. Since my return from the

country at the end of last month I have had one of those rushes of work which you doubtless will understand, and now I am starting for China tomorrow. Instead therefore of coming to see you I must content myself with a letter about your passport trouble.

I have spoken about the matter at the foreign office and they say you can get a six months' passport at any time by going the right way to work – for I presume you are in Jap. employ in order to live outside the settlement – must apply for a passport stating distinctly that he has given you six months' leave and that it is necessary in the interests of the business entrusted to you – say scientific research, – that you should travel during the six months. Then give yourselves a wide range of country in explaining your route (for the purpose of getting the passport written) and after that quickly use the passport as often as you please during the six months. Say nothing about coming back to Tokyo and leaving it again but simply use the passport each time of going away. I am sure you will have no difficulty if you adopt this method.<sup>18</sup>

Brinkley's letter was kindly meant, but irrelevant. Several months before Brinkley's letter arrived Hornel and Henry had taken matters into their own hands. They had moved out of Tsukiji, no doubt as they would have claimed, for artistic reasons. They wanted to find, or they had already found, Japanese geishas and dancing girls as subjects for their painting. They needed the 'old Japan'. Hornel complained that in Tsukiji 'every second man you meet is a missionary and your rest is broken by the constant chiming of church bells' ringing in the foreign area of Tokyo.<sup>19</sup>

From the letters from George Henry to Edward Hornel, which have survived and which are dated and addressed from Japan, it is known that by 6 October 1893 Henry was in residence at 'Kai Ki Kwan, Inage, near Chiba', that is at a seaside resort some thirty miles from Tokyo, around Tokyo bay. There he remained for some months. Henry lived in the spa hotel, which must have seemed idyllic. The building itself has long gone. By Saturday, 13 January 1894 Henry was based at 93 Tatemachi, Kanazawa, which is south of Tokyo, and was arranging to meet Hornel at 'Kamikura' [*sic*]. Kamakura, a small town (in Kanazawa prefecture), south of Tokyo, was famous as a former capital. It is still renowned for its many historic sites including its huge Daibatsu, or Buddha, and has been, and remains, a place of pilgrimage, for Japanese and foreigner alike. There is a full description of Kamakura and its shrines, in *Murray's Handbook of Japan*, which Henry and Hornel were using.

It is not known where Hornel was living, and none of his letters have survived.

But both men had apparently set up house with Japanese women. Henry was living in Inage with 'Yororku'. Hornel was living elsewhere with 'O Kumu San'. Not only that but O Kumu San may have been pregnant



although she was thought 'to be safe from any swelling' (16 October 1893). In another undated letter probably in the autumn 1893, Henry writes, 'I am awfully sorry to hear that you do not seem to be improving rapidly and that O Kumu San is breeding. However all may come right soon.'<sup>20</sup> Perhaps all did 'come right soon' in the sense that the pregnancy did apparently end. The fact that these two strangers set up house, with such ease, with young Japanese women, reflects the lowly position of women and the overall poverty in Japan at that time. Clearly living in this way could be organised more easily outside the boundaries of the foreign settlement.

Henry seems to have had a tender conscience about their behaviour in Japan. In one letter written after his return to Scotland, and, after he had been entertaining various Scottish female friends in his studio, he wrote, 'I don't know what they would think of me. It was unfortunate!'<sup>21</sup>

Henry was working with a photographer, Parlett, who seemed to be staying at the same place. There is some reference in Henry's letters to Seed's plates (glass plates for photographs). This suggests that it was Parlett who worked with O Kumu San, taking photographs of her in various kimonos and various poses, which Henry then, later, turned into pictures.

Although there seems to be no written word from Hornel about his dalliance in Japan it should be noted that he never married. His older sister, Elizabeth (Tizzy), lived with him as his housekeeper and companion for the rest of his life. And she chaperoned him when he returned to Japan in 1921.

Whatever the real story behind the experiment of living outside the foreign concession, there is a hint that it ended ignominiously. According to Hornel, who implies in his lecture that the two men were living in the same accommodation, they were supposed to be regarded, locally, with disfavour:

there were a series of newspaper articles, calling upon the population to extrude us by tuck of drum and to wreak vengeance upon men who made their houses gambling dens, and to which they lured needy dancing girls to their doom'.<sup>22</sup>

### **Alexander Reid, the dealer, in Scotland**

The visit to Japan of the two 'Glasgow Boys' had been made possible by the initiative of Alexander Reid (1854–1928),<sup>23</sup> the art dealer in Glasgow, who organised the trip, and possibly by William Burrell,<sup>24</sup> the ship owner and art connoisseur, who may have paid the bills. Reid, a remarkable entrepreneur by any standards (see Chapter 9), brought Japanese prints and the paintings of the Impressionists to Glasgow, then the prosperous industrial capital of Scotland. It was the entrepreneur Reid who had taken the initiative and lived and worked in Paris, where he lodged with the Van Gogh brothers. There, in Paris, Reid shared the excitement over the strange



'new' art that was pouring out of Japan. Reid saw the potential of *Japonisme* for Scots painters; he invested in it by inviting Henry and Hornel to go to Japan. Reid was not only acting as agent for William Burrell, but was also at the centre of an active, if small, and discriminating, public interested in art in Glasgow. There was great wealth in Glasgow at this time; those profiting from the engineering and ship-building industries were at the peak of their success.

Sir James Caw, an important Scottish painter of the day wrote:

As regards the painting of his own time Alexander Reid had better and more personal taste, more courage in backing it than any other dealer I have known anywhere. He was always discriminating, popular appreciation meant little or nothing to him, he was even in advance of prevailing tastes ... for five and thirty years from 1890, except for two rather creative artists, Alex Reid was perhaps the most outstanding and most characteristic figure in art affairs in Scotland.<sup>25</sup>

When Henry and Hornel returned to Scotland, in the summer of 1894, Alexander Reid was keen to arrange a joint exhibition of Henry's and Hornel's new 'Japanese' works. But Henry was tense and disaffected; he had unwisely rolled up some of his paintings for the return journey to Scotland, and these, on being unpacked, proved to be irreparably damaged. 'I have chucked over all the Japanese stuff and am going on with other work,' he wrote to Hornel. In the same letter he commented, 'If I feel in the humour I may take up a Jap thing now and again and finish it, but to start and attempt to work them up right off, No thank you, not for me!'<sup>26</sup>

One of the local newspapers gossiped about the situation:

Macfie, Hornel one of your crowd, is to have a show of his Japanese pictures, I see. They tell me it's his big bid for fame; and that in some respects it's a remarkable achievement. Megilpisor. H'm yes, Ned's a scorcher at colour, I've seen some of the stuff and it sings. He's not painting with Henry now, by the way. They seem to have split partnership.<sup>27</sup>

Notwithstanding his difficulties, Henry did eventually complete a number of fine geisha paintings, some of which are held in various art galleries in Scotland and others which are in private hands.

Edward Hornel's response was more appropriate. An exhibition of his Japanese paintings was presented at Reid's Gallery in May 1895.<sup>28</sup> For this occasion Henry drew Hornel's portrait, which was signed vertically, as if it were Japanese. The signature is completed with the imitation of an '*inkan*' formed from Hornel's initials. The upper Japanese character, *kei-sei*, means a courtesan. The lower character is distorted but could be taken as *hanna*, meaning 'flower'.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 11.1 E.A. Hornel, 1895

### Edward Hornel's 'Japanese' Exhibition, 1895

With some fanfare Hornel's Japanese Exhibition opened in Glasgow at Alexander Reid's *La Société des Beaux Arts*, 124 St Vincent Street, on 1 May 1895. As the *Glasgow Echo* reported:

It is indeed a unique collection, and, attracting as it does considerable attention from artists as well as laymen, it will have an important bearing on future art, for the artist has struck out in a new direction, upsetting all preconceived ideas in a wild, abandoned attempt to follow the leadings of his own imagination. Mr Edward Hornel is responsible for the whole collection. During a stay of some 16 months in the land of the Japs he

filled about 30 canvasses revelling in the grand variety and heightened colours peculiar to life and nature in the land of the Mikado.<sup>30</sup>

*The Studio* commented:

In all Mr Hornel's work there has been an influence of the best Japanese art, not a slavish imitation in conjunction with his own individuality, but an influence in the direction of good design both as regards colour and form, or rather in the effective placing on the canvas, the charm of colour and decoration.<sup>31</sup>

As Alexander Reid had no doubt hoped, Hornel's 'Japanese' exhibition was a sell-out; all thirty paintings were sold. Neither catalogue nor price list remains. As a result there can be no calculation of the profits made by Hornel, or by his agent and sponsor, Alexander Reid. Suffice it to say that the sale of the Japanese paintings seems to have made Edward Hornel financially secure. In 1901 he bought, for £650, Broughton House, High Street, Kirkcudbright, where he was to live for the rest of his life. It seems clear that from the 1890s Hornel recognised the importance of exoticism as a feature for some of his paintings. Hornel did not forget the undoubted success of his 1893–4 visit to Japan. In 1907 he visited Ceylon and in 1921 Burma and Japan.

### **Hornel in Japan, 1921**

Fortunately a set of Hornel's letters, written from Japan in 1921, has survived. This correspondence was with Thomas Fraser of Dalbeattie, a man of many skills who became a publisher, and who was the man who encouraged the mature Hornel to become an avid book collector. The Hornel correspondence from Japan in 1921 is notable for the extraordinary dedication to book collecting that Hornel then showed, and for his interest in those book sales, in Scotland, which were taking place in his absence. There are only some passing references to the paintings on which he was working in Japan.

Although the stay in Japan, from 10 February to 21 July 1921, was clearly important, there is only the occasional reference to any painterly activity. Hornel's Japanese visit in 1921 was to Kyoto, which had been chosen as a base because the ancient capital, north-east of the former treaty port of Kobe, had remained remarkably unchanged and was still redolent of the romantic 'old Japan' so beloved of Westerners. As Hornel acknowledged, 'This place is the old capital and is not very much touched by modern ideas, and is still very paintable.'<sup>32</sup>

Hornel, with his sister Elizabeth (Tizzy), stayed in the Miyako Hotel, up in the hills of northern Kyoto, where he was able to negotiate a very good rate for a long stay. The Miyako Hotel, still a gracious and spacious home from home, has been for many years one of Japan's great hotels, and as such familiar to many foreigners. The weather was a challenge. As Hornel wrote,

‘It is very cold. Snow lying about everywhere, but the buds on the flowering trees are big and full of promise.’<sup>33</sup>

By 16 February 1921 Hornel was already busy:

it is much too cold to sit out of doors to paint yet, but I have started to work inside and am trying to get a grip of the new material. This place is going to suit me alright, it is just as Jappy here as it was in Tokyo 27 years ago, and that is sufficient for me.

Hornel was soon absorbed by ‘things Japanese’; as he wrote, ‘Our landlord [at the hotel] is quite an enthusiast...he is most anxious that I should understand the meaning and symbolism of flowers and so on.’<sup>34</sup> By 18 March Hornel was:

getting into his work here and I am getting I think some nice things laid in. What a tremendous difference there is between Burma and Japan. Everything is different and it is just like starting all over again. It is splendid practice and gets one out of the old ruts.

By the end of March (31 March) Hornel was writing:

I found Japan all I had expected of it. I only wish I had more ability to do it justice. It is finer than Burma. It has all Burma has, plus that something that comes to a people with great art traditions and art possessions. There is meaning to everything you see, and it makes you think and in thinking you make discoveries, and the result is to your lasting benefit. At least so I take it, and I am awfully glad I came back to it.<sup>35</sup>

Hornel was delighted when in May (16 May 1921) a small group of travelling dancers visited the Miyako Hotel. As he noted:

The dancers were three young children, girls of about 10 or 12 and two women who played the Samisen. They danced for nearly two hours the old dances I knew so well in the old Japan days and danced beautifully.

Hornel was so pleased with this group that he arranged for them to come back and be photographed. He was displeased at the high prices charged by the photographer.

During this second extended visit to Japan, Hornel seems to have searched around for Japanese books that would inform and authenticate his paintings. In the library at Broughton House there are fourteen books, four of which illustrate Japanese flowers. These are, 1, *The Lilies of Japan*, *Paeonia Moutan*, published 1907, 2, *A Collection of 50 Choice Varieties*, 3, *Iris Kaemperi*, 18 *Best Varieties*, and 4, *Iris Kaemperi*, 25 *Choice Varieties*. All four books were published by the Yokohama Nursery Co. Ltd (21–35 Nakamura, Yokohama).

The books on kimono patterns are detailed, explaining colours and designs suitable for older or younger family members. There are pictures of patterns suitable for kimonos for weddings, springtime, New Year and so on. It is intriguing that Hornel, in 1921, as a man of fifty-eight years, should be so resolved to attain authenticity in the kimono designs for his paintings. None of his Scottish contemporaries, the buyers of his paintings in Scotland, could judge the validity of the design patterns of the Hornel-painted kimonos.

In Hornel's lecture on Japan (given on his return to Glasgow) he talks enthusiastically of the Japanese. Of their love of 'Nature' he writes:

Nature to them is symbolism itself, and associated with traditions handed down from remote periods. Flower follows flower – the whole earth rejoicing in a profusion of bloom – the cherry 'first among flowers as the warrior is first among men', the Wysteria, Iris, and Lotus following each other in rapid succession, till the season is crowned at length with the regal and imperial chrysanthemums. ... This symbolism ... finds its highest expression perhaps, in the arrangement of flowers in their homes ... an Art expression requiring many years of careful study. A few flowers, one or two twigs quaintly put together in a beautiful vase, and these tiny parts of nature express a thought, a story, or a tradition.<sup>36</sup>

For Edward Hornel the period of residence in Japan altered his career as a painter. Subsequently, he painted subjects in Scotland, particularly in the Stewartry, in south-west Scotland, but in a sense he remained in thrall to the East for the rest of his life.

Edward Hornel died a rich man, at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, on 30 June 1933. There the architect John Keppie (1863–1945) had designed and built a studio and art gallery, as an addition to the eighteenth-century house. This overlooks 'a Japanese garden', which still remains. Hornel left his house and his library in trust 'for the people of the Stewartry' but recently the National Trust for Scotland has taken over. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Hornel's visit to Japan in 1893–4, which produced a range of Japanese paintings, all of which sold well, set him on the road to prosperity.

As his biographer concluded, 'Hornel was one of the finest colourists Scotland has produced. In the first half of the 1890s he was at the forefront of progressive Scottish painting.' Finally as the painter John Duncan noted during the Japanese period, 'Hornel played with colour, making these splashes ... pass as kimono or flower or sky or water.'<sup>37</sup>

### **Frank Brangwyn (Sir)**

Although born in Bruges, Frank Brangwyn was British, the son of a Welsh architect. Once he had committed himself to an artistic career he studied with William Morris. Earlier, during his youth, he had travelled widely as a seaman in Europe and South Africa. His ship may have called in at

Japanese ports. Before he was thirty years old, he had done designs on 'Music and Dancing' in Paris for Bing's *L'Art nouveau*. He was an expert etcher and taught Bernard Leach. Although little is known of any early Japan connection it was reaffirmed in 1910 when he was a member of the General Fine Art Committee for the Japan British Exhibition at White City, London.

In 1916 Brangwyn did a charcoal and pastel drawing of Matsukata Kojiro and this led to a curious friendship. Matsukata Kojiro<sup>38</sup> was destined for business and became involved with the Hyogo Shipbuilding Company, which eventually emerged as the Kawasaki Shipyard in Kobe, a modern shipyard of great potential. He was a hard-working and astute businessman, with wide interests in newspapers and in the arts. During the First World War he lived in London, supposedly selling ships to the British government, which because of war destruction was in dire need. Kojiro was an active and dedicated buyer of Japanese art with a grand flat in Queen Anne's Mansions.

It is said that, on one day in a gallery in St James Street, he saw a fine painting of a shipyard with a large red crane. It reminded Kojiro of the shipyard at Kobe and he resolved to buy it. The gallery owner brought the painter, Frank Brangwyn, to meet him. This resulted in 'a long and close friendship'.<sup>39</sup> As has been explained, 'During the war Brangwyn introduced Kojiro to many people in the art world, who gave him advice and helped him make purchases.'<sup>40</sup> Through Brangwyn, Kojiro is believed to have met Leonce Benedite, who, as curator of the Luxembourg Museum in Paris, introduced him to Auguste Rodin. Several of Rodin's most famous works, including *The Burghers of Calais*, *The Three Dancers* and *The Kiss*, are believed to have been bought by Kojiro Matsukata.<sup>41</sup>

Certainly Brangwyn was requested to prepare a design for an art gallery in Tokyo to house Kojiro Matsukata's collection of Western art. This was to be called *Kyo Raku En*, the Garden of Shared Enjoyment. Brangwyn was to have gone to Tokyo to supervise the building of the gallery. It is said that the Tokyo earthquake of 1923, which did immense physical damage, and ruined many Japanese businessmen, prevented the plan from going forward. Brangwyn's design was illustrated in *The Builder* in 1922.<sup>42</sup> Brangwyn must have been sorely disappointed; he remarked, 'My love for Japanese art has always made me sympathetic to the Japanese, their art and civilisation.'<sup>43</sup>

Brangwyn certainly referred to this colourful friendship, remarking:

My friend Matsukata was a remarkable chap. He was a wealthy ship-builder who wished to present a most important collection of pictures and works of art to the 'Sheer Pleasure Pavilion' in Tokyo – which I designed for them. But the whole thing fell through. There came a great earthquake and the whole thing fell through – where the building should have been – was nothing but a ruin.<sup>44</sup>

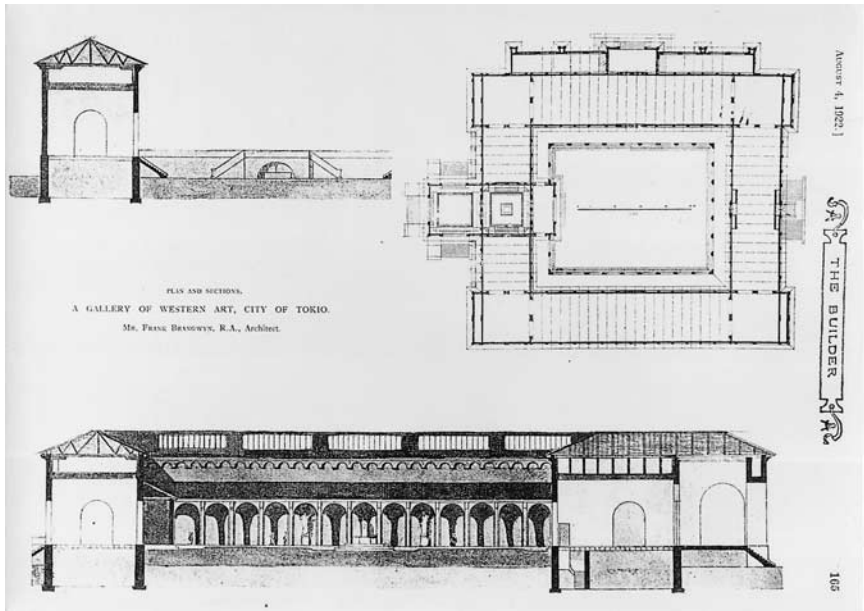


Figure 11.2 Frank Brangwyn's design for an art gallery, Tokyo

In this biography the author William de la Belleruche raises questions with Brangwyn. Belleruche therefore asks:

'And the paintings?' To which Brangwyn replied, 'The whole collection of these priceless paintings was destroyed in the great fire at the Bellgravia Pantechicon ... 600 masterpieces by the world's finest masters ... went up in smoke.

