

## **Educational and Academic Interaction between Japan and Great Britain**

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### **I. Modern Japanese education and how it relates to the rest of the world**

#### **1. Basic approaches to adopting Western educational ideas**

##### **(1)**

Japan has a history of interaction with foreign countries that dates back to ancient times. The growth and development of modern Japan also owes much to influences of, and experiences from, other countries. After ending its period of isolation, Japan looked to advanced Western nations to learn from their practices to help modernise.

Japan was able to achieve a remarkable level of modernization and industrialization in a relatively short period of time, and it is well known that education played a major role in this development. The Meiji government adopted the basic philosophy that education was the foundation for wealth, power, and intellectual and cultural “enlightenment”, and therefore put immense effort into the development of education. At the same time, the government was attempting to emulate the West by ridding Japan of all that was feudalistic and creating a unified nation. For this purpose, Japan sought to learn from the West. In fact, it studied the ways of Western nations, in many cases the same nations that forced Japan to open up to the rest of the world.

There are three points that should be noted in Japan’s encounter with the West in its attempts to establish itself as a modern nation. The first is that Japan made a conscious choice as to what influences it wished to absorb from particular western countries. In other words, Japan selected countries according to their strengths in specific, specialized areas and made concerted efforts to absorb or incorporate those strengths. Furthermore, it is worthy of mention that what enabled the government to make these conscious choices was the fact that it had been effectively able to “rank” Western countries according to their strong points and use that information as a basis for this process of “nation selecting”.

One historical source that highlights this fact is a document describing a project to send students to study abroad. It is entitled *Kaigai Ryugakusei Kisoku-an* (“Proposal for Regulations for Students Studying Abroad”, December 15, 1870), it contains a section with the title “The Choice of Subjects to be Mastered in Foreign Countries”. In it there are two passages

of particular interest. One states that students are to be sent to five nations: the United Kingdom, France, Prussia, the Netherlands, and the United States. Equal numbers of students, however, were not to be sent to each of these places. The document states, “Of a hundred students divided into groups of ten, two and a half groups should be sent to each of the United Kingdom, France, and Prussia, and the other two and a half groups should be sent in equal numbers to the Netherlands and the United States,” which, may be expressed more simply as a quarter of the total going to each of Britain, France, and Prussia, while only one eighth of the total went to each of the Netherlands and the United States.

The other passage of interest proposes that the decision as to what the students should study should be made “according to the strengths of the various nations”. In fact, the document includes a list that characterizes these nations in terms of academic fields. Britain, for example, was said to be strong in mechanics (i.e., mechanical engineering) and commerce, and France was said to be strong in law and diplomacy (including international law). Germany was said to have prominence in politics and economics, while the Dutch strengths lay in waterworks, particularly in the building of levees. America was said to be a good place for studying postal systems and agriculture.

What this infers is that comparative studies of these countries concerning their various strengths had already been done, and it is also evident that the government planned to pick and choose, so to speak, and combine fields originating in the different countries in accordance with the characteristics of these strengths. What is remarkable is that officials held such a perception of the world as early as December of 1870 (Meiji 3). It is also important to note that the conclusions drawn in this process of “nation selecting” are now widely recognized as “quite accurate” or representing a “perception of the outside world that was not very far off” in the light of the state of the world at the time, and to restate the point made above, this world view was held very early on just a few years after the “opening” of Japan.

This perception of the state of the world was in fact a major influence on the creation of institutions of specialized education. Great Britain provided the models for the founding of the Kogakuryo and its later inception the Imperial College of Technology (predecessor of the University of Tokyo’s Faculty of Engineering). The Ministry of Justice Law School (later to become the University of Tokyo’s Faculty of Law) was established on French models, and Sapporo Agricultural College (present-day Hokkaido University, Faculty of Agriculture) was founded on American ones. Again, the most important thing to note here is that the establishment of these educational centers was done by choosing from multiple models.

## (2)

The second issue to be addressed is how Japan was able to accomplish the “nation selecting”. How was it possible to do this so early on after opening to the outside world? Let us first examine the wider historical context of the latter half of the 19th century. The major powers of the West at this time were trying to conquer, divide up, or colonize much of the world. Japan managed to avoid being colonised. Not only that, but it is reasonable to assume that Japan was able to achieve its “nation selecting” precisely because it already possessed considerable information about the outside world.

Modern studies of *sakoku*, the name given to pre-modern Japan’s extreme form of isolationism, show that although the Tokugawa Shogunate had adopted and maintained this policy, Japan was not entirely closed to the rest of the world. New ways of thinking about *sakoku* make a distinction between transmitting information and receiving it. Looked at in this way, *sakoku* was an age in which information originating in Japan was cut off, but information coming into Japan from outside—particularly information from Europe—was carefully gathered.

