

Meiji-era Educational Advisor Henry Dyer's Studies of Japan: His Work and its Special Characteristics

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I. Studies of Japan by Meiji-era Educational Advisors

1. Several Unexpected Outcomes

Meiji-era educational advisors were expected to perform three main professional duties in Japan: educating, managing schools, and making recommendations on educational matters.¹ Their achievements, however, did not stop there. Their presence, in fact, resulted in several unexpected outcomes.

First, to carry out their duties as educators effectively, they conducted research on subjects that they taught and made the fruits of that research the foundations of their teaching. Some also used their time away from their primary duties as educators, school administrators, and educational planners to advance the field of Japanology. Some of those continued their studies of Japan after leaving Japan and published the results of their studies in their home countries.

These studies of Japan can be roughly divided into two main categories: research on individual topics pertaining to traditional Japanese culture and matters specific to Japan on the one hand, and more comprehensive studies of Japan, i.e. studies attempting to shed light on the politics, industry, culture, etc. of Japan as a whole, on the other hand. Some examples of research on particular subjects are E. F. Fenollosa's studies of antique art, J. Conder's studies of Japanese architecture, flower arrangement, and gardens, E. von Baelz's studies of hot springs and beriberi, R.W. Atkinson's studies of *sake*, B. H. Chamberlain's studies of the Japanese language, M. Fesca's studies of Japanese soil and agriculture, W. Gowland's studies of *kofun* (old tombs), and J. Milne's seismological studies. Studies by W. E. Griffis and H. Dyer are examples of more comprehensive research.²

The second of those unexpected outcomes is that many of these advisors left behind accounts of their experiences in or observations of Japan. As these authors were living and working in a foreign land, these writings show great interest in nearly everything they saw or heard. What is more, they were often very full of interesting insights, as they were written from foreigners' perspectives? Some examples are *Awakening Japan* by E. von Baelz, who was an educational advisor in medicine at Tokyo Medical School (*Tokyo Igakkō*), the

University of Tokyo Medical School, and the Medical School of Tokyo Imperial University, *Life and Adventure in Japan* by E. W. Clark, who was a lecturer in chemistry at the Shizuoka Academy (*Shizuoka Gakumonjo*) and Kaisei School (*Kaisei Gakkō*), *Le Japon de Nos Jours et les Echelles de l'Extreme Orient* by G. H. Bousquet, who was an advisor for the Ministry of Justice, *The Mikado's Empire* by W. E. Griffis, who taught at Meidōkan in Fukui Domain and South College of the University (*Daigaku Nankō*).³

Thirdly, many of these advisors developed an interest in *things* Japanese — such as art and craft work — diligently collected them, took them back home and introduced them into their home countries. The E. S. Morse Collection of marine life specimens (housed in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts), folk implements, and photographs, the A. von Roretz Collection of animal specimens (housed in the National History Museum Vienna), the E. F. Fenollosa Collection of antique art (housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), and E. Chiossone Collection (housed in the Edoardo Chiossone Museum of Oriental Art) are examples.⁴

These studies of Japan and memoirs of time spent in Japan are noteworthy for helping to introduce Japan to the outside world and for contributing to the development of interaction with Japan. Japanese items that were taken back to other countries are worthy of note because they aroused interest overseas in Japanese culture and gave people an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Japan.

2. Previous Work Done on Dyer's Studies of Japan

Henry Dyer (1848 – 1918) was one of the educational advisors. From 1873 to 1882, Dyer was an advisor to the Ministry of Public Works. In that capacity he served as principal of the Imperial College of Engineering, predecessor of the School of Engineering of the University of Tokyo, and as an educational advisor in civil and mechanical engineering, where he contributed to the organization of engineering education in Japan. In this way Dyer was involved in the push to modernize Japan, and while carrying out his duties, he was able to observe and develop an expertise on Japan. Even after he completed his assignment and left Japan, Dyer kept close ties with Japan and maintained an interest in the country. When he eventually began his studies of Japan in earnest, he was able to draw upon a wealth of observations and experiences from his time in the country, which made his works in Japanology distinctive. There is even a collection of Japan-related materials in Great Britain called the “Dyer Collection.” It is made up mainly of books, pamphlets, works

of fine art and crafts, musical instruments, photographs, and postcards that he collected during his time in Japan and after returning home.⁵

Several examinations of Dyer's studies of Japan have been published. For example, in (1) *Kokusai Nihon o Hiraita Hitobito* [The People who Created an International Japan] (1984),⁶ Masami Kita, in the course of research on the history of exchange between Scotland and Japan, analyzes five aspects of Dyer's conception of Japan as seen mainly in his principal works *Dai Nippon* and *Japan in World Politics*. Those five aspects are as follows: the Meiji Restoration and modernization, the ethics and culture of the Japanese people, the educational institutions, economic development, and international society and Japan's role.