'Poor Matsukata, do you know that man would go off and sell a ruddy battleship so as to buy certain art treasures'.<sup>45</sup>

Brangwyn's story of the burning of so many Western paintings seems unlikely in view of Matsukata Kojiro's achievements as an art collector. As one of his nieces has written:

Kojiro is best remembered not as a business magnate or the son of a famous father, but for his collection of Western art which he started when he was in Europe between 1916 and 1918 and which became the core of the present collection of the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo.<sup>46</sup>

There is no doubt that Matsukata Kojiro, who claimed to know little or nothing about art,<sup>47</sup> was an avid collector. In 1918 Kojiro asked Durand-Ruel, a well-established art dealer in France, 'to buy woks of modern art



which were selling at low prices'.<sup>48</sup> According to information given in the history of the Kawasaki Shipyard, of which Matsukata Kojiro was managing director, 'the Board of Directors at Kawasaki Shipyard decided to give Matsukata Kojiro ¥100 000 to purchase pictorial art'. Eventually:

The warehouse at Kawasaki Shipyard accommodated more than 1 000 pieces of art which Kojiro had collected. Before the collection was auctioned, the most outstanding pieces including works by Cezanne and Monet, were especially sold to celebrities at the premises of the Fifteenth Bank in Tokyo. After that at least seven auctions were held, and, all in all, 1 128 pieces were sold. The total proceeds were ¥2 300 000.<sup>49</sup>

It seems almost certain that this story is related to the financial crash in 1927 in Japan. The Fifteenth Bank, the 'aristocratic' bank, so-called because it had attracted investment from the old and the new elite in Japan, was much involved with the Matsukata family, which held over 50 per cent of large loans and 30 per cent of all borrowing.<sup>50</sup> It seems clear that Matsukata Kojiro's friendship with Frank Brangwyn reflected Matsukata's business involvement with fine art as well as his feelings towards his Welsh friend.

Mortimer Menpes and Edward Hornel, assisted by their patrons J. McNeill Whistler and Alexander Reid, made good money by exploiting the craze for 'things Japanese' in Britain. Frank Brangwyn, because of the devastating earthquake of September 1923, found that his designs for an art gallery in Tokyo were shelved and so did not have any real opportunity to develop his Japanese connection. Menpes completed many, many paintings of Japan and the Japanese, but these were turned into colour plates for his book, *Japan*. This book was a very profitable venture. Hornel, in Scotland, undoubtedly made the most of his 'Japan period' by preparing a series of wonderful paintings, which attracted by their vivid colouring.

Mortimer Menpes died at his home at Iris Court, Pangbourne, Berkshire on 1 April 1938. Although *The Times* remarked that 'he had a great popular reputation as an artist, and particularly as an etcher'<sup>51</sup> Menpes had in fact retired, many years before, to the fruit farm at Pangbourne. Menpes left an estate valued at £3,260, 13 shillings and 7 pence. His spinster daughter, Rose Maud Goodwin Menpes, was the trustee and sole heir. Edward Atkinson Hornel left a sum of over £40,000. He looked after his sister Elizabeth (Tizzy) but, after her death, presented his estate in trust for the people of the Kirkcudbright area.<sup>52</sup>

## Notes

1 M. Menpes, *Whistler as I Knew Him*, 1904.

2 B. Smith, *Hornel, the Life and Work of Edward Atkinson Hornel*, Edinburgh, 1997.

3 W. de la Bellerocche, *Brangwyn's Pilgrimage, the Story of an Artist*, 1948.

4 Menpes, *Whistler as I Knew Him*, p. 39.



- 5 Sotheby's, 34–5 New Bond Street, London, *The Prints of Mortimer Menpes*, a private collection, Catalogue (Sale LN5640); 422 prints were sold, some of them from Japan, in London, on Wednesday, 25 October 1995.
- 6 M. Menpes, 'A letter from Japan' (Tokio [*sic*], 15 July 1896), *The Studio*, Vol. X, 1897, pp. 32–6 and 'A letter from Japan' (Tokyo, 1 August 1896), *The Studio*, Vol. XII, 1898, pp. 21–6.
- 7 M. Menpes, 'A personal view of Japanese art, a lesson from Khiosi [*sic*]', *Magazine of Art*, 1888, p. 195.
- 8 Menpes, *Whistler as I Knew Him*, pp. 40–1.
- 9 With thanks to Nigel Thorp and to the Glasgow University Centre for Whistler Studies, the University Library, Glasgow; Whistler, M309 (no date), and Whistler, M305 (no date).
- 10 Edward Atkinson Hornel lived at Broughton House, High Street, Kirkcudbright, south-west Scotland. The house is now in the care of the National Trust for Scotland; with thanks to Frances Scott, the property manager, and to manager James Allan, the librarian.
- 11 Edward Atkinson Hornel died on 30 June 1933; Inventory of Moveable or Personal Estate and Effects, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, reference SC16/41/72, pp. 116–20, estate £40,173, 6 shillings and 8 pence.
- 12 E.A. Hornel, *Lecture on Japan Given in Glasgow*, delivered (by John Keppie) in the Corporation Art Galleries, Glasgow, 9 February 1895 (printed by J.H. Maxwell, Castle Douglas); with thanks to James Allan at Hornel Library, Broughton House.
- 13 W. Buchanan, *Mr Henry and Mr Hornel Visit Japan*, Scottish Arts Council, 1978.
- 14 *Glasgow Evening News*, 21 April 1893.
- 15 *Japan Weekly Mail*, 19 May 1894.
- 16 E. Seidensticker, *Low City, High City, Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake*, 1983, pp. 40–1.
- 17 E.P. Conant, 'Captain Frank Brinkley resurrected', in O. Impey and M. Fairley (eds) *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, 1995, pp. 124–51; J.E. Hoare, 'Captain Francis Brinkley (1841–1912), yatoi, scholar and apologist', in J.E. Hoare (ed.), *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Vol. III, 1999; and J.E. Hoare, 'British journalists in Meiji Japan', in I. Nish (ed), *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Vol. II, 1993, pp. 20–32.
- 18 Letter from Frank Brinkley, 30 October 1893, Hornel papers, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.
- 19 Hornel, *Lecture on Japan Given in Glasgow*, 9 February 1895, p. 12.
- 20 Letters at Broughton House, with thanks to James Allan.
- 21 George Henry, letter at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, no date, but post-Japan.
- 22 Hornel, *Lecture on Japan Given in Glasgow*, 9 February 1895, p. 12.
- 23 For Alexander Reid, see Chapter 9, '*Japonisme* for all'; R. Pickvance, 'A man of influence, Alec Reid', *Scottish Art Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1968; Fiona Grieve, 'The dealers and collectors of Glasgow, a social history', M.Litt., University of St Andrews, 1991.
- 24 The Burrell Collection, Glasgow. Museums and Art Galleries, Glasgow, 1983; R. Marks, *Sir William Burrell, 1861–1958*, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, Glasgow, 1982.
- 25 Sir James Caw, *Scottish Painting, Past and Present, 1620–1908*, Edinburgh, 1908, p. 70.
- 26 The letter is addressed from '136 Wellington Street, Friday morning'. This was the address of E.A. Hornel's studio, Glasgow, letter at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.
- 27 *Glasgow Evening News*, 20 April 1895.

- 28 See *The Bailie*, Cartoon Supplement, 1 May 1895.
- 29 Buchanan, *Mr Henry and Mr Hornel Visit Japan*, p. 25.
- 30 *Glasgow Echo*, 4 May 1895.
- 31 *The Studio*, 15 December 1895.
- 32 E.A. Hornel letter from Kyoto, dated 10 February 1921, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright. With thanks to James Allan, librarian.
- 33 Hornel letter from Kyoto, dated 10 February 1921, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.
- 34 Hornel letter from Kyoto, 25 March 1921, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.
- 35 Hornel letter from Kyoto, 31 March 1921, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.
- 36 Hornel, *Lecture on Japan Given in Glasgow*, Glasgow, 9 February 1895, p. 8.
- 37 Smith, *Hornel*, p. 124.
- 38 Matsukata Masayoshi (1835–1924) was the financial wizard of Meiji Japan. His family was large, rich and powerful. Matsukata Kojiro was the third son.
- 39 H. Matsukata Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, 1986, p. 290.
- 40 Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, p. 194.
- 41 Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, p. 295. There may have been more than one copy of each of these sculptures.
- 42 For Brangwyn's gallery design, Tokyo, see *The Builder*, 4 August 1922.
- 43 Frank Brangwyn collected some Japanese pottery. He bequeathed his Kanzan pieces to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
- 44 Belleruche, *Brangwyn's Pilgrimage*, p. 254.
- 45 Belleruche, *Brangwyn's Pilgrimage*, p. 254.
- 46 Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, p. 290.
- 47 Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, p. 291.
- 48 Reischauer, *Samurai and Silk*, p. 293.
- 49 *Karin no umi* [Sea of steamships], 2 vols, Kobe, 1989, Vol.2, pp. 215–16.
- 50 N. Tamaki, *Japanese Banking*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 153.
- 51 *The Times*, Obituary of Mortimer Menpes, 5 April 1938.
- 52 E.A. Hornel's estate is now cared for by the National Trust for Scotland.

## 12 'The lovely flower land of the Far East'

### Travel writing about Japan

#### Japan as Shangri-La

In 1996 the Yokohama Archives of History mounted a fine exhibition that illustrated, among other things, its remarkable holdings of travel writings from the time of the 'opening' of Japan to foreign travellers in the mid-nineteenth century. The period covered is roughly from 1868 to 1912, that is the Meiji era. The catalogue<sup>1</sup> of the exhibition is full of good things, all relating to travellers who visited Japan. Most of the authors were British, a few were American and there were others who were French or German.

The exhibition catalogue lists, from the holdings at Yokohama, no less than 105 different travel books, published between 1861–1911. Included here are well-known names such as Robert Fortune, *Yedo and Peking: A Narrative of a Journey to the Capitals of Japan and China*, 1863; Sir Ernest Reed, *Japan, its History, Traditions and Religions with the Narrative of a Visit in 1879*, 1880; Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1880; Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches*, 1900; and A.L. Liberty, *Japan a Pictorial Record*, 1910. There are many other lesser authors, listed in the catalogue, whose books are long forgotten.

For the Victorian travel writer, Japan offered a unique experience. Because of the seclusion of the country there had been few changes. Much of the excitement engendered by Japan related to the response of the British astonished by the fact that, in British terms, the Japanese people and their lives had remained unaffected by the modern world since the days of Charles I. Travellers could hope to see something of the 'old Japan'. In the case of the 'white' colonies, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, social life was basically British. In Japan there was a society, recognisable, culturally significant and tantalisingly romantic. Japan and its people occupied an especially vivid position in the British imagination.

The proliferation of travel books on Japan was a response to a romantic view of the country, but it was also stimulated by the revolution in printing techniques, especially those used in the process of producing pictures in books. Books, by 1910, could be beautifully illustrated, and although the cost of such new methods was high, the increased demand from an increas-

ingly prosperous British public for these handsome picture books justified the additional expense.

### **William Blackwood, Edinburgh, the publisher of Osborn and Oliphant**

There was intense curiosity about the first British expedition, led by James Bruce, Eighth Earl of Elgin,<sup>2</sup> who was the British plenipotentiary in China and Japan in the late 1850s. In the summer of 1858, Elgin had the express duty of making a treaty with reclusive and reluctant Japan. Therefore, when Sherard Osborn RN, who had been captain of the *HMS Furious*, one of Elgin's small flotilla, wrote to William Blackwood,<sup>3</sup> offering a series of 'Letters from Japan', Blackwood, as intrigued by Japan as were his readers, 'responded warmly'.<sup>4</sup> Blackwood was a publisher of the well-known *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

The reason for Blackwood's enthusiasm was that a preliminary account of Lord Elgin's adventures in Edo (Tokyo) had aroused great interest when it had appeared in *The Times* on 2 November 1858. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published, anonymously, Osborn's 'first lengthy popular report' in the December 1858 issue. In the early 1850s, 7,500 copies of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* were being sold, per quarter, but by 1858 the number had climbed to 8,000. From February 1860, almost 8,600 copies were sold, although, subsequently, circulation declined. It was in these heady days that Blackwood published no less than ten of Osborn's<sup>5</sup> articles on Japan.

In April 1859 William Blackwood offered 'to reprint the Series in a little volume' under the title *A Cruise in Japan Waters*.<sup>6</sup> In August 1859, 1,575 copies of Osborn's book were printed. At 5/- (25p) each, they sold rapidly and in November 1859 a second edition, of a further 1,050 copies, was issued. By April 1861 Blackwood's had sold all but fifty-six copies. The author appears to have received 10 per cent of the proceeds of the sale of the first edition. This amounted to £24 and 2½d – but note that the author received no less than eighty-three copies for himself. Osborn may have received over £9 as royalty on the second edition and he received seventeen complimentary copies for himself.<sup>7</sup>

When William Blackwood was approached by Laurence Oliphant, private secretary to Lord Elgin on the mission to China and Japan, with an offer of an account of the expedition's adventures, Oliphant also received a positive response. Laurence Oliphant<sup>8</sup> was a well-connected, but impoverished, young Scotsman, a Member of Parliament, who, eager for adventure, managed in his early years to serve in various dangerous, but newsworthy areas. He had Lord Elgin's confidence, was privy to the negotiations in China and Japan, and was ideally suited to produce the book. In 1859, within months of the party's return Laurence Oliphant offered, in two volumes, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in 1857, 58 and 59*.<sup>9</sup>

Both books are well illustrated. In the case of Oliphant's *Narrative* Volume 2 (which is mainly about Japan) there are fourteen full-page coloured lithographs. Four of these are brightly coloured Japanese scenes 'from a native drawing', the other ten appear to be coloured lithographs from the original watercolours by Captain Charles Bedwell RN,<sup>10</sup> who was a member of Elgin's party. There are also one or two illustrations taken from photographs; these may well have been taken by William Nassau Jocelyn,<sup>11</sup> son of the Third Earl of Roden, who joined Elgin's mission, as a photographer, in the summer of 1858.

Charles Bedwell must have been given permission to pursue his artistic work at the expense of his naval duties during Lord Elgin's expedition. There is still a large album of the original watercolours by Bedwell extant. It is assumed that the lithographs for Oliphant's book came from the originals. The most famous one is entitled *Exchange of Full Powers between the Earl of Elgin and the Japanese Commissioners*, which shows Lord Elgin, who, together with one other Westerner, is seated at a 'conference' table, while four other compatriots are sitting further back as observers. Not one of the foreigners has removed his footgear, thus reaffirming, to the Japanese, their 'barbarity' and, in Japanese eyes, their lack of respect for their Japanese hosts. All seven Japanese are wearing the two swords of the Samurai. There is an elaborately decorated Japanese screen in a room that is elegantly panelled and adorned. That the Japanese delegates should be sitting on anything other than the floor is remarkable enough, that they should have succeeded in providing a table and chairs must be taken as a generous gesture to please, or placate, the invading 'barbarians'.

William Blackwood published 3,150 copies of this expensive two-volume work; 2,951 copies were quickly sold, even at the remarkably high price of 42/- (£2.10). The author, Oliphant, seems to have earned 5 per cent of the takings, which amounted to over £126. And Oliphant, as author, received fifty-six complimentary copies. It is not known how many copies were presented to Lord Elgin.

The cost of the two Oliphant volumes was greatly affected by the expense of preparing the maps and the illustrations. It would appear that five men, Whymper, Hanhart, Sclater, Johnston and Jameson, were employed as specialist engravers. In fact three of the coloured lithographs of Volume I and all eleven of those in Volume II were signed M. & N. Hanhart. The high price of the two Oliphant volumes reflects the considerable expense of preparing the coloured lithographs. Most of these were in sepia, for which they used three colours, but the frontispiece of Volume II and several other illustrations, showing the signing the Treaty of Yedo, were a *tour de force* incorporating seven colours. It would appear that the production cost of all the illustrations in 3,150 copies, including plates and in-text drawings, was over £844. The total cost to the publishers of *Lord Elgin's China and Japan's* first edition seems to have been over £4,220, which was a huge sum. Once the first edition was sold, Blackwood prepared a second edition. The

publisher had in this case overestimated. The price was high; sales of the second edition were poor.

Both Osborn and Oliphant made serious attempts in their books to interpret Japan so that their readers could be informed as well as entertained. Both authors wrote with conviction, although neither was well informed. The British party, in 1858, could not distinguish between the Emperor, who was the supreme authority, but who had, for centuries, lived in retirement in Kyoto, and the Shogun, the military ruler, who was the head of government and who had effectively usurped the Emperor's power, in Edo, now Tokyo. The wonderful small steam yacht, *Emperor*,<sup>12</sup> which the British had brought as a gift, would never be seen by the Emperor. Throughout his account of Japan, Oliphant refers to decisions as having been made by the Emperor. Nevertheless Oliphant and Osborn knew a good deal more of Japan than their readers.

The traditional exchange of gifts also revealed serious misunderstandings. Although the 'shirts' that were presented to Lord Elgin were 'of exquisite design', the rolls of silk 'were in stripes about three yards in length and one in width, useless therefore for any practical purpose'.<sup>13</sup> The Japanese presented Elgin with about thirty 'dressing-gowns or robes of state',<sup>14</sup> 'each one occupying as much space as a large German duvet'. No doubt these were garments of the highest quality but because of severe shortage of space, 'and the thermometer at 80°' the silk wadding of the lining was torn out and used 'as packing for egg-shell china'.

Equally awkward was the lack of small gifts on the British side. Elgin's officers raided the stores of the *Furious* and were able to present 'flannel, blue-cloth, soap and chocolate'. They also found 'some rifles and carbines' that were 'especially appreciated'.<sup>15</sup> Embarrassingly these gifts are reminiscent of those tokens traditionally handed out to primitive people. Nevertheless Victorian readers must have been charmed by detailed descriptions of Japan, its beauties, its people and their activities. The care with which both Oliphant and Osborn wrote, and the vividness of their descriptions, ensured a wide readership. But Oliphant and Osborn fuelled a basic misconception about Japan, which was to see Japan as a lotus land, a 'lovely flower land'.

In a way Laurence Oliphant and Sherard Osborn set the tone for later travel writers. In this view of Japan they followed the lead set by Lord Elgin himself. Elgin, an imperialist, albeit a reluctant one, had indeed found Japan, after the uncertainties of negotiating in China, a wonderful contrast. It could be argued that Elgin, anxious about his imperial role, did much to spread the myth of Japan as an earthly paradise.<sup>16</sup>

Later a few other travellers did offer a stimulating read, and some insight into Japan. Isabella Bird, then a rare phenomenon, a woman travelling alone, had already made herself a reputation, and gained some notoriety from her work *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, when she arrived in Japan in 1878.

**Isabella Bird and *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan***

In the first place Miss Bird,<sup>17</sup> then in her mid-forties, was 'apart from a Japanese servant, adviser and interpreter' intending to travel alone. She proposed to get permission to journey from Tokyo north through the length of the main island, Honshu, and over the Tsugaru straits to Hokkaido, the northernmost island, at that time largely undeveloped. Isabella Bird's skill in describing, with good humour, the success, or the failure, of her endeavours must have had her readers eager to turn the pages of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*.

Miss Bird's first stop was at Nikko, some ninety miles north-east of Tokyo, the shrine for the first Shogun Iyeyasu, where 'the light of the East, great incarnation of Buddha' is buried. She noticed the grandeur of the tomb:

within, wealth and art have created a fairyland of gold and colour: Without, Nature at her stateliest, has surrounded the Shogun's tomb with a pomp of mournful splendour. A staircase of 240 steps leads to the top of the hill, where above and behind all the stateliness of the shrines raised in his honour, the dust of Iyeyasu sleeps in an unadorned but Cyclopean tomb of stone and bronze, surmounted by a bronze urn.<sup>18</sup>

But after Nikko (which almost all travel writers in Japan visited) Miss Bird came into her own. She, and her young guide, walked or rode north-west, through difficult and inhospitable country to Niigata, on the Sea of Japan coast. After a brief break they travelled on to the north over perilous and hazardous terrain. Isabella Bird's experiences, written up in lively style, were far removed from the run-of-the-mill traveller. She entertained her readers with vivid accounts of the mud and the dirt of forest tracks, and the weariness of many days. She also described in vivid detail the lives of the village people who lived in the most primitive conditions in a state of grinding poverty. Eventually she worked her way through to Aomori in the far north of Honshu Island and from there crossed over by sea to Hakodate on Hokkaido Island.

