

HOW JAPAN LEARNED ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD THE VIEWS OF OTHER COUNTRIES INCORPORATED IN JAPANESE SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS, 1868-1986*

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*Never envy the flowers which blossom
on branches without a solid trunk.*

Yukichi Fukuzawa: *Sekai Kunizukushi*

On the occasion of this, the first Jerwood lecture at Sheffield University, I would like to begin with the very first Japanese description of Sheffield. The members of the Iwakura Mission arrived in Sheffield on October 28th, 1872. Although the Mission only spent four days in the city the detailed account¹ of their visit, written in diary form, would run, in English translation, to more than forty typewritten pages. They stayed at Banner Cross Hall as the guests of George Wilson, the Managing Director of Charles Cammell and Company.² The entry for the first day of the visit includes the following general description:

“The city has developed rapidly since the beginning of the century owing to the prosperous iron and steel industries. The population has grown from 60,000 in 1800 to 239,947 now”³

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¹ *Tokumei Zenkentaishi Bei-Ō Kairan Jikki* (*A True Account of the Tour in America and Europe of the Special Embassy*—hereafter *Jikki*)—was first published in 1878. Here I use the five volumes of the recent Iwanami edition with annotations by A. Tanaka, (Tokyo, 1977-1982). The English title is according to Mayo, M.J.: “The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-76” *Monumenta Nipponica*, XXVIII-1, 1973, pp. 3-67. However Yamamoto shows that the Japanese government used the term ‘Ambassador Extraordinary’ for *tokumei zenkentaishi*, rather than ‘Special Embassy,’ (Yamamoto, K.: “The Geographical Understanding of the Western World and the Understanding of Geography as a Subject of the Meiji Government Expedition” in Takeuchi, K. (ed.) *Languages, Paradigms and Schools in Geography: Japanese Contributions to the History of Geographical Thought* (2), Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, 1984, pp. 77-80).

² Following the suggestion of Mr. Graham Healey of the Centre for Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield, I have consulted the *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* of Tuesday, October 28 and Friday, October 31, 1872 in order to identify the names of persons and firms appearing in the *Jikki*. I acknowledge his valuable suggestions in the preparation of this paper.

³ *Jikki* Vol. II p. 299.

On the second day they visited one of the factories belonging to Charles Cammell and Company:

“In the large area occupied by the factories, a mass of chimneys, large and small, reach up into the sky, a sky where clouds of smoke from the coal fires hang, pitch-black, like some terrifying rainstorm. . . . Never before have we seen such a sight, except at the Krupp works in Germany. Up to 25 years ago Mr. Cammell had only a small file workshop. . . .”⁴

This is followed by a detailed account of Charles Cammell’s success story, together with a description of the various workshops and technological explanations of the Bessemer and other processes.⁵

The third day brought a visit to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. The authors provide a full explanation of the lives of the landed aristocracy and wax lyrical on the English country house and garden. On the fourth day they were very busy with visits to the famous cutlers, Joseph Rodgers and Sons, and another large steel factory, Vickers and Company. In the afternoon they went to the Town Hall to meet the Mayor, members of the city council, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. After this they went on to James Dixon and Sons at Cornish Place to see the “Britannia Metal” or silver-plating process, this, of course, being a Sheffield invention.⁶ On the final evening of their visit to Sheffield they were honoured guests of the Master Cutler, T.E. Vickers, at the annual dinner (Cutlers’ Feast) of the Cutlers’ Company.⁷ The dinner went on well after midnight and is described as “The most magnificent party we have attended since we left the United States.”

Naturally enough, there were inaccuracies and misunderstandings: Chatsworth is not located in the upper valley of the River Don and the Cutlers’ Company was a guild, not a private company as they thought. Nevertheless, one cannot help but admire the energy, diligence and penetrating observation of the writers, taking into account their crowded schedule: days crammed full with visits and dinner parties every evening. Even for geographers, who are used to doing field work, such a programme would have been a tall order, and well beyond the capacity of an ordinary mortal!

The Iwakura Mission,⁸ sent by the newly-established Meiji government, lasted for twenty-two months and comprised more than 50 officials. They were accompanied by about 40 students, who were to remain in western countries after the mission returned home. It was the biggest mission sent by Japan to the West in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods. The inclusion of leading figures in the Meiji Restoration movement such as Iwakura, Kido,

⁴ *Jikki* Vol. II p. 300.