Furthermore, it is thought that the information received about Europe was of high quality. This information was probably conveyed selectively and to some extent systematically by the Dutch. During the era of *sakoku*, the Dutch had a trading post on the artificial island of Dejima in the Bay of Nagasaki, and this was Japan’s sole outlet to foreign countries. On Dejima, the Dutch, who traded with Japan under all sorts of restrictions, passed on information about Europe to the Japanese. There was also trade with China through Dejima, which most likely also provided useful information, but this became difficult relatively early on, so the Dutch rather than the Chinese are thought to have provided more up to date information on Europe over a longer period of time.

Japan’s ability to absorb information from overseas via Dejima—and reliable information at that—was precisely what allowed Japan to choose quickly from known foreign models which ones to adopt, soon after it ceased its self-imposed isolation and made its way on to the world stage. Models to adopt could be chosen fairly quickly and with a reasonable amount of confidence. Japan was able to identify quite quickly the right places to go for the various fields of education it sought: to Britain, the most advanced nation in the world for engineering, to France, the most advanced in jurisprudence, and so on.

There is one more point about this “nation selecting” that I wish to stress. That is the fact that Japan was able consciously to choose the best from among several choices. Since it was

not under the colonial rule of any one country, Japan did not have to follow the will of a single colonial power. It was for this reason that Japan was able to act on its own initiative and select from multiple possibilities, a point which cannot be stressed enough.

In this process of adopting the best foreign models to suit its needs and to make up for its own shortcomings, Japan was able to make independent choices and use the strong points of the systems of other countries to remedy the weak points of its own. This basic stance was a very wise one given the transformative and transitional nature of the time.

These principles can be thought of as important underlying themes in the establishment and development of modern Japan. Although this stance is clearly evident in the policies of the central government, this was not necessarily the case in the provinces. When hiring foreign teachers in more rural areas, for example, it was not uncommon to end up with a person of questionable credentials or character. This was to some extent unavoidable, as gathering accurate information was not such an easy matter in the provinces.

## **2. How Western education was absorbed**

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The third issue I wish to address is the varied means used to learn from the West, the most important of which can be grouped under the following five headings: employing foreign teachers, sending students abroad, sending diplomatic or survey missions abroad, participating in world expositions, and importing/translating academic literature. The absorption of almost all information about the West in early modern Japan was through one or other of these five methods.

The most successful of these methods was the invitation of foreign experts and teachers to work in Japan. The opportunity to learn directly from people employed by the government, who had acquired the necessary advanced skills and knowledge, was the most likely, the quickest and the surest way to advance. A great number of these *oyatoi-gaikokujin* or “hired foreigners”, were employed, often at very high salaries. It should also be noted that some were employed towards the end of the shogunate, i.e., before the Meiji Restoration. Further details are given below.

The second method was sending students to study abroad. This method was also actively pursued, at considerable expense. Many young Japanese ventured abroad supported not only through funds from the central government, but also with money provided by prefectural governments, and in some cases using their own financial means. Aichi Prefecture (Nagoya-

han at the time), this author's place of birth, sent four students to the United States and two to Austria on the 22nd of August, 1871 (Meiji 4, 7th day, 7th month according to the lunar calendar in use at the time). Three of them returned to Japan and made considerable use of what they had learned abroad. Unfortunately, one student died in Austria, reportedly of pulmonary tuberculosis. Yet during his stay in Europe, he contributed several articles to Japanese newspapers as "foreign correspondence" covering various subjects related to Europe (the Vienna Expo, the lives of the German people, etc.).

The third method was sending diplomatic or survey missions abroad, the most well-known of which is the Iwakura Mission, named after and led by Iwakura Tomomi. Iwakura was accompanied by Kido Takayoshi (a.k.a. Koin, 1833–1877), Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909), and others. The mission was a relatively long affair, spanning 22 months from the end of 1871. The mission traveled to upwards of 12 countries, most of which were in some sense world powers, for the purpose of gathering data and information, and (re)negotiating treaties. The things gained from this mission would later be put to practical use by means of various reforms in Japan. The observations and experiences of the mission were chronicled and published as an official report titled *Tokumei Zenken Taishi Bei-ou Kairan Jikki* (English translation: *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–73: a true account of the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary's journey of observation through the United States of America and Europe*, comp. by Kume Kunitake, eds. by Graham Healey, Chushichi Tsuzuki; Matsudo: Japan Documents), which is readily available (at least in Japanese) in paperback form.

The fourth method was through world expositions. Japan put concerted efforts into organizing exhibits and sending officials to attend exhibitions. If industrial products submitted by Japan were seen to be inferior, they would investigate the underlying reasons, unearth the inadequacies in Japan's educational systems, and ultimately try to apply solutions to improve or restructure those systems.