Isabella Bird was always something of an anthropologist and she made careful negotiations to stay with the Ainu, the indigenous people of Hokkaido whose culture was even then under threat from the eager new Japanese developers pouring into the north island. As she travelled with the Ainu into the forest (her Japanese guide had refused to accompany her because he said the Ainu were 'just dogs') she found 'something very gloomy about the solitude of this silent land, with its bear-haunted forests, its great patches of pasture ... and the narrow track ... on which the savages walk in their bare feet'.<sup>19</sup>

Isabella Bird's book, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, published by John Murray<sup>20</sup> of Albermarle Street, London in 1880, sold well. The book has been reprinted many times, by many publishers, including Virago. Very few travellers could equal Isabella Bird, but there were others who followed



other themes. One of these was that of the Christian, William Gray Dixon (MA, Glasgow), who was professor of English at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo from August 1876 to the end of 1879. His book *Land of the Morning*, published in Edinburgh in 1882, had at the front 'To the present and former students of the Kobu Dai Gakko, Tokiyo, this book is affectionately dedicated!' Dixon did give important information, otherwise unavailable, on the Imperial College of Engineering. He also travelled through Japan off the beaten track.

*Land of the Morning* was published by James Gemmell (of George IV Bridge) who were publishers of religious books. The last chapter of the book is entitled 'Christianity in Japan'. This chapter starts with the words 'Eighteen centuries ago, it was the mountains of Japan that first welcomed the rays of the first Easter morn.'<sup>21</sup> Dixon was instrumental in founding the Tokyo Christian Association in 1878. This society organised 'a bible reading every Friday and a prayer meeting every Sunday'<sup>22</sup> and in this way a small society, which did include Japanese, was soon flourishing. The frontispiece of *Land of the Morning* does not emphasise Dixon's Christian work, as described in the last chapter of the book, but rather dwells on Dixon's years of residence in Japan and his travels to remote places.

Another book sensible and down-to-earth was that of Lady Brassey, *Three Voyages on the Sunbeam*. Sir Thomas, Lady Brassey and their children spent long months cruising in their steam yacht, *Sunbeam*. Brassey money had been made from railways by the original Sir Thomas Brassey (1805–70). He had built railways in Britain but also in Australia, Canada, France, India and Italy. In January 1877 they steamed into Yokohama. When they landed, as Lady Brassey explained, 'The people in the streets were a study in themselves, the Brassey children thought that the people looked 'like fans walking about'<sup>23</sup> and as Lady Brassey herself commented 'before I had been ashore five minutes I realized ... the truthfulness of the representations of native artists, with which the fans, screens and vases one sees in England are ornamented'.

Lady Brassey and her party were keen to see the opening of the Kobe to Kyoto railway. At Kobe she found 'thousands and thousands of people in the streets who, although anxious to see as much as possible, behaved in the most quiet and orderly manner'.<sup>24</sup> For this ceremony the Japanese were in holiday mode:

the men all had their heads fresh shaven, and their funny little pigtailed rearranged, for the occasion. The women's hair was elaborately and stiffly done up with light tortoise shell combs and a large pin and decorated with artificial flowers.<sup>25</sup>

Lady Brassey found, in various places in Japan, the kind of romantic scenes that she wanted to see. She was a good observer; she noticed, and recorded, scenes and events that demonstrated to her readers outlandish Japan.



Lady Brassey's writing was conventional but cheery. Constance Frederica Gordon Cumming was another female traveller who knew, and may have tried to emulate, Isabella Bird. Her book, *Memories*, covers many aspects of her life, and is interesting as a contemporary account of the life of a country gentlewoman. As she reported, 'the crowning joy ... was my pilgrimage to the summit of Fujiyama, the Peerless Mountain, Fuji san the most honourable'.<sup>26</sup>

Gordon Cumming's *Memories* was published by William Blackwood in Edinburgh in 1904. The book is well illustrated by some sepia photographs taken by the author. But even these look old fashioned compared with the revolution in pictures that was to steal the market for books on Japan.

### **Mortimer Menpes on the make**

No one was more successful than Mortimer Menpes<sup>27</sup> in profiting from the cult of Japan in Britain. On 7 December 1901 publishers Adam & Charles Black presented Mortimer Menpes's *Japan, a Record in Colour* to an eager book-buying public. One of the selling points was the attraction of 100 coloured plates, each painted by Menpes himself from his own observations in Japan, and each covered with a tissue on which the title of the picture was printed. It was a handsome book, inside and out, having a well-designed cover and 208 pages of text. But the publishers' great innovation was to use the new three-colour, half-tone process on the coloured plates.

Adam & Charles Black, publishers, of Edinburgh, had been founded in 1807 and had prospered during most of the nineteenth century. Despite the move to London, by 1899 the company was in grave difficulties.<sup>28</sup> It was saved by the initiative of W.W. Callender, and by Mortimer Menpes. Callender, a partner in the company, recognised the potential of the new technology, particularly the three-colour, half-tone process being pioneered by Carl Hentschel in London. Mortimer Menpes, as artist and etcher, contacted Hentschel.

*Japan, a Record in Colour* was not the first title in the series that became known as A & C Black's Colour Books.<sup>29</sup> *War Impressions*, Menpes's record of his experiences in South Africa during the Boer War, had been published in May 1901. *War Impressions* 'was an immediate and sensational success, and reprints were called for with an urgency which was outside the author's experience'.<sup>30</sup> The reason for the runaway success of *War Impressions* and *Japan*, and a great many other titles, presented by A & C Black, was the fact that 'the colour plates were engraved under the artist's eye and printed on Miehle two-revolution presses by the eminent printer and typographer George W. Jones'.<sup>31</sup> W.W. Callender, the publisher at Blacks, recognised the importance of the new process and committed the company to this. Callender also acknowledged the advantage of the enthusiasm of Mortimer Menpes.

The text of over 200 pages was ‘transcribed’ by Dorothy, one of Menpes’s daughters, as ‘her father’s impressions’. As Dorothy wrote in a prefatory note, she presented the text ‘with whatever skill of penmanship I may possess’. She acknowledged that her father’s words were:

closely intermingled with my own impressions, which were none the less vivid because they were those of a child, – for it was as a child, keenly interested and enjoying all I saw, that I passed four or five years ago through that lovely flower land of the Far East which my father has here so charmingly memorialised in colour.<sup>32</sup>

It is a measure of the interest in Japan and in *Japonisme* that the Blacks sold over 19,000 copies.

Table 12.1 Numbers of *Japan* published

1901	3,210
1902	2,080
1903	2,100
1904	2,080
1905	3,120
1911	3,420
1914	3,120

Source: C. Inman, *The A & C Black Colour Books*, 1990, p. 20.

The book itself is of interest because of the contemporary picture of Japan that it gives. The illustrations show old Japan unaffected by modern changes.

The text of Mortimer Menpes’s *Japan* develops the themes that were of interest to him and which he guessed would appeal to a wide variety of curious readers in Britain. The chapters are headed, variously, ‘Art’, ‘Drama’, ‘Painters and Their Methods’, ‘Gardens’, ‘Flower Arrangement’, ‘Geishas’ and ‘Children’. The discussion of Japan remained at this level; Japan’s imperialism in East Asia, or her industrial ambitions, received no mention from Menpes. He does have a chapter on ‘Workmen’ but these are the craftsmen who work by hand as bronze-workers, carpenters or sign-painters.

In accordance with the attitudes of the time Menpes wrote approvingly of the lowly role of Japanese women. As is noted, if a girl has a brother:

she must look up to him as her master, even although he be younger than herself. She must give way to him in every detail. The baby boy places his tiny foot upon his sister’s neck, and she is henceforth his slave.<sup>33</sup>

Inevitably Menpes deplored any attempts of Westerners to educate Japanese girls beyond their traditional role.

Menpes did however describe an old Japan that, although thriving in the 1890s, is now long gone. The plates in his book, *Japan*, most in pastel colours, show street scenes of shops, tea-houses and theatres as well as those that show diminutive girl children carrying a younger brother or sister. In the chapter on 'Gardens' there are beautiful pictures of huge wisterias and what seem to be acres of irises, another Japanese favourite.

One can easily imagine Menpes strolling around Tokyo and Kyoto with his sketch pad always 'at the ready'. It should be noted that, probably through the influence of Frank Brinkley, newspaper owner and long-time Japanese resident, Menpes visited and worked briefly with Kawanabe Kyosai, a distinguished Japanese painter (see Chapter 15).

Some time prior to the publication, Menpes and Dorothy visited Japan to prepare more pictures for the *Japan* book. This would appear to have been a hurried visit. The purpose of the second visit to Japan was to arrange to have made in Japan artefacts and decorations for the newly built house at 25 Cadogan Gardens,<sup>34</sup> a house that Menpes had bought. Menpes had indeed caught the Japan bug, and had decided to decorate his London home in honour of Japan and the Japanese. It could be argued that the most important, and informative, chapter in the A & C Black book on *Japan* is that on 'Workers', that is craftsmen, with whom Menpes became acquainted, and from whom he bought work to adorn his London home.

Other publishers watched with amazement as A & C Black sailed back into profitable business. Two examples will be given of books on Japan clearly published with a view to emulating A & C Black's triumph.

No date is given for the publication of A.H. Exner's *Japan As I Saw It*, published by Jarrold and Sons (Warwick Lane, EC, London) but, as the title page proclaims, the book was 'illustrated with special illustrations of Collotype, Engravings and pictures drawn by various special artists'. There were twelve collotype plates; these are in sepia and white mounted on dark brown art paper, were specially typed in to the text and are a noticeable feature of the book. These plates were 'after a sketch by C. Netto and P. Bender'. Curt Netto<sup>35</sup> was an observant mining engineer who had served in various mines in Japan in early Meiji years. In addition there were sixteen 'engraving illustrations' based on drawings of Georges Bigot. Bigot was a French artist and cartoonist who worked in Meiji Japan. Finally there were thirty-seven 'Duo tone illustrations', some of which had been redrawn 'from a Japanese print'. The book was of 259 pages. All these pictures make for a very expensive book. It is not known how many copies Jarrold and Sons sold of the work. Exner's text aimed to give readers a clear account of Japan's history, its customs and famous towns.

In 1910 Macmillan and Co. Ltd (of St Martin's Street, London) published Herbert G. Ponting's *In Lotus-Land Japan*. Ponting was a photographer and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Ponting's book is

illustrated by no less than 109 photographs that he had taken himself in Japan. There are also eight illustrations, plates given in colour. Ponting's is a large book of 395 pages and, as the title indicates, it is a book following the usual pattern of romanticising Japan. Nevertheless the photographs do show contemporary Japan in 1910. Although in general Ponting's views of Japan are the romantic ones, there are a few plates that show craftsmen at work. These, showing the making of export ware, are particularly helpful for this study.

### Japan as earthly paradise

Mortimer Menpes was by no means the first to present a book to the public based on the 'happy land far, far away'. Early travellers to Japan, in the 1850s, also had pleasant images of Japan. Why was this? The matter was complex but, in part, the responses reflected an intense curiosity about Japan because it had been a closed country. Those who sought information from the travel books on Japan were looking for some escapism. It was a pleasure to read about what was thought of as a simple society, by the British caught up in what were then considered as the complexities of an industrial society.

Perhaps Lord Elgin<sup>36</sup> set the tone. As an impoverished nobleman he was forced to serve his country in far-flung difficult postings and he thought he found peace and harmony in Japan. Isabella Bird<sup>37</sup> was an astute woman who did write as she found Japan. She did not subscribe to the earthly paradise that was Japan when she was describing the poverty of remote Japanese village people. Mortimer Menpes was fulsome in his praise of Japanese hand craft workers.

What can be said with confidence is that the wide selection of books on Japan that were published in Britain and elsewhere before 1914, with their vivid pictures and attractive accounts of Japan, brought pleasure to many and in addition gave accounts of a Japan that has long since disappeared.

### Notes

- 1 The catalogue is in Japanese but many of the illustrations show pages, maps and pictures from books written in English. With thanks to Hiskako Ito of the Yokohama Archives of History; *Catalogue of Foreign Books*, Yokohama, 1996.
- 2 S.G. Checkland, *The Elgins, 1766–1917, A Tale of Aristocrats, Pro-consuls and Their Wives*, Aberdeen, 1988.
- 3 The William Blackwood and Sons papers are in the National Library of Scotland (George IV Bridge, Edinburgh). The archive is large, MS 30001 *et seq.* With thanks to Kenneth J.C. Dunn for his kind help.
- 4 T. Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind, a Study of Stereotypical Images of a Nation, 1850–1880*, 1987; see Chapter 2, 'Japan and the Edinburgh publishers', pp. 21–45.
- 5 Sherard Osborn's articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* were:  
     'A cruise in Japanese waters (part I)', Vol. 84, December 1858, pp. 635–64  
     'A cruise in Japanese waters (part II)', Vol. 85, January 1859, pp. 49–70

- 'A cruise in Japanese waters (part III)', Vol. 85, February 1859, pp. 239–50
- 'A cruise in Japanese waters (part IV)', Vol. 85, April 1859, pp. 393–412
- 'A cruise in Japanese waters (part V)', Vol. 85, May 1859, pp. 532–45
- 'On allied operations in China', Vol. 86, November 1859, pp. 617–732
- 'The fight on the *Peiho*', Vol. 86, December 1859, pp. 647–67
- 'The voyage of the *Fox* in the Arctic Seas', Vol. 87, January 1860, pp. 117–26
- 'Our position with China', Vol. 87, April 1860, pp. 430–40
- 'War and progress in China', Vol. 87, May 1860, pp. 525–42.

- 6 NLS Blackwood Paper (hereafter BP), Acc5643, D3.P94, Blackwood to Osborn, 6 April 1859. Sherard Osborn RN was on active naval service, but his sister, herself married to a clergyman, acted as editor for the Osborn pieces.
- 7 BP, Acc5643, D3.P94, Blackwood to Osborn, 6 April 1859.
- 8 See C. Blacker, 'Laurence Oliphant and Japan, 1858–1888', in Ian Nish (ed), *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Vol. II, Richmond, 1997, pp. 35–47.
- 9 The title on the spine of the book was *Lord Elgin's China and Japan*.
- 10 Captain Charles Bedwell was a particularly gifted watercolourist.
- 11 William Nassau Jocelyn kept a private journal. This Manuscript is now in the Yokohama Archives of History. With thanks to Hisako Ito.
- 12 *The Emperor*, an armed steam yacht of four guns built at Blackwall in 1856, was 370 gross tons, 135' × 22' with iron paddle; later renamed *Banryu* and *Raiden Maru*, she served in the Japanese Navy as *Raiden* (1877–88). Later a whaler, she was broken up in Osaka in the late 1890s. See T.M. Milne, *Steam Vessels Sold to Japan*, NMM THS/13/2, p. 76. Admiral Fitzgerald also reported that *The Emperor*:

was a handsome little vessel ... she was also thoroughly sea-worthy and had made her own way out to China via the Cape. ... The Japanese took kindly to her and showed great anxiety to learn how to work her themselves without any assistance from foreigners.

- See P. Fitzgerald, *Memories of the Sea*, pp. 114–15.
- 13 L. Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in 1857, 58 and 59*, Vol. II, p. 207.
  - 14 Oliphant, *Narrative*, Vol. II, p. 227
  - 15 Oliphant, *Narrative*, Vol. II, p. 228
  - 16 T. Walrond, *Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin*, 1872.
  - 17 O. Checkland, *Isabella Bird, a Woman's Right to Do What She Can Do Well*, Aberdeen, 1996; Isabella Bird, *Collected Travel Writings of Isabella Bird*, Vols 4 and 5, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, Bristol and Tokyo, 1997.
  - 18 Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, p. 78.
  - 19 Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, p. 334.
  - 20 John Murray and his family, at 50 Albermarle Street, London, were publishers and personal friends of Isabella Bird. John Murray III (1808–92) was a father figure, and John Murray IV (1851–1928) took over after his father died. Isabella Bird stayed in Albermarle Street with the Murrys before journeying on to Edinburgh, after some of her arduous travels. See J. Murray, *John Murray III, 1808–1892*, 1892.
  - 21 W.G. Dixon, *Land of the Morning*, Edinburgh, 1882, p. 659.
  - 22 Dixon, *Land of the Morning*, p. 673.
  - 23 Lady Brassey, *Three Voyages on the Sunbeam*, 1886, p. 44.
  - 24 Brassey, *Three Voyages on the Sunbeam*, p. 46.
  - 25 Brassey, *Three Voyages on the Sunbeam*, p. 46.

- 26 C.F. Cumming, *Memories*, Edinburgh, 1904, p. 207.
- 27 For Mortimer Menpes, see Chapter 11.
- 28 J.D. Newth, *Adam and Charles Black, 1807–1957*, 1957.
- 29 C. Inman, *The A & C Black Colour Books, A Collectors Guide and Bibliography, 1900–1930*, 1990. A & C Black Colour Books are still eagerly collected. Tribute must be paid to W.W. Callender for his initiative in going ahead with series after series of these books.
- 30 Newth, *Adam and Charles Black*, p. 78.
- 31 Newth, *Adam and Charles Black*, p. 78.
- 32 Dorothy Menpes's prefatory note to Mortimer Menpes's *Japan*.
- 33 M. Menpes, *Japan, A Record in Colour*, 1901, p. 141.
- 34 See 'Mr. Mortimer Menpes' house, 25 Cadogan Gardens', *The Studio*, Vol. 17, 1899, pp. 170–8. The house is now the north-west corner of the premises of Messrs Peter Jones, Department Store, Sloane Square, London.
- 35 Curt Netto was a German mining engineer and is referred to, as a friend, in Emma Schultze, *Letters from Meiji Japan*, eds C.T. Marshall and J.Z. Bowes, New York, 1980.
- 36 See S.G. Checkland, *The Elgins*.
- 37 See O. Checkland, *Isabella Bird*.



## **Part IV**

# **The commercial spin-off**





## 13 The Japan British Exhibition, London, 1910

### **Japan, power in the Pacific**

By 1910 Japan believed she had succeeded in convincing the world of her changing status. The ‘Unequal’ treaties had been, or were in the process of being, renegotiated, and, in addition, the original Anglo-Japanese Alliance<sup>1</sup> of 1902 had been renewed, in 1907, for a further five years. The diplomatic liaison between Britain, with its great empire, and emergent Japan was an astonishing achievement for Japanese diplomacy. Partly because of the support, implicit in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the Japanese had, in 1904, felt able to embark on a war against Russia, over the control of lands and resources of North China including Manchuria and Korea. Following the decisive naval battle of Tsushima, in May 1905, the Japanese had emerged victorious.

But Japan’s aggression, as seen from Britain, had also threatened the cultural bridges between the two countries. There was an uneasy recognition that the romantic view of Japan was no longer sustainable. The Japan British Exhibition of 1910 put joy and jollity back onto the agenda.

### **The Japan British Exhibition, London, 1910**

It was in a spirit of triumphalism that Japan embarked upon the Japan British Exhibition<sup>2</sup> in London in 1910. As *The Graphic*<sup>3</sup> magazine in Tokyo, in May 1910, explained, in English and Japanese:

Of all the Exhibitions held abroad in which Japan has participated, none has yet had such important and far-reaching bearing on the affairs of this country as the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition to be opened in the coming May at London, the capital of our allies, is destined to have. On the other hand not a better opportunity has ever been furnished for the British subjects in general to come into the closest contact possible with, and see and learn of, the Japanese and things Japanese than the coming exhibition.

The Exhibition on the Japanese side will be presided over by Prince Fushimi. Besides Government officials and others connected with the Exhibition, it will attract Japanese visitors in numbers and bodies such as have never been witnessed before. The Japanese and things Japanese will become not only the cynosure of British eyes, but indeed the centre of interest for visitors pouring from the countries of Europe and the two continents of America.

No event in days of peace and tranquillity has yet contributed so greatly towards advertising Japan as the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition will do. Japan will arrest the attention of the whole world; she will have no choice but to yield to the demand, and must advertise herself in the most thorough and effective manner.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that Japan was not, as yet, a great industrialised nation, but nevertheless the progress she had made towards that goal justified the display at White City, London, from May to October 1910. The exhibition was backed by senior members of the Japanese government including Komura Jutarō, then Foreign Secretary, who had earlier been, between August 1906–August 1908, in London as ambassador, and who wished to impress the world with Japan's achievement. London, then the capital of the world's greatest imperial power, was the obvious choice for this display.