(2) In "Henry Dyer no Nihon Kenkyū" [Henry Dyer's research on Japan] (1987), Nobuhiro Miyoshi examines the achievements and trends in Dyer's works, and the substance, characteristics, and intent of his studies of Japan. Miyoshi notes that Dyer largely attributes the success of Japan's modernization to a national system of education, the Japanese characteristics underlying that system (the desire of the Japanese people for independence, patriotism, creativity, etc.), and the engineering and commercial education that were put to use in the development of the country's industry.⁷

(3) Nobuhiro Miyoshi's *Dyer no Nihon* (1989) and its translation in English *Henry Dyer: Pioneer of Engineering Education in Japan* (2004) focuses on the international implications of education in Japan as seen in Dyer's works. In analyzing the lifetime achievements of Dyer, Miyoshi argues that Dyer was a pioneer who clearly understood the implications of education in Japan for international relations. In making that argument, Miyoshi demonstrates that Dyer was a truly prolific writer after returning from Japan. Of particular note is Miyoshi's examination of the methodology and characteristics of Dyer's Japan studies, as well as where they belong in terms of the history of international and Japan-United Kingdom relations.⁸

(4) In the introduction and the translator's afterword to his identically entitled translation (2004) of *Dai Nippon*, arguably Dyer's most important work, Isao Hirano includes commentary on the position of the work (which he deems the product of years of study of Japan)⁹ and on its significance in contemporary world history as well as in modern society.

(5) Gordon Daniels' "Elites, Governments, and Citizens: Some British Perceptions of Japan, 1850–2000" (Japanese translation by Chūshichi Tsuzuki) "outlines some major shifts in British perceptions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan," and in doing so characterizes Dyer's studies of Japan, particularly *Dai Nippon*. Daniels characterizes Dyer as

playing “a vocal and energetic role,” noting that amidst widespread debate on educational and other institutional reforms in Japan in the early twentieth century, Dyer asserted that “Britain should not be above learning a few lessons from Japan.”¹⁰

(6) In his “Henry Dyer no Nihon Kyōiku-kan: Dai Nippon Dai-5-shō no Tenkyo Shiryō ni Miru Jisshōsei no Kentō” [“Henry Dyer’s view of education in Japan: A study of its validity as seen in the sources given in Chapter 5 of *Dai Nippon*”] (2002), Takuji Sarada questions the degree to which Dyer’s Japan studies were based on verifiable fact. He focuses on “Education,” the fifth chapter in *Dai Nippon*, and demonstrates that the source materials are “very likely official statutes, annual bulletins, and reports” obtained from the Japanese government.¹¹

(7) Miyoshi, N. ed., *The Collected Writings of Henry Dyer; a Collection in Five Volumes* (2006) is a collection of 28 reprinted monographs, pamphlets, academic papers, and discourses divided into six areas. Those six areas are: records created during Dyer’s time as an educational advisor at the Imperial College of Engineering (lessons, rules, and annual bulletins), specialized theses in engineering, theses concerning engineering education reforms, research on social reforms, essays on education (citizen education, civil education, and engineering education), and Japanology as well as reports on circumstances in Japan. The editor’s introduction includes discussions of *Dai Nippon*, four papers that appeared in the *Financial Review of Reviews*, “Some Lessons from Japan,” and *Japan in World Politics*.¹²

In this paper, I draw upon the results of previous studies and empirically examine the main points of significance, the characteristics of, and background to Dyer’s studies of Japan.

II. Dyer’s Studies of Japan: His Work and its Characteristics

1. Thematic characteristics

During his lifetime, Dyer authored numerous works. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) notes the fact that Dyer was “a prolific writer.”¹³ Spurred on by this note, I wrote about the “Published Works of the Meiji era Educational Advisor Henry Dyer.”¹⁴ In addition to presenting a full picture of Dyer’s works, I examine the main content and characteristics of his works and make the following points.

Firstly, works recognized as authored by Dyer do indeed comprise 42 printed and published books and booklets, and 70 papers and articles (including those that were later published in booklet form) in newspapers and other periodicals. His writings are not only

large in number, but broad in scope as well. The subject matter falls into five main categories: studies of engineering education, academic research on engineering, studies of educational reforms, studies of social reforms, and works on Japanology.

Secondly, if we look at the number of works he published in each category, we see that studies of educational reforms are the most numerous by far at 56 publications. These are followed by studies of social reforms, numbering 19, and engineering research, numbering 15. Dyer also published 15 works of Japanology.

Thirdly, there are clear thematic tendencies in Dyer's research. Initially, while he was an educational advisor in Japan, due to the requirements of his job, his examinations focused on engineering education and the education of engineers. After returning to Britain, he commenced academic research in engineering, but it did not last long. It appears that he conducted such engineering research in the hopes of securing a professorship in shipbuilding at the University of Glasgow, but once he failed to be chosen, he shifted his direction to educational reforms, and further expanded the scope of his researches to cover social reforms as well. Dyer's examination of educational reforms cover four areas: the reform of education for engineers, the reform of education for engineers in Glasgow, reforms at the University of Glasgow, and reforms in primary and secondary education in the city of Glasgow. As for research in social reforms, Dyer conducted studies concerned with reforms to the Christian Church and to the promotion of the cooperative movement.