The last method mentioned above used for the absorption of Western education was the importation and/or translation of Western books and journals etc. The idea was to translate the fruits of Western knowledge, advanced culture, thought, and technology. Notable translators include Nakamura Masanao, who translated into Japanese Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* and John Stewart Mill's *On Liberty*, and Uchida Masao, compiler/translator of *Oranda Gakusei* ("Japanese and Dutch Legal Systems"). There were also cases of students learning from texts imported from the West in their original languages. Foreign teachers often used textbooks from their native countries. It was only natural, for example, for a British instructor to prefer

to teach from an English text in English. Such textbooks can be found in archives or libraries throughout Japan even today.

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Japan tried to adopt western ideas through the various methods outlined above. There are two aspects of this that deserve particular mention, related to bringing foreign teachers to Japan and sending Japanese students abroad.

First, there were also influences that made their way to Europe and America via the foreign teachers that came to Japan. The effort by early modern Japan to absorb Western knowledge and culture is often interpreted as a one-way affair, but it should not be forgotten that there was, in varying degrees, an undeniable Japanese influence on the West, because many foreign teachers took home with them their experiences of Japan or sent back information about the country while they were still working in Japan.

The duties of *oyatoi-kyoshi*, or “hired foreign teachers”, were twofold: first, they were to give instruction as teachers; second, they were to give advice and suggestions on administrative and educational matters concerning the schools in which they were working. Yet there was one more unplanned role, with unforeseen consequences, played by these teachers. After their terms expired, their contracts were terminated, and they returned to their home countries, they were able to act as conveyors of information on Japanese culture and technology. Through their writings on Japanology or by other means, their historical significance as people who introduced Japan to the larger world should not be forgotten.

The fact that the vast majority of these instructors returned to their native countries is of considerable significance in the history of Japan. This is in marked contrast to the *kikajin* (immigrants) from China to ancient Japan. In ancient Japan (8th and 9th centuries), many Japanese were sent as students, envoys and emissaries to China during the Tang Dynasty, which at the time was a highly advanced country. Likewise many Chinese emigrated to Japan, where they served as instructors in Tang-era Chinese penal and administrative legal systems. However, these *kikajin* did not return to China, but lived out the rest of their lives in Japan.

In contrast, *oyatoi-gaikokujin* hired from Western countries in the Meiji Era returned home after the terms of their contracts were over. Many of them did, however, maintain close relations with Japan and promoted exchanges between Japan and their native countries. They were pioneers of what we might now term “international exchange”.

There are several demonstrable examples of teachers bringing their experiences in Japan to bear on their home countries. One example is in engineering education. The Meiji

government, which placed a high priority on industrialization, injected vast sums of money into specialized engineering education. More especially the considerable financial resources was invested in employing Henry Dyer (1848–1918) and other teachers. After studying at Glasgow University in Scotland, Dyer came to Japan in June 1873 to be appointed Principal of the Imperial College of Engineering, and he blended the theoretical and practical aspects of engineering, and proposed what became known as the “sandwich” system, an educational system that had not been known until that time. He adopted this system in the college with noteworthy results. After returning to his native Scotland, Dyer applied his practical experiences from Japan in Glasgow, and his achievements there were sufficient to capture the attention of the British press, which featured his educational methods in numerous newspaper and magazine articles. For example, he led reforms of the engineering education system at the University of Strathclyde. In other words, he instituted an educational structure at this Scottish university similar to the one he introduced in Japan. We may go so far as to call this the “boomerang effect” in education, which I shall touch upon later.

It was not just engineering that saw Japanese influences. Its impact on the arts, for example, is well known. Another example is silk, where methods of raising silkworms and growing the mulberry leaves that they feed on were exported from Japan. At this author’s home province of Aichi Prefecture, a French language instructor named Pierre Joseph Mourier (1827–?) sent information on Japan back to France in his spare time, and when he temporarily returned to France he accepted requests to give lectures on Japan. He is also known for spreading knowledge on how to raise silkworms in France and Italy after returning from Japan.

This aspect of history in which Japan had an influence on the West through Westerners once employed in Japan returning home with new ideas, should undoubtedly gain importance as a topic of research in studies of this period.

To restate this point, Japan learning from the West was not a completely one way process. There were also influences of Japan on the West. It is my belief that if one accepts this view of Japanese history as also encompassing the “boomerang effect”, for lack of a better phrase, it is then possible to portray a picture of modern Japanese education that is not lost in the shadows of world history, but a significant part of its richness. This is a perspective that I place particular emphasis on when I examine the history of relations between Japan and Britain in the modern era.

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The second point I wish to make about the system of sending students to study abroad involves their status upon returning. Once students returned to Japan, they had the benefit of significant openings awaiting them in national institutional and governmental organisations. There were either government posts ready for them or other opportunities to make use of what they had learned abroad to further the modernization of Japan.

For example, there were tests that had to be passed for civil service entry, but special tests were prepared for returnees that included subjects to test what they had learned during their time overseas. Bureaucratic exams in China were synonymous with the infamous “imperial examination”, but sources say that “Western studies” was not included as a subject in the imperial Chinese tests for advancement as a bureaucrat. In this case, the opportunities for implementing Western knowledge and technology would have been quite limited. In terms of both bureaucratic organization and social status, the link between the experience of studying abroad and domestic institutions would have been much stronger in Japan than in China.