In Japan, they gathered a dazzling array of the great and the good to oversee what they then called the 'Anglo-Japanese' Exhibition. This committee included Honorary President Prince Sadanaru Fushimi, President Baron Kanetake Ōura, Chief of Exhibits Department Mr Navinoba Hirayama, Chief of General Affairs Department Mr Hikojiro Wada, Vice President Baron Masana Matsudaira and Chief Commissioner (in London) Count Hirotsuchi Matsui.<sup>5</sup>

By contrast the attitude of the British government to all this excitement was muted. Whereas the accord between the two nations was entitled the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, this exhibition, a public display of solidarity, was the curiously named Japan British Exhibition. Why should the British exert themselves? Exhibitions were about trade, and the British trade balance with Japan was favourable. The British were still exporting, to Japan, large quantities of expensive machinery. Officially the British government was represented on the various Exhibition committees by a multitude of aristocratic and otherwise distinguished names, but in reality this was a Japanese show.

### **Entrepreneur Imre Kiralfy, Commissioner General of the Japan British Exhibition**

The fact that the Japan British Exhibition took place in 1910, at all, may have been due to the entrepreneurial skills of Imre Kiralfy (1845–1919),<sup>6</sup> a Hungarian long resident in London, who had emerged as a first-class organ-

iser of international exhibitions. Kiralfy, well regarded by the British establishment, had been involved with exhibitions in the capital for some years. As he had found that temporary exhibition buildings caused constant problems, he had bought a spacious 140 acre site at Shepherd's Bush in West London and there erected permanent buildings. This complex came to be known as the White City, where the Shepherd's Bush Exhibition Company operated.

There seems little doubt that Kiralfy had drawn his inspiration for the White City from the buildings of the 'Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, Paris Exposition in 1900 and St. Louis Exposition of 1904, all of which he had visited'.<sup>7</sup>



*Figure 13.1* Imre Kiralfy

There was a lot of manœuvring while Japan considered its position. In theory Japan had planned to hold its own exhibition in Tokyo in 1907. This was to be the first *Nippon dai Hakurankai*, a great international exhibition. This exhibition was cancelled, supposedly because of Japanese financial constraints following the Russo-Japanese War. There seems to be no doubt that in the end the influential Komura Jutaro opted for the London, rather than the Tokyo, venue.<sup>8</sup> There seems to be little doubt that a London-based Japanese exhibition might go a long way in rebuilding cultural bridges between Japan and Britain, which had been damaged by Japanese aggression in the Russo-Japanese War.

Kiralfy, well aware of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, had worked hard to entice the Japanese into committing themselves to an exhibition. He was a skilful entrepreneur who had, following the British Entente Cordiale with France, promoted the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908. With skill and panache he<sup>9</sup> wooed the Japanese and persuaded them to commit themselves to present Japan, in London, at the White City, in 1910.

### **The Japanese exhibits**

The serious-minded Japanese prepared many exhibits that, it must be admitted, would not have attracted the crowds. Fortunately the wonderful Japanese gardens, lakes and temples together with native villages, and a street of 'Japanese' shops gave the whole site a strange and exotic appeal. There was also Kiralfy's Fun Fair, which offered a variety of thrills and excitements.

The Japanese government did put on 'tableaux' to illustrate national involvement. The Japanese displays were: the Army Department, the Navy Department, Department of Communications, Department of Home Affairs and the Red Cross Society.<sup>10</sup> One of the most effective displays was that of the Japanese Red Cross Society. The idea of humanitarianism, especially in war, had been taken up by the Japanese as a proof, as it were, of their new status as a civilised nation. As is widely known, they had behaved in exemplary fashion towards their Russian prisoners of war during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5.<sup>11</sup>

Much of the preparation by the Japanese had been done in the form of models. Toy-sized creations illustrated various aspects of Japan and Japanese life. The Municipality of Tokyo presented a wonderful model of the City of Tokyo as well as a series of miniatures of various parts of the Shogun's Mausoleum at Shiba Temple, Tokyo. There was much emphasis put on the products of the forestry industry, and the birds of Japan also featured, sadly all advertised as 'game' birds.<sup>12</sup> There was much incongruity. The new prison at Nara was featured showing the round central hub of the building with the extending 'arms' or spokes of the wheel that contained prisoners' cells.<sup>13</sup> When Jeremy Bentham had first produced this plan he had envisaged the superintendent of the prison sitting at the hub, in the central building, in his command post.<sup>14</sup>



*Figure 13.2 Britannia and Yamato*

The Department of Communications was not at all affected by modern technology. As was explained:

The first picture shows the delivering of messages during the Nara Dynasty (708–784). The man on the horseback is a government messenger. The second picture represents soldiers at the front sending letters home at the time of the Kamakura Shogunate. The third represents an ancient post station on the Tokaido road. The house on the right is a post office which supplies both horses and postmen. The houses on the left are hotels for Daimiyo. The fourth picture shows signalling by flags. This method was chiefly employed in reporting quotations of the rice market.<sup>15</sup>

That flag signalling should still be publicised in the age of the Electric Telegraph was a curious way of demonstrating forward-looking Japan.

Exhibits from the Marine Bureau, also in the form of models, reflected a rather different fishing industry from that with which the British would have been familiar. This show demonstrated 'herring fishing in Hokkaido, seaweed beds at Haneda, where branches of brushwood were "planted in the water" to encourage the seaweed to form, cormorant fishing, still a tourist attraction in Japan, and coral breeding'.<sup>16</sup>

It could be argued that these exhibits were merely the 'froth' on the top of the beer, the real exhibits being those of the Army and Naval Departments. Under the heading 'The Evolution of Arms in Japan' the pictures showed old-style Japanese arms and the transition to modern warfare. The last illustration shows the Japanese army at the time of 'the Japan-China [*sic*] War' of 1895.

Perhaps the most interesting display came from the Imperial Japanese Navy. Certainly they did illustrate several of the 'oar'-driven vessels, which required huge teams of oarsmen, but the pride of the Imperial Japanese Navy were the battleships *Takao*, *Niitaka* and the *Kurama*, all built at Yokosuko Naval Arsenal. *Takao* had been designed by Emile Bertin, *Niitaka* was a small coastal defence vessel and the *Kurama* was an armoured cruiser, which was not completed until 1907.<sup>17</sup> Of course the Japanese were anxious to make the most of their undoubted achievements. But in fact all the heavy armoured vessels of the Imperial Japanese Navy, which had beaten the Russians at Tsushima in May 1905, had been built abroad, mostly in Britain.

### **British exhibits**

The British displays included the British Army Section, British Naval Section, British Military Section, British Shipping Section, British Railway Section, British Chemical Industries Section and the British Horticultural Section

The British Machinery Section included models of battleships, cruisers and torpedo boats that had been armoured by Sir W.G. Armstrong Whitworth and Co. Ltd., on the Tyne, for the Japanese government. Included in the group was a model of one of the earliest, and also one of the latest, battleships built in this country for the Imperial Japanese Navy. A test plate of armour, which had been supplied to one of the battleships and which had been crucial in the Russo-Japanese War, was also shown. The resistant quality of this plate was well demonstrated by the marks of impact made by the 9" shells fired at it from a distance of about 300 yards.

The exhibits of Messrs Vickers Sons and Maxim Ltd., (of Barrow in Furness) consisted chiefly of ordnance:

There was a comprehensive display of artillery from a 12' naval gun to a field howitzer....There were fine models of ships and dredgers built by



the leading British Shipbuilders involved with Japan, including the Thames Ironworks Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Messrs. Thomas Wilson and Sons who exhibited conjointly with Messrs. Earles' Shipbuilding Co., Messrs Lobnitz and Co. Ltd., Sir Raylton Dixon and Co. Ltd., Ferguson Bros., Simons and Co. Ltd., and the White Star Line.... The Parsons Marine Steam Turbine Company had a fine collection of models showing their recent developments in steam turbine and electrical generators.<sup>18</sup>

Admiral Sir Archibald Douglas had as a young man had been involved with the infant Imperial Japanese Navy in Japan. He was enthusiastic about the ship models, to be provided by the British shipbuilders, and by the Admiralty, and as he remarked, 'He believed that the Exhibition would greatly promote that love which Britain had for the island beyond the sea, the England of the East.'<sup>19</sup>

The British committee of the Japan British exhibition was full of aristocratic names, men, who, for whatever reason, had been persuaded to support this enterprise. Various arrangements were made to show British works of art. Those manufacturers, including the great Manchester cotton companies, which had long exported cotton machinery to Japan, including Platt Brothers, Dobson and Barlow Ltd, and Joseph Stubbs Ltd, were praised for their exhibits, but other exhibits were criticised as being of poor quality.<sup>20</sup>

### **A vision of Japan**

These industrial and military displays would not have attracted visitors. The site had to look Japanese. An enormous effort was made to present the whole exhibition as Japanese. Visitors were greeted at the entrance, and to several other buildings, by wonderful Japanese gates. These gave a romantic look to the whole site. And then there were the gardens. As Count Mutsu said:

Japan without gardens would not be Japan at all. The Japanese town is always a 'garden city' in one sense of the term. A foreign visitor to Tokyo might wander through many streets and by-ways of the capital for a long time without noticing the existence of thousands of beautiful and romantic gardens. This deception is rendered all the more easy because of the fact that the average Japanese house is very far from being a tall or imposing structure. At the same time it is the rule rather than the exception that in Japan, even in the capital city, a small entrance gate to an insignificant residence will unexpectedly lead into a large garden, with its lakes, islands, waterfalls, and gigantic rocks, entirely shut out from the public view. A romantic little villa, standing in the middle of extensive and artistically laid-out gardens, is what appeals most to the aesthetic mind in Japan, so that the garden is regarded as a *sine qua non* of every Japanese home.<sup>21</sup>



The Garden of Peace and the Garden of Floating Islands were particularly beautiful with Japanese temples set amid lakes, both embellished by brilliantly flowing azaleas. There were also two Tea Houses, one serving, with due ceremony, Japanese tea and the other Oolong tea.<sup>22</sup>

And then there were the native villages. It was an essential by product of the imperialism, to which Japan eagerly subscribed, that natives and their primitive villages should be shown at any great exhibition. The Ainu village with three Ainu houses and ten Ainu people demonstrated the 'Feast of the Bear', showing the way in which the primitive Ainu had lived in the northern island of Japan, Hokkaido. And there was the Formosan (now Taiwan) village that showed other primitive villagers at their simple labours. Both Ainu and Taiwanese spent their days making their own distinctive craft objects that were then sold to visitors.

As Count Mutsu explained:

The island of Formosa, or Taiwan, came into our possession in 1895 as a fruit of the Chinese War (1894–5). The turbulent and unruly character of the inhabitants had long rendered the administration of the island an arduous task....Broadly speaking the native peoples are classed as northern and southern tribes. The northern tribes favour head hunting' [p. 235].



Figure 13.3 The Garden of Peace

He also noted that in the same building of the exhibition there were exhibits 'from Korea, the Province of Kwantung, the Japanese concession in Manchuria, and from the South Manchurian Railway Company'.<sup>23</sup>

Curiously, the exhibition of 'colonial' material from Japan aroused anger among those Japanese who visited.

It was inevitable that the Japanese living in London, who were diplomats, bankers, businessmen and students, looked at this image of primitive cultures, believing that non-Japanese would think this the real Japan, and were shocked. The idea that Japan should expose itself to other nations in this way was, for proud Japanese visitors, profoundly disturbing.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the native villages from Hokkaido and from Taiwan, there was an *Industrial Palace*, which was in effect a range of shops selling Japanese handicrafts of every description. Enthusiastic visitors could purchase Japanese knick-knacks to their hearts' content.

## Trading up

At the junketings held to mark the closure of the Japan British Exhibition, at the end of October 1910, Lord Blyth stated that 'he did believe that every exhibition which had been held in this country, or in any other country, extended trade throughout the world'.<sup>25</sup> Lord Blyth's sentiment would have been echoed by anyone involved with the exhibition world. Indeed one of the underlying reasons for the Japan British Exhibition in 1910 was an attempt to boost Japanese exports to Britain. By using the trade in export ware Japan had succeeded in improving her trade balance with every nation, other than Britain. The figures speak for themselves (see Table 13.1).

*Table 13.1* Japanese trade with Britain

	<i>Exports in</i>	<i>Imports in</i>
1898	11,270,000	44,836,000
1909	27,092,000	86,227,000

*Source: The Times*, 19 July 1910, special Japanese edition, pp. 40–1.

If evidence were needed of the underlying importance of the Japan British Exhibition in stimulating sales of Japanese fancy goods in the department store, it is readily provided in the form of six letters written by six of the owners or managers of the most highly regarded stores in London in 1910. These letters, quoted in full in the report of the Japan British Exhibition, contain a series of affirmations about the increased sale of Japanese goods in their shops. The men who wrote were A.W. Gamage (of A.W. Gamage Ltd, Holborn), William Whitely (of William Whitely, Ltd, Westbourne Grove), Gordon Selfridge (Selfridge & Co., Ltd, 400 Oxford

Street), J.E. Waring (Waring and Gillow, 164–80 Oxford Street), Francis Barker (of John Barker & Co., Ltd, Kensington) and R. Woodward Burbridge (of Harrods Ltd, Brompton Road). These six letters, all written on 27 October 1910, were most likely solicited, and not spontaneous. They all emphasise the build-up of sales in Japanese goods consequent upon the Japan British Exhibition of 1910.<sup>26</sup>

Of the six letter received those of William Whiteley, and J.E. Waring are given here in full.

William Whiteley, Ltd.,  
Westbourne Grove, London, W.,  
October 27, 1910.

Dear Mr. Kiralfy,

As the closing of the Exhibition is imminent, I should like to compliment you on its great success, especially from a commercial point of view.

I feel sure the unique Exhibition of Japanese works and manufactures has beneficially affected the trade in these industries both in London and the provinces.

Our own Oriental Department, which includes the arts and crafts of Japan, has shown great activity this season, in consequence, I believe, of the widespread publicity given to the Japanese industry by your great conception.

Yours truly,  
[Signed] William Whiteley.  
Imre Kiralfy, Esq.,  
Japan British Exhibition,  
Shepherd's Bush, W.

Waring and Gillow, Limited,  
164–180, Oxford Street, London, W.  
October 27, 1910.

Dear Sir,

As we understand that a gathering is to take place this evening of the representatives of the two countries interested in the Exhibition which is now drawing to a close, we take the opportunity of offering you our congratulations on the success which has attended your efforts in securing such a unique collection of the exhibits of both nations.

We desire also, as one of the exhibiting firms, to express our high appreciation of the commercial value of such an Exhibition, and we have pleasure to state that we have already executed several large

orders for Japan, and from the many inquiries received from interested visitors, we are confident that a largely increased trade with Japan with result.

In our opinion, the Exhibition has without doubt succeeded in cementing the cordial relations existing between this country and Japan, and the thanks of both nations are due to you, as Commissioner-General and the Executive Committees, for having achieved this.

Yours faithfully,  
[Signed] J.E. Waring, Director  
Imre Kiralfy, Esq.,  
Commissioner-General,  
Japan British Exhibition.

### **From Exhibition to Fair Ground**

The original Exhibition of all the Nations of 1851 in London was high-minded in its aspirations, designed to stimulate and encourage the visitors who flocked to see its industrial wonders. But with Victorian prosperity embracing more and more people, times changed and the earnestness of men like Prince Albert gave way to a greater urge for entertainment.

Astonishingly, at the Japan British Exhibition in 1910, despite the serious-mindedness of the Japanese government, the fun fair element was very much in evidence. The Ferris wheel at the Chicago Exhibition in 1893 had astonished and delighted the crowds of visitors.<sup>27</sup> The Great Mountain Railway, the Wiggle Woggle, the Witching Wares, Motor Racing Track, Submarine and the Captive Cyclone all provided thrills for excited visitors.

One example of the entertainment provided in 1910 was:

‘The Flip Flap’ recently constructed and still the last word in novelties held its place unequalled. The gigantic silvery arms stretching out on opposite sides of a colossal base, with cars at the extreme ends for carrying upwards of 50 passengers each, rose, as if by magic, upon the starting signal being given for up into the air, imparting to the passengers the sensation of flying. A magnificent birds eye view of the vast grounds of the Exhibition and of the Metropolis was gained by the journey.

Danger has been entirely eliminated, and all the modern attachments for ensuring safety, were to be found in the mechanism. Few sights were more beautiful than the Great White City, viewed from the elevation of the Flip Flap, and it was largely patronised.

Young Ian Mutsu, the son of Count Mutsu, as a child, remembered the Flip Flap vividly. As he wrote:

This was a giant pair of observation towers that functioned like scissors, in its horizontal position people were locked into a pair of observation cages. The giant scissors closed and raised the riders to a tremendous altitude from which they could take a birds eye view of their capital city. Years later in Kamakura I would tell my friends how great it was in England to go up into the sky on a Flip Flap.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Success of the Japan British Exhibition**

The Japan British Exhibition was a resounding success. 8,350,000 people paid on entry a fee of one shilling a head to enjoy the Japanese experience at the White City in London.<sup>29</sup> The exhibition certainly brought Japan and the Japanese to British attention. Because the exhibition showed, in its native villages, beautiful gardens and tea houses the romantic Japanese so vivid in British imaginations, it gave Japan an image redolent of romance rather than of the Russo-Japanese War.

The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 brought together an interesting mix of British aristocracy and Japanese bureaucrats. The range of banquets and dinners, at which laudatory speeches were inevitable, meant that compliments flowed freely. The proceedings, during the months from May to October 1910 when the exhibition was opened, seemed punctuated by events that involved constant self-congratulation. It is possible that Kiralfy felt it necessary to reassure the Japanese sponsors from time to time, in view of the heavy expenses they were meeting.

Indeed Imre Kiralfy's role was of great importance. It should be remembered that he had had the vision to create a 'dream palace' fantasy at the Great White City.<sup>30</sup> Kiralfy had organised:

1908	The Franco-British Exhibition
1909	Imperial International Exhibition
1910	Japan British Exhibition
1911	Coronation Exhibition
1912	Latin British Exhibition
1913	Anglo American Exhibition <sup>31</sup>

The outbreak of the First World War brought an end to Mr Kiralfy's enterprises. On his death his estate was worth £136,680, gross.<sup>32</sup>

One wonders about the identity of the British enthusiast who wrote in the *Penny Guide* on the Japan British Exhibition that:

One curious similarity runs through the whole, that is, the striking similarity between the Japs [*sic*] and our own people. This resemblance manifests itself in manner, physical stamp and shape of the head. To anyone acquainted with the principle of phrenology the resemblance is very marked. This last point is indicated by the large proportion of the

brain in front of and above the ear. These structural conditions are distinctive indication of considerable mental powers, and are emphasized by the portraits of some of the most highly praised representatives. Taken as a whole they constitute a good augury for the growth of sympathy between east and west.<sup>33</sup>

The Japan British Exhibition in London in 1910 gave the Japanese a sense of belonging, of being part of the great influential nations of the world. It was a coveted accolade.

## Notes

- 1 I.H. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the Diplomacy of Two Island Empires*, 1966; H. Cortazzi, J. Hoare, N. Brailey and A. Hotta-Lister, *The Revision of Japan's Early Commercial Treaties*, LSE, Suntory, Toyota International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD), 1999.
- 2 A. Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition of 1910, Gateway to the Island Empire of the East*, Richmond, Surrey, 1999; *Japan British Exhibition Official Guide*, 1910; *Japan British Exhibition Official Catalogue*, 1910; *Japan British Exhibition, British Commission Report*, 1911.
- 3 *Representative Japan*, Yurakusha, Ginza, Tokyo, 1910, published a special issue of *The Graphic*, a photo magazine. *The Graphic* gave illustrations of the Exhibition's officials and various tableaux prepared in Japan to be set up in London. These included the tea ceremony room and garden, the development of the army, and the navy, fisheries and forests. The Justice Department presented a plan of Nara prison. Altogether *The Graphic* tried to cover many aspects of the project in London.
- 4 From the *Representative Japan's* Editor's Room, no page number given, May 1910.
- 5 The portraits of these men are illustrated in *The Graphic*, p. 128.
- 6 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, pp. 38–48, 62–4, 181–2.
- 7 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, pp. 39–40.
- 8 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, pp. 48–9.
- 9 H. Mutsu, 'The Japan British Exhibition, 1910', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 21 January 1910, vol. 58, 1910; discussion, Mr Imre Kiralfy's comments on pp.241–2.
- 10 *Japan British Exhibition, British Commission Report*, p.293.
- 11 O. Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan, 1877–1977*, 1993, Chapter 5, 'Russian prisoners of war', pp. 61–70.
- 12 *The Graphic*, Tokyo, May 1910, illustrated the City of Tokyo, p. 131; Shiba Temple, p. 130; Forestry Industry, p. 129; and Game Birds, p. 136.
- 13 *The Graphic*, Tokyo, May 1910, p.142.
- 14 O. Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1980, p. 170.
- 15 *The Graphic*, Tokyo, May 1910, p. 140.
- 16 *The Graphic*, Tokyo, May 1910, p. 138.
- 17 H. Jentshura, D. Jung and P. Mickel, *Warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1869–1945*, trans. A. Preston and J.D. Brown, 1977; *Takao*, p. 92; *Niitaka*, p. 101, and *Kurama*, p. 78.
- 18 *Japan British Exhibition, British Commission Report*, pp. 111–12.
- 19 Mutsu, 'The Japan British Exhibition', pp. 232–43, discussion, Admiral Sir Archibald Douglas, p. 242.
- 20 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, pp. 148–9.