It was after the turn of the century that Dyer published in the new field of Japanology. He published just 15 works on Japanology, which is a relatively small number, but among them are *Dai Nippon* and *Japan in World Politics*, which are comprehensive works on Japan.¹⁵ Drawing upon his experiences and deep understanding of Japan from his time as an educational advisor, Dyer studied Japan in more depth and helped introduce Japan to the West.

In 2006, Dyer's achievements have come to be reassessed to such extent that the *Collected Writings of Henry Dyer, a Collection in Five Volumes*, has been edited and published as part of the "Collected Works of Japanologists" series.¹⁶

2. Comprehensive Studies of Japan in *Dai Nippon* and *Japan in World Politics*

The main thrust of *Dai Nippon* is an analysis of the history and contemporary state of modernization in Japan, as well as the factors behind its success. As is evident from the titles of all 20 chapters (Fall of Feudalism, The Japanese Mind, Transitions, Education, Army

and Navy, Means of Communication, Industrial Developments, Art Industries, Commerce, Food Supply, Colonization and Emigration, Constitutional Government, Administration, Finance, International Relations, Foreign Politics, Social Results, The Future, Recent Events etc.), it is a truly multifaceted work on Japanology.

This work attributes the success of Japan's modernization to advances in industrialization and the educational system. Furthermore—to paraphrase Miyoshi—the work takes particular note of Japanese mental characteristics underlying those, specifically placing much importance on the desire of the Japanese people for independence, patriotism, Japanese creativity, etc.¹⁷ Regarding education, *Dai Nippon* notes that the government made policy decisions resulting in financial resources being concentrated on education in science and technology. Dyer makes comparisons with his home of Great Britain, where industrialization proceeded naturally, and focuses particularly on Japan's national system of education, adding that the experience of Japan “affords lessons to Britain.”¹⁸

While *Dai Nippon* covers the development of Japan from the time of its encounter with Western civilization to its emergence as a world power, *Japan in World Politics* examines “some of the wider aspects of the results of the economic and political development of Japan” and “some of the tendencies of the present time as illustrated by some of the important international problems which have resulted from the war between Japan and Russia,” with the aim of shedding light on the role that Japan should play in the international community.¹⁹ The central theme of *Japan in World Politics* is the role that Japan is expected to play in the reconciliation of the global struggle between East and West and in future world politics (particularly in the Pacific region), but here too Dyer explores factors behind Japan's success at modernization, and finds the intellectual abilities and strength of mind of the Japanese people to be behind it. Dyer has a high regard for Japanese intellectual abilities, stating, “In the course of little more than a generation the Japanese have shown that they are not only able to adapt Western science to Japanese conditions but to advance its borders by original investigation.”²⁰ As for mental strength, Dyer places special emphasis on the patriotism of the Japanese people, arguing that the secret to Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War was patriotism. He states that “the study of Japanese history in the schools had strengthened the people's love for their native land.” He also suggests that the development of Japanese mental strength owes much to moral instruction in schools, also noting that “the syllabuses of instruction and the methods of carrying them out afford many useful lessons to educationists in Britain.”²¹

3. Studies of Japan in the *Financial Review of Reviews*

Dyer's work on particular subjects covers such things as Japan's constitutional government,²² finances,²³ engineering,²⁴ commerce and commercial education,²⁵ and the educational system.²⁶

Among these are four essays Dyer contributed to the monthly magazine *Financial Review of Reviews* in the year 1906. They deal with Japan's finances and commercial morality. Specifically, in the first of these, entitled "Japanese Industries and Foreign Investments,"²⁷ he points to improvements made to Japan's educational and constitutional systems, which were aimed at guaranteeing the safety of investments in Japan. In the second of these essays, entitled "The Commercial Morality in Japan,"²⁸ Dyer draws attention to the enhancement of status of merchants and the raising of standards of commercial morality. The third essay, "Legal Aspects of Foreign Investments in Japan,"²⁹ notes that investments in Japan are safe enough because they are backed by the authority of the government. In the fourth essay, entitled "The Japanese Loan Conversion; Interview with Mr. K. Takahashi, the Government Commissioner,"³⁰ Dyer argues for the legitimacy and safety of Japan in offering sterling bond subscriptions.³¹

In 1906, when this series of essays were published, to cover extraordinary expenses associated with the Russo-Japanese War and to introduce foreign investment in various industries, Japan actively offered sterling bond subscriptions.³² It was in these circumstances that Dyer addressed the financial situation of Japan, and in these discussions he notes the advancements made by Japan and the characteristics of the Japanese people. His arguments, however, are not limited to Japan's financial circumstances. He also explains and defends the improvements to commercial morality in Japan, the national traits of the Japanese behind the desire for the country to be on an equal footing with foreign countries, Japan's position in the Russo-Japanese War, etc.