Sending students to universities in the West was an important way of importing Western education as well as academics, but this system was only effective insofar as domestic systems were in place whereby students who had studied abroad could make full use of their education on return.

This point is crucial. In the case of Japan, the fact that returning students often took up influential positions on return and were thus able to play constructive roles in many aspects of modernization was a distinctive feature of the Japanese system of sending students abroad.

It must be noted, however, that this applied mostly to male students and that the same opportunities were not open to women. The first case of women being sent to study abroad was in November of 1871 (Meiji 4), when five women were attached to the Iwakura Mission to the United States. Of those five, three returned to Japan early due to illness or similar reasons, but two of them stayed away for about 10 years, more than fulfilling their academic obligations. Because their studies were financed by the Japanese government, they wished to repay their country by serving it in some way or another, but no suitable posts were available. There were no institutions or workplaces seeking the skills that they possessed. They initially became English instructors at a school for women, but that proved to be unfulfilling. One of the two women, Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), went back to the U.S. to pursue further studies. Upon returning to Japan she founded a women’s college: the present-day Tsuda College.

When assessing schemes of this sort for students to study in foreign countries, it is important to think not just of systems that sent them off, but also of the systems in place to welcome them back and allow them to utilize the skills that they had achieved.

## **II. Interaction between Modern Japan and Great Britain**

### **1. Different aspects of interaction**

#### **(1)**

So far I have addressed very broad and general issues, but below I shall take up in more detail the topic of interaction between modern Japan and Great Britain, with a particular focus on personal interaction. In order to do so, I wish to examine three issues: the hiring of teachers and experts from Britain, the sending of Japanese students to Britain, and the Iwakura Mission's trip to Britain.

In this section I shall address Japan's invitations to and hiring of British citizens. At present, there are many foreign nationals in Japan. Many non-Japanese serve as instructors at educational institutions. This was also the case in the early Meiji Era when Japan first opened up to the Western world and various forms of international exchanges thrived. One can see in this period of history that there were international exchanges of human resources not just in the central government, but in the provinces as well. Nagoya University, for example, hired German-American and Austrian physicians early on in Meiji era in an attempt to learn from Western medicine.

Just how many foreigners were hired in total when Japan was establishing itself as a modern nation? We have a comprehensive study done by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO that provides some answers to this question. According to this study, from 1868 to 1889 (Meiji 1 to 22) there were a total of 2,299 persons involved. This figure includes people hired by both the central and regional/prefectural governments. The breakdown by country is as follows. With 928 people, Great Britain had the highest representation by far, accounting for over 40% of the total. This was followed by the United States with 374 people, France with 259, and China (Qing Dynasty) with 253. Germany and the Netherlands trailed with 175 and 87 people, respectively. It is interesting to note that relations with the Dutch, with whom Japan had been historically very close, had dwindled to this level in such a short period of time. I would now like to examine the characteristics and trends in the hiring of British citizens in some detail using another source of statistical data.

Records of foreigners hired by the central Meiji government from 1868 to 1900 reveal first that foreigners were employed in a remarkably broad range of agencies and ministries, from the Ministry of Public Works all the way to the Imperial Household Ministry. It also shows that the foreigners hired were not just from one or two countries, but represented a range of nationalities—more than 20 in all—stretching from Great Britain to Mongolia. In other words, foreigners were hired from many places throughout the world, not just from a few, select countries. The largest representation was by Great Britain, followed by France, America, and Germany. China trailed behind with 95 people involved.

Second, of the nationalities represented, British experts and teachers far outnumbered others, with 1,034 people, or 43% of a total of 2,400. What is more, although France has the second largest number, there were only 401 French nationals employed by the central government during this period, which means that British outnumbered French by more than a factor of two and a half. This attests to the degree to which the Meiji government felt British expertise was needed.

Third, 553 of the British hired, or more than half, were employed by the Ministry of Public Works. Furthermore, the Ministry of Public Works did not exist throughout the whole of this period: it was dissolved in 1885. This is further evidence of the importance of Great Britain to Japan. Likewise, since this ministry was the one most directly involved in the promotion of industrialization, which was a major goal of the Meiji government, one can easily infer the field in which Japan relied on Great Britain.

The Ministry of Public Works was responsible for mineral and coal mines, railways, communications, industrial and public construction, lighthouses, etc. Since Great Britain led the world in its level of industrialization, it was chosen as the role model in this field. All Chinese employees worked at the office responsible for lighthouses.

Fourth, it is evident from this set of data that Britons were the most numerous in the Ministry of Public Works, French in the Ministry of Justice, Americans in the Development Commission (responsible for the development of agriculture and livestock in Hokkaido) , and so on. In addition, in each of these government offices the predominant foreign nationality far outnumbered other nationalities. In other words, people were chosen from specific countries according to fields of speciality.