- 21 Mutsu, 'The Japan British Exhibition', p. 238.
- 22 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, p. 224.
- 23 Mutsu, 'The Japan British Exhibition', p. 235.
- 24 Hotta-Lister, *The Japan British Exhibition*, pp. 138–49.
- 25 *Japan British Exhibition, Commission Report*, p. 546.
- 26 *Japan British Exhibition Commission Report*, pp. 542–7.
- 27 There had been a Ferris wheel at Earls Court in 1897. Such entertainments were a necessary part of the exhibition by 1910. See Anne Woodward, National Monuments Record, London, W1; the *Guardian*, G2, 1 February 2001, p.9.
- 28 I. Mutsu, 'The Mutsu family', in Ian Nish, ed., *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Vol. II, 1997, pp. 160–1.
- 29 *The Times*, 2 November 1910.
- 30 J.M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, Manchester, 1984, p. 112.
- 31 'Death of Imre Kiralfy', *The Times*, 29 April 1919, p. 9, column d.
- 32 'Wills and bequests', 'Mr. Imre Kiralfy of Tower House, Cromwell Road, S.W., the originator of the series of International Exhibitions in London...£136 680, gross', *The Times*, 24 June 1919, p. 15, column c.
- 33 Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 106, quoting *Penny Guide*, p. 10.



## 14 Shopping for *Japonoiserie*

It was a happy coincidence that the emergence of shopping, as a leisure occupation in an increasingly prosperous Britain, came in the late Victorian years when Japanese art and artefacts were readily available both for travellers in Japan and for stay-at-homes in new and expanding department stores. The development of what was later to be called mass consumerism brought middle-class women<sup>1</sup> out of the home and into the shops. And, for these women, having the freedom to move around was a new experience. The excitement of shopping was also mixed with a sense of pride in Britain's imperial achievement. Everyone knew the map of the world showed the British Empire vividly coloured in red; everyone looked for the exotic products of this strange world in the shops. For this purpose Japan was regarded as being within the British sphere of influence.

### **In Japan**

For the visiting foreigners<sup>2</sup> shopping in Japan was regarded as an exciting pursuit, redolent of colonial attitudes. The Japanese merchant or shop-keeper was determined to cheat you, the British traveller, confident of his or her superiority, determined to bargain prices down.

John M. Cook, the son of Thomas Cook, the inventor of adventurous travel, both at home and abroad, gave the figure of 80,000 tourists in Japan in 1894.<sup>3</sup> If most of the 80,000 bought souvenirs of some sort, then that gave an encouraging boost to trade at the principal treaty ports and the holiday resorts favoured by the foreign tourist.

There was some indignation about curio dealers in Japan, although (Sir) Alfred East, in his matter-of-fact way, gave an honest account of his experience in Kobe, writing:

I entered through an unpretentious place – no glass, no window. ... I was received very politely, the sitting proprietor bowing to the ground. ... I passed on to another room with more costly curios in great numbers. Lacquer, bronze, armour, embroidery – all were here. In still another room, softly matted and warmed by a great brass brazier in the



middle of the floor, were stored the choicest and most costly work. Here were old and rare lacquer, rich inlaid metal work, curious weapons and quaint carvings. From a cabinet were brought forward a quantity of old prints through which I waded, selecting what I required and then making, in the most good humoured way, our bargain which amounted to a quarter to a third off the asking price.<sup>4</sup>

Other visitors, proud of their shrewdness, were less circumspect. Lady Brassey, an imperialist to her fingertips, who wrote of her experiences travelling, with her husband and children, in *SS Sunbeam*, was outspoken. On 30 January 1877 she was in Yokohama. As she wrote:

Having landed, we went with the Consul to the native town to see the curio shops, which are a speciality of the place. The inhabitants are wonderfully clever at making all sorts of curiosities and the manufacturers of so-called 'antique bronzes' and 'old china' are two of the most wonderful sights in Yokohama the way in which they scrape, work, chip, mend and colour the various articles, cover them with dust, partially clean them, and imitate the marks and signatures of celebrated makers, is more creditable to their ingenuity than to their honesty. Still, there are a good many old relics from the temples and from the large houses of the reduced Daimyos to be picked up.<sup>5</sup>

Lady Brassey referred to the problem of recognising fakes and to the availability of genuine Japanese pieces from the homes of persons impoverished under the new regime. Of course the foreigners were keen to make good bargains and the Japanese merchants keen to do profitable business. All too often the negotiations seemed to deteriorate into an unedifying tug-of-war between greedy merchants and unscrupulous tourists.

None cherished the colonial relationship more enthusiastically than Mortimer Menpes, who believed he had become an expert during his time in Japan. He had befriended a Japanese curio merchant and between them they had a lively time. Menpes was ordering various Japanese products in order to decorate his new London house. He therefore 'adopted' a Japanese whom he called 'Inchie', who counted, with his thumb and forefinger, 'one inchie, two inchie' and so on.<sup>6</sup>

According to Menpes:

You will find that the Japanese merchant talks openly and frankly about his dealings with European globetrotters. He will tell you that he cheats you and charges you high prices because the average Westerner has no eye. The Westerner does not appreciate the really fine and beautiful objects which the Japanese soul worships; therefore the merchant gives him what he thinks the Westerner wants, and asks the price he thinks the Westerner will give. When we first came into touch with the

Japanese, we began by cheating them and foisting deceptions upon them, and now they turn the tables and cheat us to the best of their ability.<sup>7</sup>

*Murray's Handbook of Japan*, the eighth edition, 'revised and partly rewritten', which was issued in 1907, would not have been complete without its pages of advertisements, front and rear, proclaiming, among other services, the wealth of companies in Yokohama, Kyoto and other tourist centres in Japan, eager to sell 'Japanese and Chinese Works of Art, Ancient and Modern' or as some preferred 'Curios'. One of these companies was substantial and operated overseas as well as in Japan. Through the medium of these agents, visitors to Japan could purchase art objects in Japan and those who, although collectors of Japanese art objects, never went to Japan could purchase from agents based in London or in the United States.

*Murray's Handbook* also explained to the foreigner how to deal with the Japanese curio merchant.

The rule is that several visits are necessary before he will display his choicest articles and that even then a long time must be spent in bargaining. Some establishments of the more modern sort have fixed prices. ... Japan is now almost denuded of old curios. Some have found their way into the museums of the country, while priceless collections have crossed the sea to Europe and America.<sup>8</sup>

## **In Britain**

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the British were, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, enthusiastic buyers of all sorts of Japanese art objects. These ranged from fine old *objets d'art*, which were sought after by connoisseurs, to the cheap and jolly factory-produced knick-knacks snapped up by the ordinary housewife. At the lower end of the market there were also cheap goods from India and the middle East, as well as those from Japan. It could be argued that it was a form of imperialism that British housewives could adorn their homes with exotic pieces from the dependent colonies.

That it was possible to sell quantities of *Japoniserie* in Britain depended on the development of a new phenomenon, the department store. As has been explained:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a small number of these speciality shops responded to changed trading conditions by embarking upon the sale of additional lines, and expansion into adjoining premises, thereby creating a new kind of retail enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

The entrepreneurial figures who created a new kind of retailing concentrated on 'diversification, display, advertisement, price manipulation and sheer

spectacle'.<sup>10</sup> Selling *Japoniserie* thus became one of the strengths of the glorious display in the new emporia. No wonder the middle-class housewife eagerly embraced the new shopping opportunities that were presented to her.

But demand for cheap Japanese fancy goods had been rising steadily during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Trade papers such as the *Drapers' Record*<sup>11</sup> were advertising a wide variety of Japanese-made furnishings from the mid-1890s. The most conspicuous advertiser was Marians and Priest (of 28, 29 Bevis Marks, London, EC) who advertised<sup>12</sup> 'More Novelties in Japanese Stove Screens', emphasising that 'Our new Registered Designs cannot be procured elsewhere.' As Marians and Priest advised, 'Every Draper should stock these goods, the Public will have none other.' In the same issue of *Drapers' Record*, Messrs T.H. Bethell (of 30 St Mary Axe and 30 Bevis Marks) announced that 'Spring Novelties are now arriving in regular shipments from the Far East.' Messrs T.H. Bethell was indeed a direct importer, with 'Manufactories in Yokohama and Kobe, Japan' and 'buying agencies in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Canton'.

Most of the novelty items were made in Japan but more bulky pieces of bamboo furniture were in fact made in Britain. Japanned ware, the name speaks for itself, cheap stamped-out metal ware, such as trays and tea caddies, was often made in Birmingham.

### **Liberty's of Regent Street, London**

The Oriental Warehouse, owned by Farmers and Roger where, between 1862 and 1875, Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843–1917) was employed, became a meeting place for the art connoisseurs of the day. There, Liberty 'absorbed their talk, their enthusiasms, their audacious pronouncements upon life and upon art'. He sold them 'blue and white porcelain and other oriental enchantments'.<sup>13</sup>

Liberty was enthralled. In an article, some fifty years later, in the *Daily Chronicle* he reflected that 'famous artists got the idea that I took a real interest in what we sold and that my knowledge and appreciation of art were extended by prolonged visits to their studios, where I was always made welcome'.<sup>14</sup> By the 1870s, in fact, the Oriental Warehouse was the only profitable element in Farmers's and Roger's business. Their Great Shawl and Cloak Emporium had, with changing fashion, entered into a terminal decline. Arthur Liberty's great success in the sale of Oriental goods encouraged him to look for a partnership with his employers. This they declined.

On 15 May 1875, with the help of Emma Louise Blackmore, his fiancée and later his wife, and with the financial support of her father, Arthur Liberty opened his own shop, or rather half-shop, at 218A Regent Street. This he grandly named East India House because initially the stock consisted of silks from the East. To Liberty's delight 'William Morris, Alma Tadema and Burne-Jones and Rosetti used to come in and turn over and

rave about' the stock.<sup>15</sup> The second half of the shop was soon appropriated and a wide variety of Japanese goods displayed. These included 'Japanese porcelain, prints, fans, screens, *tatami* mats, *netsuke*, sword guards and other articles.'<sup>16</sup> Other items, 'curios', were ordered specially by Liberty from Japan.

As the Victoria and Albert Museum explained<sup>17</sup> at the Eastern Bazaar 'A catholic range of goods was to be had at "East India House".' These were fabrics and blue and white porcelain for discriminating collectors; there were, as well, painted paper sunshades and parasols, charming trifles which were as popular with the public as with painters such as Whistler and Albert Moore. Fans were a particularly intriguing symbol of current fashion. Usually Japanese, but occasionally Indian, they were perched on mantel-pieces, mounted on walls and furniture, or, as in some of du Maurier's cartoons, were clutched in the fist of an intensely aesthetic lady.<sup>18</sup>

E.W. Godwin's account of attending at Liberty's in 1876 gives the flavour:

There was quite a crowd when we arrived. A distinguished traveller had button-holed the obliging proprietor in one corner; a well-known baronet, waiting to do the same, was trifling with some feather dusting-brushes; two architects of well-known names were posing an attendant in another corner with awkward questions; three distinguished painters with their wives blocked up the staircase; whilst a bevy of ladies filled up the rest of the floor space. It was some time before I could catch the eye of the master of this enchanting cave, and then, to learn, to my disappointment, that the case [of fans] would not arrive until late in the evening.<sup>19</sup>

The Japanese bonanza was extraordinary, and Arthur Liberty was doing good business out of it. But the demand was putting a tremendous strain on the Japanese suppliers. The store of Japanese art objects rapidly disappeared. How were the Japanese to satisfy this insatiable demand from the West? The Japanese response was two-fold. They encouraged the trade in inferior export ware, and they began to use most garish colours which, they believed, would be better appreciated in the West.

E.W. Godwin was disturbed by the new developments. In reporting from Liberty's he wrote:

There are matting and mats, carpets and rugs for the floor; Japanese papers for the walls; curtain stuffs for windows and doors; folding screens, chairs, stools, and so forth. ... Most of the faience flower-pots, garden seats and vases are not only 'rough' as the catalogue describes them, but positively crude both in shape and colour. ... Either the European market is ruining Japanese art, or the Japanese have taken our artistic measure and found it wanting, perhaps there is a little of both.<sup>20</sup>

The craze for ‘things Japanese’ created by a coterie of artists, mainly in London, and satisfied initially by the Oriental Warehouse and, from 1875, by Liberty’s, was not only enriching culturally but also profitable. There can be no doubt that, for a time, artists using Japanese themes and artefacts sold their pictures the more readily because of attractive ‘Japanese’ shapes and colours. The difficulty was that a shop such as Liberty’s, which sold goods of the highest quality,<sup>21</sup> had in fact stimulated a demand which could no longer be supplied and Arthur Liberty had to search all over the East, in India, China, Java, Indo-China and Persia, for goods to satisfy it. In 1889 Arthur and Emma Liberty themselves spent some months visiting Japan. Although a pleasure trip, no doubt Liberty was able to make some useful business connections. Liberty’s remarkably successful experiment with Oriental goods soon attracted others. ‘Japanese’ warehouses were opened in department stores, as William Whiteleys, Debenham and Freebody, and Swan and Edgar hurried to respond to the demand (see Chapter 13).

### **Christopher Dresser as shopkeeper**

No one used his ‘Japan’ experience to better effect than Christopher Dresser.<sup>22</sup> Before leaving for Japan, in late 1876, Dresser had proposed to Messrs Charles, Reynolds and Co. (known as enterprising City merchants and importers of fancy goods), who had already brought to England much export ware from Japan, ‘that they set up a separate concern’. Mr Charles, Mr Reynolds and Mr Pare followed Dresser’s advice and set up Messrs Londos and Co., at the Art City Warehouse, 126 and 127 London Wall. Messrs Londos had, according to Dresser, branch houses in various ports in Japan. Even in the 1870s, it would appear that good business was done, as Dresser explained: ‘At first one warehouse only was taken, but within two years ... a second was added, and now a third serves as a store room for fresh importations.’<sup>23</sup>

Dresser travelled to Japan via the United States where he seems to have negotiated with Messrs Tiffany of New York to buy Japanese goods on their behalf. As Stuart Durant makes clear:

Despite the undoubted energy which Dresser put into acquiring a Japanese collection for Tiffany, its subsequent sale proved a commercial failure. At the New York sale on 18 June 1877 most of the Japanese objects fetched rather less than the prices which Dresser had paid for them.<sup>24</sup>

Soon after Dresser’s return from Japan, he set up an import business to buy good-quality Japanese art objects. His partner was Charles Holmes (1848–1923), a Bradford man, who was also involved with Japan over many years. Dresser and Holmes opened their premises in Farringdon Road on 21 June 1879. As the *Furniture Gazette* reported:

A large and distinguished company responded to the invitation of the firm to attend a private view of their really magnificent collection. Those present included Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock ... members of the Japanese legation and many well-known artistic, literary and scientific gentlemen.

Dr Dresser's son is still in Japan, and is engaged with a large and capable staff of buyers in travelling throughout the country and visiting towns and villages in the little known interior where the European has hitherto been excluded.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed the Dresser and Holmes business seems to have continued, at least in Japan, although possibly under a different name. It would appear that two Dresser relatives, Christopher and Charles, continued to do business from Kobe. Both Christopher Dresser and Charles Dresser are buried at the Shuhogahara Foreign Cemetery, Kobe.<sup>26</sup> The younger Christopher Dresser was married to a Japanese lady and there was a Dresser family in Japan until 1980 when Stanley Dresser died.<sup>27</sup> Ceci Whitford, formerly Dresser, the wife of Frank Whitford, art historian, was a member of the Japanese branch of Dressers.<sup>28</sup>

Christopher Dresser was also a consultant for several 'Japanese projects' but these were primarily commercial ventures. He was adviser to the Alexandra Palace Company (London, 1874) and the Art Furniture Alliance (London from 1880). Londos and Co. were set up before Dresser's Japanese visit; while in Japan he was to buy Japanese art work on their behalf.

Elsewhere in the country the large stores also featured Eastern goods. From the 1890s, and certainly until the First World War in 1914, most store catalogues carried pages and pages of pictures of Japanese items, mostly of elaborate design and decoration. In addition there were many items from India, 'Benares bells and brass-ware', Egypt, 'Cairo carved screen', and Syria, 'Damascus Inlaid Furniture'.

Under the heading 'bamboo furniture' there were items such as 'patent writing desk', elaborate tables and 'lacquered what-not', 'writing desk', bookcase and easel and many more, all of elaborate and indeed fussy design. The Japanese china was of various patterns, all richly coloured, often in red and gold. Japanese birds and curios were 'in a variety of styles and colourings'.<sup>29</sup>

Japanese draught screens were, in 1895, given special prominence. These had either "hand-painted" or embroidered black and gold birds and flowers'. In 1895 the screens were further advertised by the note 'We have purchased several important consignments of Screens this season, which we were enabled to offer at much less than usual prices.'<sup>30</sup>

These items come from Harrod's Catalogue. It seems certain that the bamboo items were not imported but were made in England. The Harrod's Catalogue is not clear about this but [p. 1120] there is the notice

'Bamboo furniture made up to customers' own designs'. The Army and Navy Stores Catalogue (1908) advertises an equally impressive array of Japanese *objets d'art* but here the statement 'English made' is frequently used. The many designs of bamboo tables, 'English made', are advertised with 'Japanese lacquer tops'.

### **At the top end of the market**

There was also a brisk trade in Japanese works of art as sold by companies like Messrs Yamanaka & Co. of 68 New Bond Street, London, and Shozo Kato, who sold Japanese Works of Art (modern and antique) from 54 Mortimer Street, London. Both these firms also operated in Japan, Shozo Kato in Osaka and Yamanaka in Osaka, Kyoto and Nara.

*The Art Journal* (No. 7, July 1901) published an article that was in effect an advertisement for Yamanaka, illustrating magnificent Japanese pieces including a 'vase in translucent enamel, a silver vase with raised ornament, partly enamelled, an iron incense-burner, with panels in silver filigree and enamel and a panel of a folding screen in silk embroidery'. These expensive craft items were on a different level compared to the quality of some of the mass-produced oriental goods sold in the big stores.

One of the smaller adverts is that of Yamanaka & Co. who, in Japan, traded from Awata, Kyoto and also from Osaka (Kitahama Nichome), as well as New York (254 Fifth Avenue), Boston (324 Boylston Street) and London (68 New Bond Street, later 127). Yamanaka, both in Japan and overseas, became one of the most important 'curio' businesses not only in Osaka and Kyoto but also in London. From the 1890s Yamanaka Shokai was operating in Japan. From 1900 Yamanaka Sadajiro and Rokusaburo were in charge of Yamanaka Trading Company, which was established in London. The London establishment was run by Kumasaku Tomita who had arrived in London at the end of the nineteenth century to serve with Ikeda Gomei Kaisha (of Kobe), a company trading in Japanese antiques. (In May 1900 there was a scandal that Kumasaku appears to have been involved in; the details are not known.) Kumasaku was recruited and joined the Yamanaka staff. Later he was to head the company in London, from which he retired in 1922. In 1919 the company had a capital of ¥20,100 but a turnover of ¥700,000. It employed six Japanese and nine foreigners, who were British, in London.