Studies such as the above, especially those dealing with Japan's loans or foreign investment, which rely on and cite much data, contributed to the efforts to introduce Japan to the world at large and to advance relations between Japan and Great Britain.

4. Studies of Education in Japan

Another major theme among Dyer's works on specific individual topics is Education in Japan. Studies of his include *Education and National Life*, "Education and National Efficiency in Japan," "Engineering in Japan," and "Commercial Education in Japan."³³

Concerning commercial education, Dyer writes in *Japan in World Politics*, “Not only in technical, but also in commercial schools, Britain might learn some lessons from Japan.” In Great Britain, ordinary school education was still thought to be sufficient even for those engaged in commerce, but “in Japan, as in Germany, students in this department go through a very complete course of study as well as of practical training, and we see the results in the rapidly developing commerce of these countries.” He notes that the curriculum, not to mention the buildings and facilities, are thoroughly prepared, and that much attention is also given to broad instruction in “ethics and civic duty.”³⁴

In the essay “Commercial Education in Japan” as well, Dyer paints a picture of Japan’s system of commercial education (the system of commercial schools, courses of study, etc.) and argues, “The Japanese were not long in recognizing, after their country was opened to foreign trade, that if they were to take a high position in world commerce they must have men who knew their business thoroughly, and in commercial education, still a good deal has to be done to prepare the younger men for all the different departments of their work.” He concludes by stating, “The Japanese have, in commerce as well as in every other department of national activity, laid a solid foundation in a thorough system of education. I would ask the merchants of Glasgow—Have they nothing to learn from Japan in this respect ? ”³⁵

Regarding engineering education, in his essay “Engineering in Japan,” Dyer gives an overview of the contemporary state and history of engineering and engineering education in Japan, as well as the impact that engineering education had on the Japanese economy (the development of railways, merchant ships, and shipbuilding). He states, “Early in the new career of Japan it was recognized that, as a means to an end, she must take full advantage of Western science and its applications to every department of national life,” and that schools of engineering (the Imperial College of Engineering and other engineering schools) were established for this purpose. And because “the engineer [educated at such institutions] is the real revolutionist; for his work generates economic and social forces against which the efforts of statesmen are vain,” engineering education of the kind seen in Japan represents an “important evolution which is going on in the Pacific area, and which will profoundly change the centre of commerce of importance, not only of the world’s industry and commerce, but also of its politics.” Dyer further asserts that “Japan will take a most important part in the further evolution which will certainly take place.”³⁶

III. Background to Dyer's Studies of Japan

1. Dyer's Appointment as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison

(1)

Dyer's studies of Japan are concentrated in his later years, especially in the period from 1904. As stated above, beginning with *Dai Nippon*, which was published in 1904, up until his death, he published 14 works of Japanology. Why is it that his studies of Japan are concentrated in this period ?

It is likely to be the case that Dyer's experiences as an educational advisor to Japan and his observations of Japan during that time became the impetus for studying the country, but there are two points to consider in terms of circumstances and context underlying the fact that Dyer studied Japan intensively during this period, after a considerable amount of time had passed since returning home. One is that he was granted the position of Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison by the Meiji government, and the other is that in Great Britain there was growing interest in Japan.

To begin with, because Dyer kept close ties with Japan even after returning to Great Britain, and helped to promote Japan-United Kingdom relations (for example, by helping Japanese students studying at the University of Glasgow, and by providing assistance when the University of Glasgow implemented Japanese language preliminary examinations),³⁷ in March of 1902, he was commissioned by the government to be Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison, and in this capacity he was chiefly tasked with showcasing Japan to a British audience, which seems to have encouraged Dyer to further his research on Japan. Moreover, as Liaison he was able to obtain and freely utilize much data and information on Japan,³⁸ and as a result he constantly observed trends in both countries which supported his analyses.

(2)

It was the idea of Minoji Arakawa (1857 – 1949), who was Consul of Japan in London, to appoint Dyer as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison. After graduating from the Imperial College of Engineering (1880, passed Grade 2 examinations of the Mining Department), Arakawa worked for the Mining Bureau of the Ministry of Public Works, and then worked for Nippon Railway, after which he became a diplomat and was sent to London. At the time, he was employed as Consul-General at the Consulate of Japan in London.³⁹

On November 26, 1901, Consul Arakawa sent a petition to Jutarō Komura (1855 – 1911), the

Minister of Foreign Affairs. The document was entitled, “Petition to appoint Dr. Henry Dyer, former Principal of the Imperial College of Engineering, as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison.” It is written in ink on vertically lined paper on which “Consulate of Japan in London” is stamped on the fold.⁴⁰

The document addresses three main issues. It firstly lists the reasons for Arakawa’s proposal, namely, that in addition to letting the London market know of Japan’s financial and socioeconomic state, it is essential to keep the British people well informed about Japan, for reasons dealing with socioeconomic trends in the country. Until that time, various types of reports had been disseminated from time to time around Britain, and the consul himself had openly reported on those circumstances on the pages of newspapers, but thus far such articles ended up being little more than formal advertising, and as a result failed to draw the interest of the British people. In contrast, articles by newspapers’ British correspondents and other sources seemed to be more effective in arousing the attention of British entrepreneurs. Arakawa was focused solely on taking this approach and intent on publicizing the contemporary state of Japan’s finances, commerce, and industry to the extent that this was practically possible. This was the task that he wanted Dyer to take on.