To summarize what the data above tells us, as I mentioned at the very beginning, it provides further evidence about the basic position of the Japanese government in attempting to absorb Western culture. It is a reflection of the process of “nation selecting” in which

Japan flexibly chose from among many options – as opposed to a select few – and according to particular specialities after which to model their own systems. Again, these choices were independent and conscious ones, choices made in an efficient manner that would make use of the strengths of other countries to supply what Japan lacked.

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Programs that sent students abroad to study also played a major role in the history of interaction between Great Britain and early modern Japan. A large number of students were sent to various parts of Britain. It is said, however, that ascertaining accurate figures is an impossible task. University records exist in cases in which students graduated, but studies abroad took a variety of forms, including shorter courses and brief visits. Yet sources of statistical data do exist, however incomplete they may be. And while it may not be possible to get an entirely accurate overall picture, the data is nonetheless important in that it gives us clues as to major trends and features.

First, we have records for the Meiji Era, or more strictly speaking data from Meiji 1 to Meiji 41 (1868 to 1908), of students sent to Britain by the Ministry of Education, which give a figure of 446 students in all. In terms of their subject areas, 259 specialized in the natural sciences, the most popular field by far. Of the natural sciences, 87 students specialized in engineering, 85 in medicine, and 53 in other sciences (physics, chemistry, etc.). This bias in the number of government-sponsored students studying engineering and science is understandable given that these fields were directly relevant to the Meiji government's goals of industrialization and promoting new industry. In addition, there were many students studying abroad who were paying their own expenses, but there is little coherent data for such students.

Second, there are also statistics from 1875 to 1897 on where students were sent. According to this data, Germany was the destination with the most students with a total of 104, followed by Britain with 35 students, France with 30, and the U.S. with 28. It is evident from this data on students sponsored by the Ministry of Education that Great Britain did not receive the major share, but again it is worthy of note in that it tells us that students were sent to eight different countries, including Britain and Germany.

Third, I wish to point out here that when one looks at the figures on destinations by subject area, it is clear that for natural sciences, many students sent to Britain went to colleges or universities in Scotland. Glasgow University in particular has records that state that there were about 50 Japanese students there from 1880 to 1914. The majority were

government-sponsored.

There is a reason for Japanese students disproportionately studying in Scotland, and specifically at Glasgow University. This reason is that Glasgow University offered the opportunity to study the natural sciences (engineering and shipbuilding in particular). Glasgow University was the first university in Great Britain to offer a course of study in engineering, and was the academic center of engineering in Britain. Another feature of Glasgow University is that it let students gain hands-on experience at the same time as they were studying at local shipyards or railway works. It is a well-known fact in Japan that Taketsuru Masataka (1894–1979), a graduate of Glasgow University who went on to found the Nikka Whiskey Brewery Company, spent some time as an apprentice at distilleries in Elgin and Speyside in the northeast of Scotland. Also, Anderson College (the predecessor of the University of Strathclyde) also in Glasgow, offered evening courses, in addition to providing course material that had a high degree of practical applicability, which was doubtlessly an attractive feature for Japanese students.

The Japanese that went to Glasgow University were mostly scientists and engineers. People who graduated from Japanese universities, for example the Imperial College of Technology mentioned above, and then went to Glasgow to further their education at the graduate level, were said to be “overall gifted” students. Shida Rinzaburo (1856–1892), Minami Kiyoshi (1855–1904), and Takayama Naotada (1856–1886) were such people, and they did extraordinarily well in their studies. *The Glasgow University Calendar* at the time printed lists of the top-ranked and award-winning students for each subject. The names of these Japanese students appear time and time again.

Fourth, it should be noted that Glasgow University recognized Japanese as one of the elective foreign languages required to gain entry. This was decided on in January of 1901 by the University’s faculty board. Likely reasons behind the adoption of this “Preliminary Examination in Japanese” include the presence of talented Japanese students, in addition to the general friendly relations between Great Britain and Japan, as evidenced by the soon-to-be-formed first Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902). The exam initially stemmed from a proposal by Fukuzawa Sanpachi (1881–1962), son of educator Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), who had been studying at Glasgow University since the academic year 1900. The exam was approved by the University, and this proposal had the support of Henry Dyer, a former oyatoi-kyoshi in Japan, who helped to push it through.

Interestingly enough, the first “external examiner” for this exam was Natsume Kinnosuke

(1867–1916), who under his penname Natsume Soseki would go on to become a renowned novelist. Soseki was a student in London on a Ministry of Education scholarship. Soseki prepared the language exam at his boarding house near Clapham Common and sent it to Glasgow University by post. In his *Diaries*, Soseki mentions his role in connection with this exam. Soseki states that he was examiner for the exam for the spring and fall semesters of 1901, for which he claims he was paid four pounds and four shillings. The telegram from Consulate General Arakawa Mitsugu (1857–1950) in London recommending Soseki to Glasgow University can be seen to this day, as does the post-box from which Soseki sent the exam, and given Soseki's great fame as a novelist, the exam itself would make a very interesting artefact. I spent a considerable amount of time and effort searching for the exam at the Glasgow University archives, but unfortunately I was unable to locate it. We have the names of Japanese students who sat Soseki's exam, but the contents of the exam paper are not known.