An enterprising man, Kumasaku wrote, with G. Ambrose Lee, *Japanese Treasure Tales* (1906) and, with Henri L. Jolly, *Japanese Art and Handicraft* (1916). Both of these were published by Yamanaka. The aim of these privately printed books was to enlighten and inform prospective customers. Kumasaku had been disturbed to find that people in the West did not understand the symbolism of Japanese art.

As Kumasaku explained:



Even since I first came to England some six or seven years ago, I have had many enquiries for explanations of the incidents which occur so frequently in the art treasures of Japan, and also as to any English works in which the stories thus illustrated might be found. Such a book I have unfortunately not been able to name. ... I then formed the intention of producing such a book myself.<sup>31</sup>

The thirty-seven illustrations in the book showed sword guards (*tsuba*) and *netsuke* (a toggle used to fasten various items including medicine boxes (*inro*)). The items shown came from the collections of Walter L. Behrens, H. Seymour Trower, O.C. Raphael, Yamanaka or G. Ambrose Lee. The book was dedicated:

To Mrs Hugh Fraser  
who by her writing  
has done much  
to disseminate in England  
a knowledge of Japan

It would appear that 616 copies were printed.

As Yamanaka & Co. were located in a fashionable setting they attracted a great deal of attention. In July 1901 *The Art Journal* published under the heading of 'Modern Craftsmanship in Japan' a short piece entirely on a few of the contemporary art pieces stocked by Yamanaka.

The four pieces that feature in the article were 'a screen in dark brown wood', a 'vase in translucent enamel', 'a silver vase with raised ornament, partly enamelled' and 'a folding screen in silk embroidery'. In general the piece is laudatory, and the craftsmanship much praised, although there was some criticism of an enamelled vase. As the anonymous author wrote, 'We miss, here, the cloisonné of metal; and the departure from ancient precedence is hardly good; it enables the artist to get broad expanses of unbroken colour, but, as it happens, broken colour too is beautiful' (*The Art Journal*, No. 7, July 1901, p. 218). Sadajoro Yamanaka (1866–1936) was the inspiration behind the Yamanaka shop. It was of great importance to the company that they attracted a distinguished clientele, and this included (in the 1920s and 1930s) Queen Mary (the wife of George V), the Prince of Wales and Mrs Simpson, the Dukes of Gloucester and of Kent, and Winston Churchill. To Yamanaka's great delight they were given the Royal Warrant by King George V on 1 December 1919 and by Queen Mary on 10 February 1920 (Sadao Oba).

Although Yamanaka's was perhaps the best known of the art shops owned by Japanese, there were several other specialists in Japanese art and art objects living and working in London, in the early years of the century. In addition to Kumasaku Tomita there were Saburo Iida, Tanosuke Hosoi, Masayuki Kataoka, Shozo Kato and Ken'ichi Takahashi. Some of these had retail outlets for their Japanese art works.



## In Glasgow

The cultural bridge between Japan and Britain, which brought Japanese goods as adornment for English and Scottish sitting rooms, was well established long before Victoria's death on 22 January 1901. In *The Mercantile Age* of 30 December 1884 Mr Ernest E. Barker's *Japanese House* was praised. Mr Barker was an art teacher (at the Ladies' College, Bath Street, Glasgow and at many other west-end schools) but he also ran a shop, and may have taught various crafts including china-painting there. In 1884 he set up the Japanese House where he displayed 'one of the best collections of oriental and art objects to be found in Scotland'. In his display Barker 'combined the useful with the ornamental. Draught-screens, Chippendales, cabinets, mirrors exquisitely painted, flush frames for photos and so on ... china and bronze including statuettes can also be selected from his legendary stock' (*The Mercantile Age*, 30 December 1884, n.p. given).

Clearly Mr Barker could not be said to be competing with Yamanaka's in New Bond Street, London, but he was nevertheless supplying what seemed to be an insatiable demand for 'Japanese' goods.

## What granny bought

Few homes have retained the items of Japanese export ware that great aunt, or great grandmother, bought many years ago. Some of these once-treasured pieces can now be found at the curio shop. They fall into two categories, mass-produced factory pieces, post-1900, and earlier, pre-1900 items that were produced by hand. In addition there are many other non-ceramic Japanese products including wooden boxes, made by hand and machine, often for a specific purpose.

Early pieces would include small cups, in rather thick Japanese porcelain, decorated in red on a white background. These often have Western style, rather elegant, handles. The decoration, which is attractive, has been applied with transfers and 'air brush'. The cups and saucers are not identical. These particular pieces were made at Kutani, or 'Nine Valleys' in Japanese. Kutani, a small inland town, is near Kanazawa, in Ishikawa prefecture and was famous for its porcelain.

Another dish, about 24 cm across, is in white. It does have a glaze, but this has been unevenly applied, so that there are places that the glaze never covered. The pattern has been applied in the form of stencils. These and the hand-painted flowers have an informal air. This dish is marked on the bottom, Hizen, Arita, and was made by one Hirabayashi. Another tea plate, although charming, has a crude appearance, as the decoration has been carelessly applied. In this case there are the lines of a pattern, slightly incised, on to which the colours have been added. This plate may be slightly later than the Arita and Kutani ware, having the sign, in Japanese, *Dai Nippon* ('Great Japan'), and was made by one Furuta. Later, once the

pottery industry had been modernised, factory-produced tea sets, all pieces perfect and identical, were usually given the mark *Japan*.

Japanese-made wooden chocolate boxes were popular. One held Fry's chocolates (manufactured by J.S. Fry and Sons, Ltd, Bristol and Somerdale, England). This lacquered box has an elegant Japanese lady on the lid. She is standing by the lake at the edge of which irises are in flower. Another box had contained Birrell's sweets. The scene on the cover is a Japanese mountain and lake scene. All the boxes have locks, although the keys are long gone.

### The British fight back

Granny also bought pieces of British-made china that deliberately used the designs and patterns appropriate to Japanese export ware. Elegant British cups were crudely covered with Japanese designs, while Scottish porridge bowls were swamped, inside and out, with a dazzle of Japanese designs, as if they had in fact been Japanese export ware. To most ordinary housewives buying Japanese ware, the term export ware was of no concern. But collectors were inevitably more wary, although this did not make matters any easier. The tradition of making English and Scottish ceramics with Chinese and Japanese motifs is a long one.

The market in *Japoniserie* was difficult and confusing. Nevertheless the ordinary British housewife was charmed by her Japanese pieces. That they were export ware was of no concern to her. It was at the top end of the market, where prices were much higher, that buyers wanted to be sure of the quality of the Japanese goods which they were buying. This has remained very difficult to guarantee.

### Notes

- 1 R. Bowlby, *Carried Away*, 2000; L. Head, *Victorian Babylon*, 2000.
- 2 Most visiting foreigners carried copies of *Murray's Handbook of Japan*, reissued regularly, including in 1907, revised and rewritten by Basil Hall Chamberlain. After 1945, *Japan, the Official Guide* was published annually in Tokyo, by the Tourist Industry Division of the Ministry of Transportation.
- 3 *The Times*, 4 January 1894, letter from John M. Cook.
- 4 A. East, *A British Artist in Meiji Japan*, ed. H. Cortazzi, 1991, p. 25.
- 5 Lady Brassey, *Three Voyages in the Sunbeam*, Tuesday, 30 January 1877.
- 6 M. Menpes, *Japan, a Record in Colour*, 1901, p. 155.
- 7 Menpes, *Japan, a Record in Colour*, pp. 153–4.
- 8 *Murray's Handbook of Japan*, 1907, p. 12.
- 9 M. Moss and A. Turton, *A Legend of Retailing, the House of Fraser*, 1989, p. 11.
- 10 Moss and Turton, *A Legend of Retailing, the House of Fraser*, p. 31.
- 11 The *Drapers' Record* was first published in 1887 and, because it informed and enlightened, it soon achieved a wide circulation. Local regional drapers found it invaluable: it provided information on general trading, sometimes giving profiles of particular enterprises, publicity to novelties being manufactured and a list of registered patents and trademarks. There was also a *Scottish Retail Drapery Journal*.

- 12 *Drapers' Record*, 21 March 1896.
- 13 A. Adburgham, *Liberty's, a Biography of a Shop*, 1975, p. 14.
- 14 Adburgham, *Liberty's, a Biography of a Shop*, p. 14.
- 15 Adburgham, *Liberty's, a Biography of a Shop*, p. 19.
- 16 F. Whitford, *Japanese Prints and Western Painters*, 1977, p. 99.
- 17 *Liberty's 1875–1975*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1975, p. 5.
- 18 *Liberty's 1875–1975*, p. 6.
- 19 E.W. Godwin writing in *The Architect*, 23 December 1876.
- 20 Godwin, *The Architect*, 23 December 1876.
- 21 See Chapter 4, 'Yokohama muki: Japanese export ware'.
- 22 S. Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, 1990, pp. 28–9.
- 23 C. Dresser, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 1878, p. 170.
- 24 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 29.
- 25 *Furniture Gazette*, 12 July 1879; Christopher Dresser was art editor of the *Furniture Gazette* for about one year in 1880.
- 26 In the Shuhogahara Foreign Cemetery in Kobe there are the graves of Christopher Dresser (born 3 July 1857, died 20 November 1903) and Charles Dresser (born 1881, died 1932). My thanks to C.C. Duncan of Lipton, Japan KK Kobe.
- 27 W. Halén, *Christopher Dresser*, 1990, p. 44.
- 28 Durant, *Christopher Dresser*, p. 33.
- 29 Messrs Harrods had been founded by Charles Henry Harrod (1800–85). In 1893 the company moved to Brompton Road, where it continued to expand. See *Harrod's Catalogue*, 1895, pp. 1118–35.
- 30 *Harrod's Catalogue*, 1895, pp. 1134–5.
- 31 K. Tomita and G.A. Lee, *Japanese Treasure Tales*, 1906, Introduction.

## **Part V**

# **Four bridge builders**



## 15 Painter, poet, pearl-maker and potter

Kyosai, Binyon, Mikimoto  
and Leach

The lives and experiences of four men, two Japanese and two English, are used here to bring this study to an end. These four, in markedly different ways, set their seal of approval by building cultural bridges between the country of their birth and that of their adopted country. Kyosai Kawanabe's (1831–89)<sup>1</sup> contribution to Japanese art was illuminated at the British Museum by an exhibition, between 1 December 1993 and 15 February 1994. The book to illustrate the exhibition was entitled *The Demon of Painting*.<sup>2</sup> This would have greatly pleased Josiah Conder,<sup>3</sup> one-time Professor of Architecture in Tokyo, who was Kyosai's devoted pupil for the last years of Kyosai's life. The dedication of the poet and Orientalist, Laurence Binyon (1869–1943)<sup>4</sup> at the British Museum in London created a new dimension in studies of Japanese fine art and artefacts. Mikimoto Ryuzo (1894–1971),<sup>5</sup> the wealthy son of a pearl-making father, explored, with tenacity, the ideas of John Ruskin and brought them to Japan. While the potter, Bernard Leach (1887–1979),<sup>6</sup> was one of a very few who lived easily in two countries and could claim two native lands, Japan and Britain.

Kyosai here represents artists who had worked in isolation in Japan, generation after generation, for over 200 years. Once the flood gates were open, and ideas from the West poured into newly opened Japan, as Kyosai discovered, those foreign influences were bound to affect the work of the Japanese artist. Laurence Binyon's contribution was to bring reason and order to the problem of classifying Japanese art. This was an important advance as previously Chinese and Japanese art and artefacts had usually been considered as one. Binyon was also generous to those Japanese who visited him in London and who became his friends. Mikimoto Ryuzo represents the curious Japanese, the man who was inspired to explore the complexity of Western ideas. In this case Mikimoto became the advocate for the ideas of art historian and quasi-socialist John Ruskin. Bernard Leach took Japanese cultural co-operation to another level, living and working, as a potter, in Japan, as if it were his homeland. He was also profoundly affected by the religious ideas of Japan and the East.

The relationship between Kyosai and Conder was one of master and pupil. It says much for the attitude of both men that their relationship was

so close and harmonious. Laurence Binyon, good and kind though he was to the young Japanese men who visited him at the British Museum, was always *sensei*, a respected teacher, to be looked up to, and admired. Mikimoto Ryuzo, who was six years old when Ruskin died in 1900, was almost certainly engaged in an act of rebellion against the commercialism of his father with his wonderful Mikimoto's pearls. As a student young Mikimoto was trained, at the Imperial University of Kyoto, by Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946), a 'Marxist' and a 'socialist' who also rebelled. In Kawakami's case, it was against an oppressive Japanese government. Bernard Leach, in the early twentieth century, went farther than anyone else in embracing life in Japan as an artisan, who not only laboured arduously as a potter but who also, under the guidance of Japanese fellow-potters, helped make kilns. Once the kilns were fired, he worked night and day, as a labourer, to feed the furnaces.

The men whose commitment to friendship between Britain and Japan is discussed here, all, with the exception of Mikimoto Ryuzo, needed to earn a living. They also needed the warmth and support that their own personal bridges between Japan and Britain created.

### **Kawanabe Kyosai and the British Connection**

Kyosai, during the 1880s in Tokyo, after several refusals, accepted Frank Brinkley<sup>7</sup> and Josiah Conder as pupils, and because of their connections received other British artists at his studio over several years. As a result, among others, William Anderson<sup>8</sup> and Mortimer Menpes<sup>9</sup> wrote engagingly about Kyosai in the British journals<sup>10</sup> of the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed Menpes, who was for a time a 'follower' of J. McNeill Whistler, made sure that Whistler knew of the style and technique of Kyosai, 'his' Japanese master. Conder, the most serious of Kyosai's<sup>11</sup> British students, who collected Kyosai's work assiduously, also wrote a comprehensive account of Kyosai's work, explaining Kyosai's methods.<sup>12</sup> The outcome was that Kyosai and his work were more widely known in Britain than in his native Japan. In recent years, thanks especially to the dedication of one of Kyosai's descendants, Kyosai's *œuvre* has been brought to the attention of the Japanese public.

### **Kyosai and Kyo-ei – the Englishman Conder**

Kyosai was born in May 1831. From his earliest days he was interested in the form and shape of nature and of everyday objects. His artistic leanings were so strong that, at the age of seven years, he was sent to Edo, now Tokyo, to study with Kuniyoshi,<sup>13</sup> one of the great artists of *Ukiyo-e*, the distinctive Japanese wood block print. Kuniyoshi urged any pupils of his to keep their eyes open and paint from whatever they had observed. Close observation became one of Kyosai's characteristics: he was always watching and then transferring his observations onto paper. After Kuniyoshi, Kyosai moved to



*Figure 15.1 Kyosai, Grasshopper and Poppy*

the Kano school.<sup>14</sup> Kyosai was a mature artist of twenty-eight when the treaty ports first opened in 1859, allowing foreign merchants to live and trade in one or two treaty ports, including Yokohama.

It would appear that the first British connection with Kyosai was through Frank Brinkley (1841–1912) who had arrived in Japan in 1867 as an artillery instructor. He married a Japanese lady, and became an expert in Chinese porcelain.<sup>15</sup> He spoke fluent Japanese and made Japan his home for the rest of his life.

Josiah Conder had arrived in Tokyo early in 1877. As an architect, employed to teach and advise the Japanese government on Western architecture, he was fully occupied. In his leisure time he wanted to pursue his interest in painting. As Kyosai explained:

In his own country, the Englishman J. Conder studied the practice of oil painting, and diligently learnt the rules of draughtsmanship until he truly absorbed expert techniques. But he loved Japanese paintings which demonstrated deft brush control. He loved the serenity of a Soami [fifteenth century] painting of an egret, a Tan'yu [seventeenth century] painting of an egret in the rain and other types of old paintings which he collected. Whenever he had free time, he looked at them, feeling there was no greater pastime.<sup>16</sup>



Within three or so years of his arrival in Japan, Conder was keen to learn more of the practical problems of Japanese painting. Through a Mr Yamaguchi (d. 1893)<sup>17</sup> Kyosai was approached. Could Conder study under Kyosai? Kyosai replied 'I have long since heard about Conder's great abilities in oil painting and in draughtsmanship. I do not have either the energy or the place to teach such a man.'<sup>18</sup> Despite Kyosai's discouraging response he eventually agreed to accept Conder as a pupil.

In 1881, when Conder's tutelage began, Kyosai was fifty years old. Conder, nearly thirty years old, was some twenty years his junior. Because of his full-time job, Conder usually had his lessons on a Saturday.<sup>19</sup> Kyosai, in his diary, sketched or referred to Conder over one hundred times. There are drawings of Conder 'lying down while he is sketching, relaxing in Japanese attire or enjoying a Western meal with Kyosai'. For the Saturday meetings Kyosai prepared 'preparatory drawings' that still remain in a box labelled 'Sketches for the Englishman'.<sup>20</sup>

In the course of the 1880s, master and pupil, Kyosai and Conder, made three journeys together, as working holidays: to Nikko, the site of the Tokugawa mausoleum, north of Tokyo; Enoshima, a sea-side resort; and Kamakura, also a sacred place, south of Tokyo. There seems no doubt that the relationship became close in the late 1880s before Kyosai's death in 1889.

Kyosai's great granddaughter Kawanabe Kusumi comments that 'Kyosai was originally an isolationist who felt a strong sense of enmity towards foreigners, but after he began to associate with Conder, and learned something of foreign customs and manners he changed his views.'<sup>21</sup> Kyosai regarded Conder as 'always courteous and never under-hand'; Conder was present as Kyosai lay dying and promised to 'look after things' on his behalf.

Conder had been given the name 'Kyo-ei', which is the English 'ei', follower of Kyosai. In the years after the painter's death, no one did more than Conder to keep his memory green. In the long obituary that he wrote for the *Japan Weekly Mail* Conder stressed Kyosai's concern for the common people amongst whom Kyosai felt most happy.

From the 1880s Conder had been collecting Kyosai's work. By 1911 Conder, then approaching his sixtieth birthday, had prepared a book, *Paintings and Studies* by Kawanabe Kyosai, which was published, jointly, by Maruzen and Messrs Kelly and Walsh, in Yokohama, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore. The several chapters of the book (reprinted in 1993) include a section on the life of the painter, and others on painting materials, painting methods, examples of technique, the signatures and seals, which Kyosai used, and a catalogue of Conder's collection of Kyosai's work. The book is well illustrated with many examples of Kyosai's work; the frontispiece, in full colour, is a fine painting of a Japanese beauty. Kyosai had apparently prepared this vivid painting as a gift for Conder to celebrate Conder's progress as an artist. The painting remains in Scandinavia where Conder's daughter Haru lived after her marriage to a Swedish diplomat.

Kyosai's career and his association with Josiah Conder is a fine paradigm of cultural bridge building between Japan and Britain. Once Japan ceased to be a secret closed country then co-operation was not only desirable but inevitable.

### **Laurence Binyon of the British Museum**

Laurence Binyon began a forty-four-year career at the British Museum in 1893, when, newly graduated from the University of Oxford, he was appointed as an assistant to the Department of Prints and Drawings. By 1933, when he retired, he had many achievements to his name. Two of these relate to Japan. He had worked hard to categorise Japan art, especially Japanese prints, and learn as much as possible about its provenance, and he had succeeded in acquiring a good collection of Japanese prints for the British Museum. His remit at that time was a wide one, but his scholarly approach made possible the specialisation that became inevitable as a future generation of art historians, often trained in Japan, brought in new skills.

Through his writing he also made an important contribution to knowledge about East Asian Art. As has been noted, his 1908 *Painting in the Far East* was the first book in any language to discuss the whole range of Oriental painting, while *The Flight of the Dragon* was a widely read and influential study of Chinese aesthetics.

### **Laurence Binyon, *bi-no-shito*, a dedicated apostle of beauty**

Laurence Binyon<sup>22</sup> was a welcoming host to those Japanese who sought him out at the British Museum. The Binyon family lived in Montague Street, in one of those houses that were in fact part of the British Museum. There Laurence Binyon regularly entertained Japanese friends, including Yashiro Yukio and Taki Seiishi. The whole Binyon family, including the three Binyon girls, ensured that the welcome was a warm one.