Secondly, Arakawa lists the reasons for recommending Dyer. Specifically, he states that after completing his contract as educational advisor and returning to Glasgow, Dyer continued to have Japan’s interests in mind. Dyer had published reports and essays on Japan that were favorable towards the country in newspapers and magazines, and had in many ways made great efforts, both directly and indirectly, for the benefit of Japan. Arakawa notes a recent example. When the Minister of Finance sent Arakawa 100 copies of an annual report in English on Japan’s finances and asked that they be distributed through the Consulate of Japan, he also sent a copy to Dyer. Dyer then used it to pen a lengthy article on the current state of Japan’s economy, which he submitted to *Engineering*, a periodical published in Glasgow. The article drew great attention from figures in commerce and industry in Britain.

At the time, the Ministry of Finance had been dispatching financial and industrial liaisons to the world’s major cities, including London. These liaisons were tasked with investigating the finances of the respective countries. The Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce likewise spent a considerable amount of money sending commerce and industry observers to various countries, where they tried to facilitate dealings among capitalists and other figures in commerce and industry in Japan and their respective countries. The same

ministry also opened product exhibition halls in countries around the world in an attempt to spur the growth of trade with Japan. Considering these factors, there was no reason not to utilize someone like Dyer, who was “very knowledgeable about the circumstances of this country and the empire, and who strongly desires good fortune for our empire.” Having Dyer frequently inform the British public on the state of affairs in Japan and having him report back on the state of industrial activities in Glasgow and other cities must have been extremely beneficial to Japan.

Thirdly, Arakawa requested that either the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce provide Dyer with “a title such as Imperial Economic or Industrial Liaison, and grant him a commensurate allowance.” As for the amount, Arakawa suggests that “given the general conditions of this country, an annual amount of about one thousand and two or three hundred yen (120 pounds in the British currency), or around that, would be appropriate.”

This framework and proposal by Consul Arakawa were approved by the Japanese government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted the matter for consideration by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and after both ministries considered it, gave their approval. A letter dated February 13, 1902, sent to Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sutemi Chinda (1857–1929) by Director-General of the Ministry of Finance, Yoshiro Sakatani (1863–1941) states that “he (Henry Dyer) would be extremely beneficial,” so “please make him an Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison.” It is recorded that Dyer was expected to “publish in newspapers and magazines matters concerning Japan’s finances and economy or using other methods make these matters known to general foreign markets and occasionally report on the state of affairs in foreign countries.”⁴¹

Arakawa notified Dyer of his appointment, sent him a translation of his instructions, and received a letter from Dyer dated March 26 of the same year stating, “I am deeply grateful for the goodwill of our government, and going forward I will act in accordance with said purpose and devote even more efforts for our empire.”⁴²

This was how, in mid-March of 1902, Dyer was commissioned as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison. The chief duty he was expected to perform was to make known “matters concerning Japan’s finances and economy” to “general foreign markets and occasionally report on the state of affairs in foreign countries.” Specifically, he was tasked with regularly providing simple commentary on yearly budget plans or the state of imports and exports

every six months, or presenting reviews of and/or lecturing on statistical reports relating to Japan's finances and economy, important financial reports published in European languages by the Ministry of Finance, as well as on the history and contemporary state of railways, shipping, banking, insurance, mining, various industrial fields, agriculture, etc.

Dyer used his home (No. 8 Highburgh Terrace, Glasgow) as a base for this mission. Correspondence with Japan was addressed to the Ministry of Finance and carried through the Consulate of Japan in London. Initially, he sent his correspondence to Secretary Shunkichi Minobe, who was chief of financial communications at the Ministry of Finance.⁴³

(3)

For operating as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison, Dyer was paid 10 pounds monthly (120 pounds annually), which prompts us to ask what results he produced and what contributions he made towards furthering Japan-United Kingdom relations. This is an issue that deserves exploration, but it is difficult to measure in concrete terms.

The matter of Dyer's assignment was considered confidential, even to the point that the chief document ("The Matter of the Petition by the Consul at London to Appoint Dr. Henry Dyer to be Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison") in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan makes no mention of his accomplishments.⁴⁴ Incidentally, this document is marked here and there with stamps and handwritten notations designating it "Classified by the Secretariat" and "Confidential Communication."