Lastly, I should mention Japanese students who studied at Oxford and Cambridge. It is known that students who attended these two universities were members of the upper echelons of Japanese society. It was common for many of them to be accompanied by “young companions”. In addition, some of the graduates of these universities were extraordinarily gifted students, though perhaps few in number. These included people like Kikuchi Dairoku (1855–1917), Suematsu Kencho (1855–1920), Soeda Juichi (1864–1929), and others like them. While they did not all receive the highest of marks, they nonetheless went on to play active roles in both Britain and Japan. They wrote academic treatises on Japan in English and made significant contributions as promoters of academic interaction between Japan and Great Britain.

### (3)

Next I shall take up the issue of the Iwakura Mission from Japan. The roughly 50-member group of envoys who visited Britain from August to December of 1872 (Meiji 5).

In their travels through Britain, the first thing that deserves mention is the relationship between the duration of their stay and the number of pages devoted to Britain in *Tokumei Zenken Taishi Bei-ou Kairan Jikki*, the official report of their travels. This document is invaluable as a historical record of the interaction between the two nations during this period, and as such has appeared in an English translation published in London, entitled *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–73*.

Of the 100 kan (a unit historically used to count scrolls but gradually taking on a meaning roughly equivalent to “volume” or “chapter”) of the report, 20 are devoted to Britain.

Likewise, 20 kan deal with the United States. The number of pages spent on Britain is 443. More than 200 days spent in the United States occupied 397 pages in the journal, while the 122 days spent in Great Britain (from July to November of 1872) filled 443 pages.

Although the visits to Germany and France were somewhat shorter, the pages dealing with those countries number less than half of those of Britain, and those chronicling their stays in Italy, Russia, and other countries less than a quarter. In other words, as I indicated above, one can glimpse here a policy at work that “ranks” the countries visited. At the time the Iwakura Mission had left Japanese soil, Great Britain probably already occupied the top position in the eyes of the Japanese government. It is safe to say that this ranking reflects the perception of the world held by Japanese authorities at the time.

The second issue I wish to examine is what the Iwakura Mission inspected and observed at their more major destinations in Britain. They visited most major cities in Britain, and saw many examples of Britain’s cutting-edge industrial facilities. It was noted that priority was given to industrial complexes representative of the various regions they visited. In addition to numerous factories related to iron and steelmaking, they went to shipyards, textile mills, dyehouses, woollen mills, and even carpet factories. Their focus was mainly upon major industrial complexes, which provides telling clues as to the motives behind their travels in Britain.

The Mission as a whole praised what they had seen of the industrial facilities that were shown to them, and the effect of these visits was at least twofold. It is said of their inspections: “There were two main consequences of the Mission’s visit. British industry strengthened its grip on the Japanese market – and equally importantly, the Japanese had their determination to industrialise themselves, reinforced.”

Third, passages in *Tokumei Zenken Taishi Bei-ou Kairan Jikki* make it quite clear that when the Mission visited these factories, the members examined in detail the processes involved in creating these products, kept careful records, and annotated them with accurate comments. A strong element of curiosity was evidently at work, one that sought answers to the secrets of how this small island nation, roughly the size of the main Japanese island of Honshu, came to occupy the highest of positions among world powers.

Fourth, one point should be made here concerning interaction in the field of education, that is, the Japanese secured recommendations for British nationals to serve as instructors (*oyatoi-kyoshi*) in Japan. When Ito Hirobumi, Vice Ambassador of the Mission, visited Glasgow University, “[he] said to Professor J.M. [sic] McQuorn Rankine (1820–1872), ‘tell me, Professor

Rankine, how do we in Japan set up a factory to make guns?’” to which the latter reportedly replied that “it would be better for Japan to establish a college to train young men as engineers.” That advice would later become the impetus for the establishment of the Imperial College of Technology, an institution dedicated to engineering.

The Mission also took the opportunity to ask for recommendations for instructors to head such a college. McQuorn Rankine in effect chose his brilliant pupil Henry Dyer to be Principal of the new college. The faculty to work under Dyer was also selected through these connections. Because the “hired teachers” that came to Japan naturally chose the most talented Japanese students they had instructed to be sent to study abroad, these teachers probably also gave advice as to where the students study. And these teachers from Scotland presumably also asked of their colleagues to look after the students they sent to their home country.

## 2. Rising interest in Japan in Great Britain

### (1)

Modern Japan developed using Western nations as role models. At the same time, from the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was a significant rise in the level interest in Japan apparent in the West.