Yashiro Yukio (1890–1975)<sup>23</sup> arrived in London in 1921. He had been brought up in the cosmopolitan surroundings of Yokohama, the principal treaty port in Japan, and he had a good grasp of English. Although he studied English literature at Tokyo Imperial University his real interest was in art. Perhaps because oil painting was an expensive exercise Yashiro took up Western-style watercolour painting<sup>24</sup> and in Japan he succeeded in selling some of his work. Yashiro lectured, and worked on his painting at Tokyo School of Art (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko) in Ueno Park. Not until 1921 was he able to make the journey to Britain where he planned to indulge himself by visiting art galleries. He soon found his way to the British Museum where he received a warm welcome from Binyon. As has been explained:

Binyon found Yashiro a delightful companion, open eyed and sensitive to beauty in life and art. In Binyon, Yashiro found both a sympathetic

friend and a model, a scholar-artist who was a respected poet, while in his modest way, doing for Japanese art what Yashiro's beloved Ruskin had done for Turner in *Modern Painters*. Yashiro called Binyon his English *sensei*, or master or teacher.<sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding the rapport between Binyon and Yashiro the climate in London seemed cold and clammy. Yashiro later settled in Florence where he worked successfully on Botticelli.

### **Binyon in Japan**

Binyon did not succeed in his life-long ambition to visit Japan until he was sixty years of age and not far off retirement. There had been earlier attempts to visit the East but these all failed, partly because of the advent of the First World War in 1914 and partly because of government unwillingness to finance his journey. In the end the Binyon Reception Committee, in Japan, raised the funds themselves. In London Binyon was granted 'special leave' on condition that 'no extra cost fell on imperial funds'.<sup>26</sup> Binyon arrived in Tokyo on 1 October 1929. After the initial shock of noisy, bustling Tokyo, Binyon realised that there were many links between the cacophony of the modern Tokyo and the old world.

Binyon's month-long stay in Tokyo in the autumn of 1929 was a memorable one. His principal task was to lecture on 'Landscape in English Art and Poetry'. To this end a collection of English watercolour painting had been borrowed and transported to Tokyo. These pictures were exhibited at the Institute of Art Research, in Ueno Park, Tokyo. There were fifty-four pictures in all including:

Eighteenth century watercolours by Wilson, Gainsborough, Alexander and J.R. Cozens, Francis Towne, Rowlandson and Romney, through the great Romantics, Blake, Constable, Girtin, Turner and Cotman to the twentieth century artists such as Vanessa Bell, Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer, and David Jones.<sup>27</sup>

During the course of his lectures, Binyon, with great skill, discussed the links between East and West, explaining similarities and differences. This was intended to bring subjects, difficult for a Japanese audience to understand, closer to their experience and therefore to their understanding. He explored the links between 'say Girtin and J.R. Cozens and the Sung landscapists, Rowlandson and Uro Mano, Cotman and the Korin school, between Wordsworth and the Zen poet-painters, Shelley and the Taoist sages'.<sup>28</sup>

It was a bold performance. On each of the six occasions Binyon addressed an audience of nearly 1,000 people. He was praised for his 'modesty, his obvious deep love of Japanese art, the beauty of his language and his enunciation'.<sup>29</sup> Binyon was told later that, 'I still now hear it told

everywhere that no foreigner has yet made lectures of such deep impression here as those you delivered at the Imperial University.’<sup>30</sup> Mrs Sansom, George Sansom’s wife, commented to her diary that Binyon had had ‘a wonderful success. He is probably as good an ambassador as we have ever had.’<sup>31</sup>

### **‘Binyon of Bloomsbury’**

Laurence Binyon spent his forty-four-year career at the British Museum nurturing and advancing the cause of Japanese art and artefacts. His prodigious output included work on various poets, painters and literary figures, as well as classic volumes on the holdings of Japanese art at the British Museum.

And yet he is most famous in his own country for his poem, ‘For the Fallen’, written in 1914. His most famous poem remains a poignant reminder of the disasters of the First World War.

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them

These four lines, intoned like a prayer every Armistice day, cannot fail to move any who hear them. A recording was made, and sold commercially by Nippon Columbia, of Binyon reading some of his poems, including ‘For the Fallen’ together with extracts from his lectures. These were publicised as ‘the essence of the pure nobility of the English language’.<sup>32</sup>

Laurence Binyon was, from 1913–33, Keeper of Oriental Prints at the British Museum. During his long period of service he worked hard to catalogue the Japanese prints held by the British Museum. Not only that but he tried to ensure that the collection was a broad one. When he started at the British Museum in 1893 Japanese work was not distinguished within the general category of Oriental Art. The cultural bridge that Binyon built to Japan ensured that his successors could build on the foundations that he had laid. It can be noted that ‘by 1912, largely through Binyon’s drive and ingenuity, the British Museum had acquired a collection of Far Eastern art to rival any public collection in Europe’.<sup>33</sup>

### **Mikimoto Ryuzo and Ruskin in Japan**

The foremost Ruskinian in Japan was Mikimoto Ryuzo, the only son and heir of Mikimoto Kikichi, the man who had, by discovering a technique of encouraging oysters to make ‘cultured’ pearls, set up a new and profitable industry that became well known worldwide. Young Ryuzo would have none of this, as he wrote:

so long as there exists the merit of my father, who has been invested with a decoration for producing pearls with the help of five hundred employees, we cannot extirpate the bacteria of poverty, which are the causes of the social disease.

According to Mikimoto Ryuzo in his *Time and Tide*<sup>34</sup> Ruskin wrote that:

whether you get your ceiling painted by a Paul Veronese or get a goblet cast by a Benvenuto Cellini, it is left to your option, but you ought not to employ one hundred divers to seek for pearls at the bottom of the sea and adorn your dress.

Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946)<sup>35</sup> is credited with bringing Ruskin's 'socialist' ideas to Japan. Nowadays Kawakami is labelled a Marxist, but there was always a strong humanistic element in his teaching. Kawakami, of good family, was early imbued with the old Samurai values of 'patriotic nationalism and political responsibility'. He held the Chair of Economics at Kyoto University between 1908 and 1928. But by 1924 he could not deny his label as a Marxist, and by 1928 was forced to resign. Notwithstanding, Kawakami knew he was, despite his label, always closer to Ruskin than to Marx. He believed that 'economic policies have to be widely and deeply based on human life'.

John Ruskin (1819–1900),<sup>36</sup> one of the most important Victorian writers and watercolourists whose work, originally bedded in art and art history, gradually moved into architecture, and later into studying the state of British society. Indeed the inequalities between the classes in Britain led him to various social experiments that caused him to be labelled a 'socialist'. In the 1870s and 1880s he issued *Fors Clavigera*, a monthly pamphlet which was, despite its difficult title, intended for the working man, in which he inveighed against the injustices suffered by the lower classes in Britain at that time.

But he was first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford from 1870–9 and again from 1883–5. There is no doubt about his abilities; his four volumes on *Modern Painters* (1843, 1846, 1856, 1860) made his reputation. In his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–3) he established his position as a commentator on architecture.

In the 1850s he worked, as did Dante Gabriel Rossetti, at the Working Man's College in Red Lion Square, London, and produced *The Elements of Drawing* (1857). As his interests became more involved with social and ethical problems he wrote *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866) and *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866). After 1864, when his father died, he had a reasonable fortune at his disposal. From 1871, he made his home at Brantwood on Lake Coniston in the Lake District. From here he organised the Guild of St George, a scheme for setting up land communities. He used his money widely supporting various philanthropic endeavours, including Octavia Hill's workers' housing associations. These could be called, loosely, 'socialist' endeavours.

John Ruskin never visited Japan and was never able to acknowledge the beauties of art in Japan. As early as 1863, when he was a man of forty-four, Ruskin wrote to William Michael Rossetti, thanking him for the loan of a book of uncoloured Japanese landscapes: 'The book is delightful, and thank you for sending it. I should like to go and live in Japan. ... I return Japan by book-post. The seas and clouds are delicious, the mountains very good.' Notwithstanding Ruskin's apparent enthusiasm with Japanese art he was in fact seeking to distance himself from anything to do with Japan. In a letter from Ruskin to Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1865) Ruskin wrote, 'But we won't have rows, and when you come, we'll look at things that we both like. You shall bar Parma, and I, Japan.' At a lecture at the Japan Society in 1906, six years after Ruskin's death, the Chairman remarked during the discussion:

Mr. Quaritch once showed me a letter from Mr. Ruskin. He had been in the habit of sending him great books of art, and Mr. Ruskin asked him not to send any more of those books on Japan, as they disturbed him and it was too late for him to enter into those matters.<sup>37</sup>

There are many reasons why Ruskin may have resisted knowing more about Japanese art. The principal one must be that by the mid-1860s, when the Rossetti brothers were absorbed in the wonders of Japan, Ruskin's thoughts were turning more and more to the inequalities of British society. To have entered into even a cursory study of Japanese art would have deflected him from what he then saw as his life's work.

### **Ruskin, *Ruskin* in Japan**

Ruskin's life and work covered an enormous range of subjects. His work on art, nature, architecture, inequalities in society and social experiments was wide ranging and so proved to be attractive to the Japanese. The first appeal in Japan was to nature. The romantic view of nature had emerged during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and been developed by the Lakeland poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. Those who live as subsistence farmers have no time, either in Europe or Japan, to consider the finer points of nature; only those who have time and leisure can appreciate the sublime in the mountains, crags and waterfalls. Ruskin, who had advised his readers to 'go to Nature in all singleness of heart ... rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing', was an ideal mentor for the Japanese.

As a young man of twenty-three, in 1920, some twenty years after Ruskin's death, young Mikimoto came to London and bought up any Ruskiniana he could find. With the help of Ruskin's relatives he amassed 'Young Ruskin's collection of seaweed, his books, articles, letters, original manuscripts, drawings and paintings.'<sup>38</sup> These treasures were shown at an





Figure 15.2 Mikimoto designs, including a likeness of John Ruskin

exhibition in Tokyo in 1926 at Mamzen's bookshop. After more travels in Britain there was a further showing of Ruskin's work in 1931. Also in 1931 Mikimoto established Tokyo Rasukin Kyokai (Tokyo Ruskin Society) and a journal, *Tokyo Rasukin Kyokai Zasshi* (Tokyo Ruskin Society Journal).

Although Mikimoto Ryuzo had refused to take part in the Mikimoto pearl-fishing industry he clearly felt some responsibility for the workers. Through the 1920s various 'Christian socialist' ideas were floated at Mikimotos. Saito Shinkichi, Ryuzo's uncle, who was head of the jewellery factory, in 1919, set up a Workers' Church for the 'cultivation and enlightenment' of the workers. In 1923 at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake, Mikimoto, with others, set up a printing works, *Shimeisha* (The Mission Company), which was able to take on unemployed Mikimoto workers. The *Shimeisha* printed material for the *Tokyo Rasukin Kyokai Zasshi* and *Rasuko Bunko* (Ruskin Library).

There was also 'the Ruskin Cottage'. Unemployed Mikimoto workers were encouraged to make craft work and sell it at the Ruskin Cottage. Mikimoto opened tearooms in the Ginza, Tokyo, with the idea of replicating Ruskin's tearooms in London. But Ruskin's enterprises were in unfashionable areas; Mikimoto's became fashionable and attracted a wealthy clientele.

The emergence of Mikimoto Ryuzo as one of the foremost Ruskinian scholars in Japan raises a number of challenging issues. Was the young Mikimoto in fact allowed to proceed with his Ruskinian endeavours because of his father's wealth? The Japanese government (until 1945) was oppressive and illiberal. There was no room in the Japanese state for any dissidence.<sup>39</sup>

## **Bernard Leach**

Of all those who feature in these pages Bernard Leach is the one who attained fame and acclaim in both Japan and England. With Tomimoto Kenkichi he, Leach, became heir to Kenzan VI, one of the great names in Japanese ceramics.<sup>40</sup>

Bernard Leach was born in Hong Kong, but, because of his mother's death at his birth, was reared as an infant by his grandparents in Nagasaki in Japan. As a small boy he moved to Singapore to be with his father, who was a judge there. He did not set foot in England until 1897, when, as a 10-year-old, he was sent 'home' to attend school. It seems reasonable to believe that these ten years spent in the East gave Leach an interest and understanding of East Asia, including Japan, which was denied to others. Leach attended the Slate School of Art in London, where, among others, he was taught by famous art teachers including Henry Tonks.

His interest in Japan and the East was stimulated by reading Lafcadio Hearn. After finishing at art college he resolved to travel to Japan and somehow to make a living from his art. He arrived in Japan in April 1909. In London he had already met Nakamura Kotaro, a sculptor, who gave Leach an introduction to his father. Nakamura knew that it would be hard for Leach in Japan without any knowledge of the language, or of the way of life there. At this stage Leach carried his etching pens with him and planned to give lessons on etching in Japan.

Leach had other introductions, one to Baron Iwamura, whose assistant Morita Kamenosuke befriended Leach. Morita provided Leach with a small house, an annexe to his own, and helped him to learn Japanese. But Leach was lonely; his cousin, his fiancée, would only be permitted to come to Japan to marry if he had a house. Leach managed to build a small house in northern Tokyo in temple gardens. Eventually Muriel, the prospective bride, arrived with her mother and the young couple were married at Doshisha Christian University in Kyoto. Leach had reasonable contacts with young Japanese artists, and held the occasional exhibition, but, although busy with his painting, he was not making a living.

Leach's closest friend was Tomimoto Kenkichi (Tomi) who had been in England for some two years. Tomi made wood-block prints; Leach had his etching; together they approached the Gahosho Gallery in Tokyo and arranged for their work to be shown there. It was in association with the young artists at the Gahosho Gallery that Leach was invited to decorate a clay pot. In the course of this session the young potters returned Leach's pot



to him glazed and patterned. As Leach wrote, 'Enthralled, I was on the spot seized with the desire to take up this craft.'<sup>41</sup>

It is a curious reflection that when, in 1909, the 22-year-old Leach decided to become a potter in Japan much of the old hand-crafted pottery had gone. Government policy to get rid of the old hand-crafted pottery had been only too successful (see Chapter 4). The pressure of the export trade for pots of all descriptions, as long as they were cheap, had led to the death of the old industry. Thus Bernard Leach and his Japanese confrères found themselves in the position of recreating and revitalising an old tradition in Japan. This became an important part of the art and craft movement in Japan.

Shortly after his conversion and his decision to become a potter, Leach, together with his friend Tomimoto, was introduced to Kenzan VI, who agreed to teach the two young men. Kenzan VI was from a long line of potters, famous throughout Japan, who, originally from Kyoto, had moved to northern Tokyo in the eighteenth century. There with Kenzan, Leach:

began to learn my alphabet of clay, turning a potter's wheel with a stick, making either the software with wet hands, or turning the cheese hard pots. Kenzan discouraged talk. Do what I show you, which is how my master taught me.<sup>42</sup>

The four men, whose careers are briefly discussed here, all strengthened the cultural links between Britain and Japan.

Kyosai Kawanabe never visited Britain, but in a small book that he prepared in 1872, *Shank's Mare around the West (Seiyo Dochū Hizakurige)*, he did visit London – on paper at least – and he made a small drawing of the British Museum.

Josiah Conder, the Professor of Architecture, was Kyosai's pupil and close friend. When Conder died in 1920 he was buried with his wife at the burial ground at Gokokuji Temple, Tokyo. At the grave now there is a small sign saying 'Josiah Conder's grave is cared for by Kusumi Kawanabe'. She is Kyosai's great granddaughter.

Laurence Binyon strengthened the cultural bridges between Japan and Britain in two ways. As a poet he was valued in Japan where still, each New Year, the Emperor leads the imperial court in a poetry writing ceremony. This might be considered the romantic view of Binyon. On the practical side Binyon brought his intellectual skills to bear by attempting to categorise and codify Japanese prints in the British Museum collections. His achievement was the more notable because prior to his work little was really known about the provenance of the Japanese prints.

Bernard Leach lived in Japan and immersed himself for years in Japanese society. He moved easily from one society to another. The cultural bridges that he built were strong and resilient. He talked engagingly of a marriage of the East and West.

## Notes

- 1 With thanks to Dr Kawanabe Kusumi, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Kawanabe Kyosai Memorial Museum Foundation, for her kindness and support.
- 2 T. Clark, *The Demon of Painting, the Art of Kawanabe Kyosai*, British Museum, 1993.
- 3 Josiah Conder, Tokyo Station Gallery, 30 May to 21 July 1997.
- 4 J.T. Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, Oxford, 1996.
- 5 With thanks to Emiko Tomida, the librarian at the Ruskin Library of Tokyo, 2–15–15 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104, Japan.
- 6 Bernard Leach, *Beyond East and West. Memoirs, Portraits and Essays*, 1978.
- 7 E.P. Conant, 'Captain Frank Brinkley resurrected', in O. Impey and M. Fairley (eds), *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, Vol. 1, 1995; for Frank Brinkley, see J. Hoare, 'British Journalists in Japan', in I.H. Nish (ed.), *Britain and Japan, Biographical Portraits*, Folkestone, Kent, 1994, pp. 26–7.
- 8 Dr William Anderson FRCS, a medical doctor who served in Japan in the 1870s and was founder of the Japan Society in London, sold his Japanese print collection to the British Museum; see Chapter 10.
- 9 For Mortimer Menpes, see Chapter 11, and *Japan, a Record in Colour*, 1901, pp 61–6.
- 10 W. Anderson, 'A Japanese artist, Kawanabe Kiosai', in *The Studio*, Vol. V, 1898, pp. 29–38; M. Menpes, 'A personal view of Japanese art' and 'A lesson from Khiosi', *Magazine of Art*, April 1888, pp. 192–9 and pp. 255–61.
- 11 J. Conder, *Paintings and Studies of Kawanabe Kyosai*, Yokohama, 1911, reprinted Kawanabe Kyosai Memorial Museum, Warabi, Saitama, 1993.
- 12 Conder, *Paintings and Studies of Kawanabe Kiosai*, Chapter 1, 'Life of the painter', pp. 1–14.
- 13 Kuniyoshi Utagawa (1798–1861) a leading colour print designer, book illustrator and *Ukiyo-e* painter, especially noted for his 'Warrior' prints; see B.W. Robinson, *Drawings by Kuniyoshi*, 1953, *Kuniyoshi*, 1961, and *Kuniyoshi, the Warrior Print*, 1982.
- 14 The Kano School was one of the most influential, and long-lasting, groups in Japan to teach Chinese painting.
- 15 E.P. Conant, 'Captain Frank Brinkley resurrected', pp. 124–51.
- 16 *Kyosai Gadan, the Life in Art of Kyosai Kawanabe Toiku* (1831–89), compiled by Baitei Gaso, Kyosai's Student, translated by Scott Johnson, Kyosai Memorial Museum, 1983, p. 32.
- 17 Mr Yamaguchi may have been an official of the Imperial Household Ministry.
- 18 *Kyosai Gadan*, p. 31.
- 19 Usually Kyosai, and his daughter, visited Conder at home; the lessons were reported to have become a family affair.
- 20 *Josiah Conder Catalogue of Exhibitions*, Tokyo Railway Station Gallery, Tokyo, 1997, p. 61.
- 21 *Josiah Conder Catalogue of Exhibitions*, p. 62.
- 22 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, 1996.
- 23 For Yashiro Yukio (1890–1975), see J.T. Hatcher, 'Anglo-Japanese friendships, Yashiro Yukio, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley', *Fukuoka University Review of Literature and Humanities*, Vol. XXIII, No. IV (No. 91), March 1992, pp. 1–26 (also numbered pages 997–1022).
- 24 Hatcher, 'Anglo-Japanese friendships', p. 3 (p. 997).
- 25 Hatcher, 'Anglo-Japanese friendships', p. 7 (p. 1003).
- 26 British Museum, Minutes, Vol. IVII, CE 3/62, p. 4501.
- 27 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 250.
- 28 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 250.
- 29 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 251.