Nevertheless, concerning Dyer's assignment to "publish in newspapers and magazines matters concerning Japan's finances and economy," Dyer did make the following submissions⁴⁵ to newspapers and magazines. The main content of those submissions is as I have described elsewhere in this paper.

—"Education and National Efficiency in Japan," *Nature*, Vol.71, No.1833 (15, Dec. 1904)

"Japanese Industries and Foreign Investments", *The Financial Review of Reviews*, Vol.1, No.4 (Feb. 1906)

"The Commercial Morality of Japan", *The Financial Review of Reviews*, Vol.1, No.7 (May 1906)

"Legal Aspects of Foreign Investments in Japan", *The Financial Review of Reviews*, Vol.2, No.10 (Aug. 1906)

"The Japanese Loan Conversion: Interview with Mr. K. Takahashi, the Government Commissioner," *The Financial Review of Reviews*, Vol.2, No.13 (Nov. 1906)

"Some Lessons from Japan", *The Co-operative Wholesale Societies Limited, Annual for*

1908 (March 1908)

"Engineering in Japan", *The Times* (18 March 1908), Engineering Supplement

"Commercial Education in Japan", *The Glasgow Herald* (26 Nov. 1910)

"Eastern Trade, Engineering in Japan and China", *The Glasgow Herald* (31 Dec. 1912)

The Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison commissioning system did not continue forever. In addition to London, the government had commissioned reports and supplied investigation allowances for investigative reports on the financial and economic states of affairs in New York, Shanghai, and Bombay, but amidst administrative reorganizations and expense-cutting measures by the Japanese government, in the 1913 fiscal year such commissions were ceased and allowances were abolished. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy Dyer's commission and allowance as Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison were to be "continued as before for the time being." His commission is thought to have continued until his death in 1918.⁴⁶ This is because there is no record of the said commission being terminated in the relevant documents.

2. Growing Interest in Japan

(1)

The second likely reason for Dyer's studies of Japan being concentrated in the beginning of the twentieth century is the growing interest in Great Britain in matters concerning Japan.

Interest in Japan was not limited to Great Britain. Amongst the countries known by western countries, Japan was the only non-Christian nation that had industrialized. What is more, once Japan eventually grew to be a major power in Asia over the course of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, interest in Japan in the world at large began to grow even more.⁴⁷

For example, to begin with, *Literary Digest* (first published in 1890), an influential general-interest magazine in the early twentieth-century United States, featured a special column in its August 28, 1905 edition called "Notable Books of the Day, Useful Books on Japan." As interest in Japan grew through the developments of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, and as more and more books of Japanology written in English came to appear, the magazine chose 13 books on the topic of Japan to review. Dyer's *Dai Nippon* was selected among these, alongside Inazō Nitobe's *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*, Kenchō Suematsu's *The Risen Sun*, and Yoshisaburō Okakura's *The Japanese Spirit*.⁴⁸

Secondly, in its December 9, 1904 edition, the British book review newspaper *Times Literary Supplement* (first published in 1902) put together a special column entitled “More Books on Japan” in which it took up six new books, including Dyer’s *Dai Nippon*, Lafcadio Hearn’s *Japan; An Attempt at Interpretation*, and *Japan in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, compiled by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. All six were published in Great Britain in 1904.⁴⁹

(2)

In the case of Great Britain, interest in Japan began around the time the country opened up to the outside world. This interest was fueled by the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the establishment of the Meiji state, and the subsequent rapid changes of Japanese society. Eventually, “in response to the successes of Japanese economic and military development, major changes were seen in the way in which Japan was perceived in Great Britain,” and “exports such as fans, woodblock prints, and lacquer ware contributed to the spread in Great Britain of the image of Japan as a refined, exotic, and beautiful country.”⁵⁰

Meanwhile, to create and cultivate a certain image of Japan, the Meiji government took careful, deliberate steps to influence intellectuals and the media in the west. For example, it invited and welcomed designers of battleships for the Japanese Navy, extended special treatment to British authors travelling in Japan, and had “an ambitious plan to publish government reports and statistics in English.” The success of these measures led to rising interest in Japan.⁵¹

Around the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, world affairs, specifically those brought about by Russian expansionist policies, had a major impact on Anglo-Japanese relations. Great Britain and Japan “shared common interests in resisting Russia’s expansionist policies,” and when the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was formed in 1902, interest in Japan in Great Britain grew even further. After the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, “the output of English language sources from Japanese official agencies increased. Furthermore Japanese writers such as Nitobe Inazō produced works on Japan which sought to evoke favorable responses amongst British readers,” and it has been suggested that “the Japanese Foreign Ministry may have given financial support to books which were, ostensibly, commercial publications.”⁵²

Moreover, there was also a special set of circumstances that had arisen within Great Britain, namely a growing public desire for domestic reforms. Amidst this, the notion spread

that Japan might serve as a model for reforms. According to Gordon Daniels, a historian of Anglo-Japanese relations,

In the first years of the twentieth century Britain's overseas policies and domestic institutions were objects of widespread criticism and reappraisal. Such controversies were given additional intensity by the growth of popular newspapers and the electorate's increased interest in political rivalries and international conflict. The belief that German and Russian expansion threatened Britain's imperial position contributed to the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. Fear of German, French and American commercial competition generated a major debate on educational reform and national efficiency. Within this Henry Dyer played a vocal and energetic role.⁵³

These were the circumstances and background that led Dyer further to develop his studies of Japan and be seen as someone with an expert knowledge of Japanese affairs.