Japan was the only nation of its kind to substantially industrialize itself through its encounter with the West. Once it became a major power in Asia after the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, the rest of the world took a growing interest in Japan. For example, *The Literary Digest*, a popular American early 20th century magazine of general interest featured a special article in its August 28, 1905 edition entitled “Notable Books of the Day, Useful Books on Japan”. As Japan received more and more attention after the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars and as more and more books devoted to Japan were published in English, this magazine selected and reviewed 13 “useful books on Japan”. Nitobe Inazo’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* and Suematsu Kencho’s *The Risen Sun* were featured amongst them.

The December 9, 1904 edition of *The Times Literary Supplement*, dedicated as the name implies to book reviews, had a column entitled “More Books on Japan”, which featured six new titles, among which were Henry Dyer’s *Dai Nippon, the Britain of the East* and Lafcadio Hearn’s *Japan*. All six titles had been published in Britain in 1904.

### (2)

The British interest in Japan goes back to the time when Japan rid itself of its long-

standing isolationist policies. Much of that interest stemmed from the period of transition from the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the construction of the Meiji state and the ensuing radical social changes, but among these changes, the British were particularly interested in Japan's economic and military progress, which led to a major change in the British view of Japan.

The Japanese government, for its part, also took steps to create a positive image of Japan in the minds of Western intellectuals as well as in the Western media. As Gordon Daniels has pointed out, designers of battleships for Japan's navy were invited to Japan and treated to a generous amount of hospitality, British writers traveling to Japan (the writer Isabella Lucy Bird [1831–1904], for example) enjoyed special accommodation on their journeys throughout the country, and ambitious plans were pursued to publish official reports and statistics in English. It is generally acknowledged that these measures were effective in raising the level of interest in Japanese affairs.

In addition to these developments, in late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were other factors that came into play as well, i.e., changes affecting the balance of power in the world, most notably Russia's expansionist policies. In their power struggles with Russia, Great Britain and Japan shared common interests, which ultimately facilitated the formation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. It was through these developments that a markedly increased level of interest in Japan was seen in Great Britain. Once the Alliance was formalized, the volume of documents in English produced by Japanese public institutions increased dramatically. And as hinted at above, Japanese writers like Nitobe Inazo produced works on Japan in the hope of a favorable reception from British readers.

There was another, quite major factor behind interest in Japan. Around this time, British society was beginning to show signs of unrest. Large sectors of the public were calling for political reforms. Around the beginning of the 20th century, British foreign and domestic policies were the subject of widespread criticism and re-evaluation. There were fierce debates over educational reforms stemming from the threat of competition in trade from Germany, France, and the United States. Amidst these developments, there was a growing sense that Japan could prove to be a useful model to learn from.

### **3. British reforms based on the Japanese educational model**

#### **(1)**

I stated that Japan came to be thought of more and more as a potential model for Britain

to base its domestic reforms on. For example the book *Dai Nippon*, a work whose very title (Great Japan) is symbolic of this line of thinking. It was published in London in October of 1904, just when the debate over educational reforms in Great Britain was reaching its height. Initially only 1,000 copies were printed, but since they sold out within the year, an additional 250 copies were printed. Japan had once looked to Britain for guidance in order to become the “Britain of the East”, but by this stage it was well on the way to becoming just that. *Dai Nippon*, a fairly large work of 450 pages, provided a historical analysis of the circumstances and events behind Japan’s national development. In this work, Dyer asserts that Japan offers lessons to a stagnant Britain of reforms it might pursue, particularly based on the role education played in Japan’s development, and he says that Britain could learn much from the Japanese educational system.

Given the relevance of Dyer’s arguments to this debate, I wish to quote several passages directly from *Dai Nippon*. Firstly he argues, for instance, “The evolution in this country has been comparatively slow, and many of our industrial developments are due to conditions which are rapidly disappearing.” In contrast, “Other countries, notably France, Germany, the United States, and above all Japan, have developed their educational arrangements and applied the results to national affairs in such a way as to affect profoundly economic and social conditions at home and trade abroad.”

Secondly, and more importantly, is his assertion that “the educational arrangements of Japan are very complete, and those who have had the advantage of them have been fitted to take an active and intelligent part in the great developments which have taken place.” He also argues, “They have laid a solid foundation for national progress in a system of education which is very complete in every department, and which, in some respects, affords lessons to Britain.” To summarise, Dyer focuses on the role played by education in the growth of Japan, and makes the argument that Britain should learn from Japan’s system of national education.

Thirdly, Dyer points to the sheer efficacy seen in Japan’s national education system:

“At the root of all these developments has been the very complete system of education which has been established in the country. The recent history of Japan is the most striking illustration of the influence of a wisely directed system of education on national affairs when those who are responsible for it are infused with high national ideals.”