- 30 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 251.
- 31 K. Sansom, *Sir George Sansom and Japan, a Memoir*, Tallahassee, Florida, 1972, p. 42.
- 32 Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, p. 251, from the sleeve note, Harriet Proudfoot Collection.
- 33 Hatcher, 'Anglo-Japanese friendships', p. 102.
- 34 R. Mikimoto, *What is Ruskin in Japan?*, Tokyo, 1931, p. 15, with thanks to the Ruskin Library, Tokyo; Mikimoto is not, of course, actually quoting Ruskin.
- 35 Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946) was credited with bringing Marxism to Japan but it seems likely that he was closer to Ruskin than to Marx. Kawakami was Professor of Economics at Kyoto University from 1908–28, when an increasingly intolerant Japan forced his resignation. Inevitably he influenced R. Mikimoto, himself eager to rebel.
- 36 See *Ruskin in Japan, 1890–1940, Nature for Art, Art for Life*, general editor Toshio Watanabe, Tokyo, 1997, pp. 274–5.
- 37 *Ruskin in Japan*, pp. 274–5.
- 38 *Ruskin in Japan*, p. 306.
- 39 See R. Rhodes and D. van Janik, *Studies in Ruskin. Essays in honour of Van Akin Burd*, Athens, Ohio, 1982. See particularly the chapter by M. Kimara, 'Japanese interest in Ruskin, some historical trends', particularly pp. 215–18.
- 40 B. Leach, *Kenzan and his Tradition*, 1966.
- 41 B. Leach, *Beyond East and West. Memoirs, Portraits and Essays*, p. 56.
- 42 Leach, *Beyond East and West*, p. 57.

# Appendix I

## Catalogue of Japanese Exhibition and their products shown at the International Exhibition, Glasgow, 1901 (see chapter 2)

For the International Exhibition, see Chapter 2. The spelling used here is that of the Catalogue of 1901.

### East Gardens, near Grand Concert Hall

Brightness, rich colouring, delicate workmanship, and chaste artistic knick-knacks are always associated with the deft workers of Japan. It will be found that in the present instance these attributes are well maintained. The examples of Ware, Ivory and Wood Carving, Metal Working, Silk Weaving, Carpentry, Embroidery, Art Paper, Fancy Goods, Furniture, etc., to be seen in the Japanese Pavilions, will bear favourable comparison with any previous exhibit. The goods shown, and the names of the exhibitors follows:

#### Class I: foods etc.

Yamamoto Shozo, Osaka – Starches  
Kawazoye Rinhei, Nagasaki – Table Salt  
Takahashi Gihei, Hokkaido – Smoked Salmon  
Nagata Daisuke, Kobe – Bamboos  
Morita and Co., Aichi-ken-soy (Japanese Sauce)

#### Class II: manufactures

Watano Kichiji (Yokohama), Inouye Iihei (Whyo), Takemoto Koichi (Whyo), and Murakami Tsuyoshi (Kyoto) – Porcelains  
Matsumoto Sahei and Sanyeigumi, Tshikawa-Ken – Kutani Porcelains  
Miyagawa Kozan and Watanabe Kintaro, Yokohama – Porcelains and Fayences  
Hiochiyen, Whyo – Paintings on Porcelains and Fayences  
Ito Zozan (Kyoto), Suzuki Hachizo (Yokohama) – Fayences  
Kinkozan Sobei, Kyoto – Awata Fayences  
Chinjukan, Kagoshima-Ken – Satsuma Fayences  
Yamanaka & Co., Osaka – Kyoto Porcelains and Fayences

Suya Kinhei, Vaniquchi Kichijiro, Vominaga Imshiro, Kawajiri Kihei, Yamanioto Tsuburo, Akiyama Komajiro, Watano Gentaro, and Matsumoto Sataro, all of Tshikawa-Ken – Kutani Porcelains

### **Class III: art metal industries**

Okazaki Sessei (Whyo), Shima Sahei (Osaka), Yamanaka & Co., Sanyegumi (Ishikawa-Ken), Watanabe Kintaro (Yokohama) – Art Bronzes

Shimozeki Kahei, Whyo – Art Bronzes, combined with Metal Inlaid Working

Namekawa Veisho, Unno Yoshimori, and the Whyo Carving Art Association – Metal Carvings

Shimozeki Kahei, Whyo – Art Bronzes, combined with Metal Inlaid Working

Hirano Kichibei, Kyoto – Art Bronzes, Enamelled

Kutsutani Vakijiro, Whyo – Carving on Precious Metals

Suzuki Kichigoro, Whyo – Antimony Wares

### **Class IV: cloisonne and enamel industries**

Ando Yinbei, Suzuki Honda, Kawade Shibataro, Kawaguichi Bunzayemon and Gonda Hirosuke of Nagoya and Inaba Nanaho (Kyoto), Hayashi Kodenji and Hattori Kichibei (Woshima) – Cloisonnes

### **Class V: ivory and wood carvings**

Kaneda Kanejiro, Yolsugi Wmigoro, Wyama Chozo, Kato Wyoshichi, Kilajima Kojiro, Kilamura Shikai (all of Whyo), and Yamanaka & Co. (Osaka) – Ivory Carvings

Murakami & Suyoshi (Kyoto), Horkawa Jukiehiro and Murakami Kurosaku, of Ishikawa-Ken – Wood Carvings.

### **Class VI: lacquered works**

Shibakawa Matayemon (Osaka), Makiye, Seizo Kwaisha (Hamamatsu), Shidzuoka Shikki Kumiai (Shidzuoka), and Shinjo Inokichi (Wakamatsu) – Lacquered Wares

Mikami Kozaburo, Mikami Jisaburo, and Murakami Vsuyoshi, of Kyoto – Lacquer Works

Kawamoto Kihei and Sanyegumi (Tshikawa-Ken) – Gold Makiye Works

### **Class VII: cotton and mixed fabrics**

Aichi Bussangumi (Nagoya), Abe Kosuke (Whyo), and Kyoto Aisomegio Kumiai (Kyoto) – Cotton Fabrics

**Class VIII: raw silk, silk thread, etc.**

Gunze Filature Co., Kyoto-Fu – Raw Silk  
Kyoto Itomono Kumiai (Kyoto), Domio Shimbei (Whyo) – Silk Cords and Braids

**Class IX: silk fabrics**

Kawashima Zimbei (Kyoto), Tida Shinshichi (Kyoto), Abe Kosuke (Whyo), and Aichi Bussangumi (Nagoya) – Silk Fabrics  
O ya Hikojiro (Wyama-Ken), Kitahama Sanjuro (Kanazawa), Matsubara Sakaye (Fukui) – Habutaye Silk

**Class X: embroideries and Yuzen dyed stuffs**

Nishimura Sozayemon, Zanaka Rishichi, and Zanaka Seishichi, of Kyoto – Embroideries and Yuzen Dyed Stuffs  
Tida Shinshichi (Kyoto), Kawagoye Masakatsu (Kanazawa), Murakami Zsuyoshi (Kyoto) – Embroideries  
Hayashi Zadamasu, Whyo – Embroidered Curtains  
Zsuruta Nao, Whyo – Embroidered Screens  
Nishimura Jihei, and Hiro-oka Jhei, Kyoto – Yuzen Dyed Stuffs

**Class XI: other trades and manufactures**

Fujimoto Shotaro, and Mitani Iwazo, Sakai – Carpets  
Kyoto Reedmakers' Association, and Kitaoka Mohachi, Kyoto – Reeds  
Kutsutani Zakijiro (Whyo) – Purses, Card-Cases, and other Fancy Articles  
Tshizumi Kisaburo (Kyoto), Miyawaki Shimbei (Kyoto), Nagoya Fan Manufacturing Co. (Nagoya), Zeshigawara Navjiro (Gifu) – Fans  
Zakei Sukeyemon (Gifu), Ohta Genzayemon (Shidzuoka-Ken), Inouye Denjuro (Kochi-Ken Niphon Kami Shokwai (Kobe), Zeshigawara Navjiro (Gife) – Papers  
Zeshigawara Navjiro, Ozeki Rishichi of Gifu – Paper Lanterns  
Kawamoto Matakichi (Kyoto), Watanabe Kintaro (Yokohama) – Paper Panels  
Murakami Masanojo, Kyoto – Toys  
Matsumoto Sahei (Ishikawa-Ken), Murakami Atsushi (Kyoto) – Pictures and Books  
Seiran Simidzu, Kobe – Furniture  
Hayami Kichihei, Kyoto – Wicker Basket, etc.  
Niwa Kensuke, Kyoto – Collective Exhibits of Old Japanese Ceramics

## Appendix II

### Industrial art manufacture in Japan. Companies which worked with, and for, Kiritsa Kosko Kaisha (see chapter 3)

These are companies that probably worked with and for *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* [Establishing Manufacture and Commerce] after 1873 (see Chapter 3) (extracted from *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha* by Hida Toyojiro, Kyoto, 1987). See A.W. Franks, *Japanese Potters, Being a Native Report*, published for the Committee of Council on Education, Chapman & Hall, n.d., but 1880, for a contemporary account of Japanese pottery and export ware.

#### **Honshu Island, Kanazawa**

February 1877

*Kanazawa Toki (china) Kaisha*: Founded by Junya Hasigawa, although there had been an earlier firm of Kaga craftsmen. In 1884 they started to export products through Magobei Tanak, who later operated the Paris branch of *Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha*. The firm was dissolved in 1888.

#### **Near Kanazawa, Ishikawa prefecture**

*Kutani Toki Kaisha*: This company was founded by Kyoshi Kasagai at the suggestion of Takamasa Chisaka, the governor of Ishikawa prefecture.

#### **Kyoto**

f. 1870

Kanzan Denshichi (?–1890) was a craftsman working near the *Kiyomizu* Temple. He was the first potter to use Western paints. His company became *Kanzan China Kaisha* but this failed in 1889.

18?

*Kinkozan Sobei*: This company was the largest in the Awata (East Gate) area. By 1890 the firm had three main kilns, twenty kilns for ‘colour prints’ and 105 craftsmen were employed there.

1887

*Kyoto Toki (China) Kaisha*: Twenty potters joined together at Fushimi (South Gate of Kyoto) aiming to increase production of Kyoto ware. They aimed to produce china for daily use and adopted a factory system; at least one French machine was introduced. Forty craftsmen were employed but the company ceased to trade in 1899.

1873

*Nami Kawa Yasuyuki*: Namikawa (1845–1927) (a Samurai of the Fushimi family) took up *cloisonné* work in 1873. His work won several prizes. He became an imperial craftsman in 1896.

## Nagoya

1876

*Marimina-gumi*: Founded by Morimura Ichizaemon and Yutaka, two brothers. Yutaka settled in New York to open a shop that would sell Japanese art objects. From around 1881 the firm bought in semi-finished china from Seto. Later the successful firm was reorganised (1894) as *Nihon Toki Kaisha*.

## Tokyo

Before 1873, apparently dissolved in 1879

*Ahrens*, probably a German, founded a pottery works in Tsukiji to produce various art objects. In 1875 ten craftsmen were recruited from Owari (Nagoya) to help produce *cloisonné* ware; possibly this company made lacquer ware and china ware as well as *cloisonné*. In 1877 Ahren's *cloisonné* works was bought by a Nagoya company and Sosuke Minatogawa (1847–1910) became manager.

Note: Heinrich Ahrens, a German, set up the only expatriate firm to manufacture export art at its own premises. Ahrens was not 'regarded favourably' by Japanese manufacturers. See *Khalili Collection of Japanese Art*, Vol. 1, 1995, pp. 84–6.

1877–?

*Seikosha*: Founded by Kokei Kishi in Kanda, Tokyo, by 1879 the firm had contracts with forty-three craftsmen to produce lacquer work, decorated with gold.

1868

*Gansvien*: Founded by Yosai Takemoto and his son Hayata (1848–92) at Koishikawa, this firm was eager to introduce Western methods and, after 1873, Kirjiro Nohimi, who had been in Vienna, at the Exposition, taught modern methods to the employees.



## **Tokyo**

June 1883

*Yugyokuen*: Founded by Tomotaro Kato (1851–1916) in Kanda, Kato came from Seto, but did some training in the Tokyo Museum.

1870

*Yokohama*: Founded by Miyagawa Kozan (1842–1916) who moved from Kyoto in 1870. Miyagawa won many prizes, not only in exhibitions in Japan, but also those overseas. He exhibited for the Japan Art Association (*Nihon Bigutsu Kyokai*). He was elevated to the rank of imperial craftsman in 1896. He was an artist and a craftsman but he produced ‘daily necessities’ by making souvenirs for the foreigners.

## **Kyushu Island**

1875

*Koransha*: The founders were Eizaiman Fukugawa (president), Bokunosuke Fukami, Katsuzo Tsuji and Kamenosuke Tezaka. It soon achieved status as an imperial supplier. They won many prizes.

## Appendix III

British publishers with whom Maruzen was doing business between 1912 and 1941 (see chapter 5)

### **The Catalogue of Maruzen books in English, French and German, 1883 (see Chapter 5)**

Catalogue headings only

Agriculture, Algebra (Mathematics), Anatomy (Medical Books), Architecture (Carpenter and Building), Arithmetics (Mathematics), Astronomy and Meteorology, Atlas (Maps, Atlas and Charts).

Banking (Commerce), Bible (Theology and Religion), Biographical Works, Book-keeping, Botany (Natural History), Building.

Calculus (Mathematics), Charts, Chemistry, Commerce and Banking, Composition and Rhetoric, Constitution (Political Science), Conversation (Languages).

Dictionaries, Drama (Poetry), Drawing.

Educational Works, Elocution and Oratory, Encyclopaedia (Dictionaries), Engineering, Entomology (Natural History).

Fine Arts, French Books.

Geography, Geology and Mineralogy, Geometry (Mathematics), German Books, Grammar (Language), Guide Books (Travels and Voyages), Gymnastics.

History (General), Hygiene (Physiology and Medical Books).

Industrial Arts (Manufactures), Intellectual (Philosophy).

Languages, Law Books (in General), Letter Writing (Composition), Lexicons (Dictionaries), Literature, Logic (Philosophy).

Machinery (Engineering), Manufactures and Industrial Arts, Maps, Atlas and Charts, Mathematics, Mechanics (Natural Philosophy), Medical Books, Mensuration (Surveying or Mathematics), Mental Philosophy (Philosophy), Metallurgy and Mining, Metaphysics (Philosophy), Meteorology (Astronomy), Military and Naval Science, Mineralogy (Geology), Mining (Metallurgy), Miscellaneous and General Works, Moral Philosophy (Philosophy).

Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Naval Science (Military), Navigation (Naval Science).

Object Teaching (Educational Works).

Painting (Fine Arts), Penmanship, Philosophy, Photography (Fine Arts), Physics (Natural Philosophy), Physiology and Hygiene, Poetry and Drama, Political and Social Science, Primers, Psychology (Philosophy). Readers, Religion (Theology), Rhetoric (Composition). Social Science (Political), Spellers, Steam Engine (Engineering), Surveying. Theology and Religion, Travels, Voyages and Guide Books. Veterinary Medicine.

**British publishers with whom Maruzen was doing business between 1912 and 1941 (see Chapter 5)**

The information in this section is extracted from *Maruzen Hyakunenshi* [100 years of Maruzen], Tokyo, 1981, pp. 224–62.

Academy Architecture

1 title

George Allen & Unwin Ltd

25 titles in total

Over 1,000 copies of K. Kantsky, *Bolshevism at a Deadlock* sold

Allman & Son

2 titles

Amalgamated Press Ltd

10 titles

Several thousand copies of *Marvels of the Universe* sold

Edward Arnold & Co.

8 titles

J.W. Arrowsmith Ltd

3 titles

John Bartholomew & Son

3 titles

A.T. Batsford Ltd

9 titles

George Bell & Sons Ltd

8 titles

Ernest Benn Ltd

8 titles

Bentley & Co.

1 title

Adam & Charles Black Ltd

2 titles

Blackie & Son Ltd

1 title

*Standard Dictionary* that was sold as Maruzen's Standard Dictionary, 35,000 copies

Thornton Butterworth Ltd

11 titles

Butterworth & Co. Ltd

16 titles

Cambridge University Press

73 titles

Jonathan Cape Ltd

3 titles

Cassell & Co. Ltd

17 titles

W. & R. Chambers Ltd

5 titles

*Chambers Seven Figure Mathematical Tables* sold 1,500 annually

*Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* sold between 20,000 and 30,000 copies

Chatto & Windus

3 titles

T. & T. Clark

8 titles

William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd

2 titles

*Collins Illustrated Pocket Classics* sold 20,000 to 30,000 copies

Constable & Co. Ltd

68 titles

Country Life

6 titles

J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd

11 titles

D. Jones, *English Pronouncing Dictionary* sold 5,000 copies

Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd

1 title

C. Maclair, *The French Impressionists 1860–1900* sold 1,000 copies

Eyre & Spottiswood Publishers Ltd

1 title

Gee & Co. Ltd

2 titles

Gowans & Gray Ltd

9 titles

B.H. Chamberlain, *Japanese Fairy Tales* sold 1,000 copies

Charles Griffin & Co. Ltd

47 titles, all scientific and engineering books

A.E. Seaton, *Pocket Book of Marine Engineering Rules and Tables* sold several thousand copies

Gurney and Jackson

8 titles

George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd

17 titles

W. Heffer & Sons Ltd

3 titles

William Heinemann Ltd

38 titles

F. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazou*, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, all translated by C. Garnett, all sold several thousand copies

E.F. Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (2 vols) sold 2,000 copies

John Heywood & Ltd

5 titles

L.B. Hill Ltd

2 titles

Hodder & Stoughton

25 titles

Martin Hopkinson Ltd

8 titles

Iliffe and Sons, Ltd

7 titles

Independent Labour Party Publication Dept

11 titles

Wylie Jackson & Co.

6 titles

Richard Jäschke

2 titles

J. Jenkins Ltd

6 titles

W. & A.K. Johnston

6 titles

P.S. King & Staples Ltd

24 titles

John Lane

9 titles

Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, *Penguin Island* and *Red Lily*

Crosby Lockwood Son, Ltd

19 titles

Green Longmans & Co.

185 titles

W. Ashley, *Economic Organization of England* sold 3,000 copies

S. Dunkersley, *Mechanism* sold 1,000 copies

A. Findlay, *Physical Chemistry for Students of Medicine* sold 2,000 copies

— *Practical Physical Chemistry* sold 2 copies

J. Goodman, *Mechanics Applied to Engineering* sold 1,000 copies

W.J. Goudie, *Steam Turbines* sold 1,000 copies

- W. Tuchley, *Theory of Heat Engines* sold 1,000 copies  
 G.W.C. Kaye, *Tables of Physical and Chemical Contrasts and some Mathematical Functions* sold 1,000 copies  
 D.A. Low, *Applied Mathematics* sold 1,000 copies  
 — *Heat Engines* sold 1,000 copies  
 — *Manual of Machine Drawing and Design* sold 4,000 copies  
 — *Pocket Book for Mechanical Engineers* sold 10,000 copies  
 J.W. Mellor, *Higher Mathematics for Students of Chemistry and Physics* sold 1,000–2,000 copies  
 G.S. Newth, *Manual of Chemical Analysis* sold 10,000 copies  
 — *Smaller Chemical Analysis, Qualitative and Quantitative* sold 4,000 copies  
 J. Prescott, *Applied Elasticity* sold 1,000 copies  
 W. Ripper, *Steam Engine Theory and Practise* sold 1,000 copies  
 P.M. Roget, *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* sold 2,000 copies  
 R. Sennett and H.J. Oram, *The Marine Steam Engine* sold 1,000 copies  
 S.G. Starling, *Electricity and Magnetism for Advanced Students* sold 1,000–2,000 copies  
 Macmillan & Co. Ltd  
 295 titles  
 Elkin Mathews & Marrot Ltd  
 5 titles  
 Medici Society Ltd  
 5 titles  
 Meiklejohn & Sons, Ltd  
 4 titles  
 Methuen & Co. Ltd  
 97 titles  
 A. Chelton-Brock, *Shelley, Man and Poet* sold 1,000 copies  
 J.A. Hobson, *Problems of Poverty* sold 1,000 copies  
 A. Kidd, *Social Evolution* sold 1,500 copies  
 F. Straker, *The Money Market* sold 2,500 copies  
 L. Tolstoy, *My Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* sold 3,000 copies  
 — *Problems of Life* sold 1,000 copies  
 — *Towards Socialism or Capitalism* sold 1,000 copies  
 Thomas Murby & Co.  
 6 titles  
 Thomas Nelson Sons, Ltd  
 1 title only

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