IV. Characteristics of Dyer's Japan Studies

1. Comparative Studies with His Native Great Britain

Dyer's studies of Japan are unique in terms of his analytical methodology, perspective, and the source material he chose to study.⁵⁴ To begin with, he frequently made comparisons of Japan and Great Britain. He portrayed Japan as a model nation, and attempted to apply the lessons he had learned from Japan to reforms in Great Britain, a nation whose power was waning.

This comparative perspective appeared very early on in Dyer's work. When he arrived in Japan as a foreign educational advisor and was entrusted with organizing education and school administration at the Imperial College of Engineering, he "previously had made a special study of all the chief methods of scientific and engineering study in the different countries of the world and of the organization of some of the most important institutions," and as a result he tried to adopt an approach that combined the systems of engineer training present in European countries and education with a British-style emphasis on learning in the field.⁵⁵ In promoting reforms in Britain after return there, his perspective reflected practices he had tried at the Imperial College of Engineering and observations and examinations of what was happening in the larger world, including Japan.⁵⁶

As Japan achieved phenomenal growth and became a member of the international community at the end of the nineteenth century, Dyer used analysis of the forces that drove

that growth to try to draw lessons for a stagnating British society.

“As a source of ideas of institutional reform, Great Britain had a surprisingly long history of taking an interest in Japan,”⁵⁷ but as mentioned above, in the early years of the twentieth century, “Britain’s overseas policies and domestic institutions were objects of widespread criticism and reappraisal,” and amidst this Dyer “played a vocal and energetic role.” In his *Dai Nippon*, for example, he argues that “the evolution in this country has been comparatively slow, and many of our industrial developments are due to conditions which are rapidly disappearing.” Other countries, in contrast, “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.”⁵⁸ He also notes that “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.”⁵⁹

2. High Praise for the National Education System in Japan

The second characteristic of Dyer’s studies of Japan is his emphasis on the role that education played in Japan’s development. In drawing comparisons with education in Britain, Dyer praises highly Japan’s national system of education. Concerning Japan’s rapid growth, Dyer states, “At the root of all these developments has been the very complete system of education which has been established in the country,” and that “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 ideas.” Through comparisons with his native Great Britain, where industrialization proceeded naturally, he draws attention to Japan’s system of national education, and argues that the experience of Japan “affords lessons to Britain.”⁶⁰

There is a section in *Dai Nippon* entitled “Lesson for Great Britain,” as well as a section in the pamphlet *Education and National Life* titled “Lesson from Japan.”⁶¹ Dyer also published papers titled “Education and National Efficiency” and “Some Lessons from Japan.”⁶² At the beginning of his paper “Some Lessons from Japan,” Dyer even goes so far as to say, “It is universally admitted that the rise of Japan as a member of the comity of nations is the political wonder of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and it is not only the duty, but also the interest, of all the countries in the world to study the causes which have brought it about, and as far as possible to apply the lessons to be learned so that they may profit

thereby.”⁶³

Dyer posits that engineering education in particular, and even more specifically the government-led system of engineering education, is valuable, as a lesson for Great Britain, but it is not exclusively engineering education. In fact, Dyer urges Britain to learn from Japan's commercial education and moral instruction as well. These arguments are presented in *Japan in World Politics, Education and National Life*, and “Commercial Education in Japan.”⁶⁴

3. Access to a Copious Amount of Source Materials on Japan

The third point concerning Dyer's studies of Japan that should be noted is that he utilized a wealth of sources relating to Japan. Both *Dai Nippon* or *Japan in World Politics* incorporate a great many source materials and much data. There were more than a few other foreigners who had the same kind of experiences in Japan as educational advisors, yet the primary reason that Dyer had such access to source materials and data is that he had help from his Japanese friends, especially from people associated with the Imperial College of Engineering. Dyer wrote that “My friends in Japan keep me supplied with many of the more important journals and official reports, and long conversations with those who visit this country prove to me that the most thoughtful minds in Japan fully recognize the difficulty of the problems with which they are confronted.” He expresses special thanks to his “students in all parts of the country” for their help and cooperation, which he acknowledges in *Dai Nippon*.⁶⁵

The second reason for the wealth of sources Dyer utilizes is that he was able to obtain materials through the Japanese government. As noted above, after becoming Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison, Dyer was able to utilize freely many sources of data on Japan supplied to him via the Japanese government. This allowed him to constantly observe trends in both countries and deepened his analyses.