Industrialization did not progress in Britain under the direction of the state, but rather more as a natural or “evolutionary” process. In contrast, according to Dyer, the national educational system of Japan is what led to its progress in engineering, and therefore Japan’s

experience “affords lessons to Britain”. Dyer’s conviction on this point is evident in that in the same volume he devotes sections with such titles as “Lessons for Great Britain” and “Lesson from Japan”.

Fourthly, Dyer argues that engineering education in particular is a field that is useful as a lesson to Britain because, as he had previously noted, “in many respects engineering education in Great Britain was very defective”. But, “since that time, practically all the improvements which we had adopted in the Imperial College of Engineering, Japan, are to be found in almost all the colleges in this country.” He notes, for example, “The method of combining theory and practice in the training of engineers which I introduced into Japan is now being strongly recommended under the name of the ‘sandwich’ system of apprenticeship.”

(2)

As we have seen, according to *Dai Nippon*, the message is clear that Japan should serve as a model for reforms in Great Britain, which country should learn particularly from Japan’s national education system. And it is Henry Dyer, the author of this work, who was hired in Japan to develop the country’s system of engineering education, and went on to contribute in large measure to the industrialization and modernization of Japan. He is here arguing that Britain needs to learn from an already developed Japan.

Dyer came to Japan as an oyatoi-kyoshi, or a hired foreign teacher, and, by educating students at the Imperial College of Technology, went on to put their education to practical use in the country’s process of industrialization, Dyer indirectly contributed to the growth of Japan. Yet after his return, Britain was in a state of stagnation, and to address this, Dyer recommended that Britain should learn from Japan. He did in fact use his experiences in Japan to help forward reforms in British engineering education. The idea that Britain should learn from Japan—the idea that Japan offers the lessons that Britain needs to learn—is of great interest.

Dyer also proposed that Britain should learn from Japan’s system of commercial education, not just engineering education. To summarise, although Japan had one stage tried to model itself after Britain in certain respects, the time had come, according to him, for Britain to study the example of Japan.

### **III. Research on the History of Interaction between Modern Japan and Great Britain**

To date, much illuminating research has been done on various aspects of educational and academic interaction between modern Japan and Great Britain. The following is a list of particularly significant works.

Kita, M., *Kokusai Nihon wo Hiraita Hitobito: Nihon to Scotland no Kizuna* (“The People who Paved the Way for an International Japan: The Bonds between Japan and Scotland”), Doubunkan, 1984.

Checkland, O., *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan, 1868–1912*, Macmillan, 1989 (Jpn. trs., Sugiyama, C. & Tamaki N., *Meiji Nippon to Igrisu–Deai, Gijutsu Iten, Nettowaaku No Keisei–*, Hosei University Press, 1996).

Cortazzi, H. & Daniels, G., eds., *Britain and Japan, 1859–1991: Themes and Personalities*, Routledge, 1991 (Jpn. tr., Oyama, M., *Eikoku to Nippon-Kakyō no Hitobito*, Shibunkaku Shuppan Co., Ltd., 1998).

Nish, I., ed., *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Folkestone, 1994 (Jpn. tr., Nichi-Ei Bunka Koryū Kenkyū-kyōkai, *Eikoku to Nippon–Nichi-ei Kōryū Jinbutsu Retsuden–*, Hakuhōdō Shinsha Publishers, 2002).

Nish, I., ed., *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Vol.II, Japan Library, 1997.

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Hosoya, C., & Nish, I., eds., *History of Anglo-Japanese Relations 1600–2000* (also published as *Nichiei Kōryū-shi 1600–2000*) ; Vol.1: The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600–1930; Vol.2: The Political Diplomatic Dimension, 1931–2000; Vol.3: The Military Dimension; Vol. 4: The Economic-Business Dimension; Vol.5: Social and Cultural Perspectives, Palgrave Macmillan,

2002, University of Tokyo Press, 2001.

Checkland, O., *Nihon no Kindai-ka to Scotland* (Technical Transfer and Cultural Exchange between Britain and Japan, title on cover of Japanese translation) (Jpn. trs., Kato S. & Miyata M., Tamagawa University Press, 2004).

Of these, the most noteworthy is *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits* series commissioned by the Japan Society, seven volumes of which have been published so far. As stated above, while examinations of the history of interaction through leading personalities and significant themes of the day are quite interesting, it is this author's hope that more in-depth research will be done on the subject of true interaction, by which I mean the two-way process (particularly reverse influences, or what I have called the "boomerang effect"), and not merely unilateral influences. In addition, one characteristic aspect of recent studies in the field is the increased attention being given to the part that Scotland, as opposed to Britain as a whole, played in the development of early modern Japan. Since Japan was particularly intent upon industrialization and the promotion of various industries, and compared with England, more emphasis was placed on practical industrial arts and the practical application of the natural sciences in Scotland, educational and academic interaction between modern Japan and Scotland is a topic worthy of more detailed studies.

#### IV. Abridged Bibliography

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Additional Notes:

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