Dyer was made Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison because he maintained close ties with Japan—especially with his students at the Imperial College of Engineering—after completing his duties as educational advisor and returning to Britain, and because he helped to promote relations between Great Britain and Japan. It is likely that this was the major event that prompted Dyer to commence studies of Japan in earnest, and what led him to produce such distinctive research.

In carrying out these studies, Dyer “relied on materials written in English,” and we should

not forget that “much of them were prepared by Japanese government officials for westerners with an affinity for Japan.”⁶⁶ This fact is probably not unrelated to Dyer’s praise of Japan as a model from which Britain should learn and the favorable light in which he portrayed Japan.

V. Summary

The fact that Dyer experienced life in Japan and was able to observe the country as an educational advisor is likely to be what led him to pursue further studies of Japan. In any case, after he returned to Britain, in the course of facilitating Japan-United Kingdom relations, his interest in Japan grew, and he eventually began research on Japan in earnest.

Firstly, after Dyer completed his assignment as an educational advisor and left Japan—and quite late in life—he commenced serious research on Japan. Beginning with the publication in 1904 of *Dai Nippon* until his death in 1918, he tirelessly presented the results of his efforts. He left at least 15 works of Japanology.

Secondly, as far as the content of his publications were concerned, in addition to research on specific topics, he produced more comprehensive studies of Japan. Specifically, he published works on individual topics such as the economy, engineering education, commercial education, and moral instruction, as well as comprehensive works on Japan, namely *Dai Nippon* and *Japan in World Politics*. The latter two are large works, comprising 450 pages and 418 pages, respectively. They have been praised as a “highly substantive compilation of comprehensive research on Japanese history, the contemporary situation, and issues,”⁶⁷ and a “work of the highest level in terms of research on Japan by a foreigner at the time.”⁶⁸

Thirdly, these works of Japanology were published at a time of growing interest in Japan in other countries in the world, and furthermore amidst growing ties between Britain and Japan, and therefore contributed to the efforts to showcase Japan to the outside world. It is this author’s opinion that Dyer’s appointment in March 1902 to the position of Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison by the Meiji government further spurred his Japan studies. It is notable that after being appointed to this position, Dyer was able to utilize freely many sources of data and materials on Japan supplied to him by the Japanese government, an opportunity that allowed him constantly to observe trends in both countries and add depth to his analyses.

Dyer’s recommendation to the post of Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison made his

background unique among foreign advisors to Japan, and the fact of this appointment seems to have not only encouraged him to engage in Japanese studies with even more fervor, but also influenced the content of his research and favorable portrayals of the country. The person who came up with the idea of the post of Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison and also recommended Dyer as the perfect person to fill it was Minoji Arakawa, Consul of Japan at London. Arakawa was a graduate of the Imperial College of Engineering, where Dyer served as principal.

Fourthly, in his analyses of Japan Dyer frequently employs comparisons with his native Britain to illustrate the topic at hand. There was a great demand for domestic reforms in Britain at the time. Dyer's efforts are particularly noteworthy because, amidst those calls for reform, he turned to Japan as a model and tried to apply the lessons he had learned there to the argument for changes to be made to a stagnating British society. It has been noted that "Dyer's Japan studies not only functioned to inform the broader world about the existence of Japan, they served as a stimulant to a stagnating Britain in the form of lessons [learned] from Japan."⁶⁹

To sum up, Dyer was invited to Japan from Britain as an educational advisor in 1873, and there he contributed to the modernization of the country by helping to organize its system of engineering education. However, while Japan had developed so much by the beginning of the twentieth century that it astonished world powers and made Japan a member of the global community, the once-thriving Great Britain, on the other hand, began to show signs of decline and faced calls for domestic reforms. Moreover, the shift in geopolitics marked by the rise of Russian expansionism prompted further interest in Japan within Britain. Amidst these developments, Henry Dyer's name was put forward for the post of Imperial Financial and Industrial Liaison, a position that gave him access to Japan-related materials provided by the Meiji government. He in turn utilized those materials to engage actively in studies of Japan, and through analyses of the driving factors behind the quick rise of the nation on the international stage, offered suggestions to a stagnating British society in the form of lessons from Japan.

The above features, characteristics, and motives are present in the studies of Japan by British educational advisor Henry Dyer. Yet how are Dyer's Japan studies perceived in relation to other works of Japanology by Meiji-era foreign educational advisors? It should be concluded that his works have yet to receive ample discussion in the realm of discourse on "Japan as seen through the eyes of foreigners."⁷⁰ In addition, the specific role that Dyer's

works on Japan played in shaping perceptions of Japan—particularly perceptions of Japan by Britain—is an important issue that still deserves further consideration as part of this inquiry. As I was unable to explore this question in depth here, I hope to address it in future examinations.⁷¹

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