⁵ Walton, M.: *Sheffield, its Story and its Achievements*, The Amethyst Press, Otley, West Yorkshire, 1984, pp. 189–194.

⁶ *Pawson & Brailsford’s Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and Neighbourhood*, Sheffield, 1862, (Reprinted paperback edition with foreword by Mary Walton, The Amethyst Press, Otley, West Yorkshire, 1985) p. 167.

⁷ On the Cutlers’ Company I have consulted Pawson & Brailsford, op. cit., pp. 138–142.

⁸ General accounts of the Iwakura Mission are given in: Ōkubo, T. (ed.): *Iwakura Shisetsu no Kenkyū (Studies on the Iwakura Mission)*, Munetaka-shobō, Tokyo 1976.

Tanaka, A.: *Iwakura Shisetsudan to Bei-Ō Kairan Jikki (The Iwakura Mission and the Account of its Travels in the United States and Europe)*, Kōdansha, Tokyo, 1977.

Tanaka, A.: ‘*Datsu-A’ no Meiji Ishin, Iwakura Shisetsudan o Ou Tabi kara (An Account of a Journey in the Footsteps of the Iwakura Mission)*, Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, Tokyo, 1984.

Izumi, S.: *Meiji Yonen no Anbassadoru (Ambassador of the Fourth Year of Meiji, 1971)*, Nihon-keizai Shinbun-sha, Tokyo, 1984.

Ōkubo, Itō and others, served to demonstrate the dignity of the new Meiji state.

The size of the mission, however, suggests that something more than mere diplomatic courtesy calls was intended. In fact, the mission had the difficult assignment of adding to Japan's first-hand knowledge of the Western world. Among the members there were many who had already been in the United States or Europe, sent either by domain (*han*) governments or by the Shogunate. Some had even stowed away on foreign vessels during the Tokugawa period. With the assistance of such people the mission was able to make full use of the time available, with visits and inspection tours (like that to Sheffield); they also amassed a wealth of documentary evidence on the political and administrative system, economic conditions, technology and culture of each country.

This sort of fact-finding tour, or perhaps, in modern parlance, intelligence-gathering mission, had been a feature of Japanese missions abroad in the 1860s, whether sent out by the Shogunate or by individual fiefs. The Iwakura Mission was the last of its kind: it came to be replaced by the systematic dispatch of students abroad, the expansion of permanent diplomatic establishments overseas, and the invitation to Japan of foreign specialists such as professors, engineers and administrative consultants. Even before 1854, when the Shogunate gave up the policy of seclusion from the outside world, there had been some sporadic accounts of foreign countries made by castaways. After 1854, missions sent by the Shogunate or the fiefs wrote comprehensive reports and diaries. However, except for the Satsuma fief, which changed its policy from hostility to Western culture to acceptance of it,⁹ and which therefore paid attention to the reports of the missions and students they sent abroad, most of those reports had little effect in a country prey to internal turmoil. Indeed, the detailed description of Britain which formed part of the investigation report of the Shogunate mission of 1860 was not published until 1974.¹⁰

The historical significance of these missions lies in the impact that the experience of foreign travel had on individual members who were later to become leading figures in the political, economic or cultural spheres. Official reports and documents were never read by ordinary people at that time: they formed their images of Western countries through the publications and speeches of these leaders who had been abroad. Although the materials—books, brochures, maps, volumes of statistics—posted home by the Iwakura Mission were destroyed by fire before the mission's return to Japan, they systematically compiled an official report which ran to 68 volumes.

Iwakura, who was then head of the mission and who held the posts of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister (*udaijin*), was deeply impressed by the warm welcome they received from the governments and the peoples of the countries they visited. He full appreciated the need to publicise in Japan what they had seen abroad. He commissioned two young secretaries to accompany him throughout the tour and to record all the activities of the mission. One of these secretaries, Kunitake Kume, who later became professor of

⁹ Inuzuka, T.: *Satsuma-han Eikoku Ryūgakusei (Students of the Satsuma Fief in Britain)*, Chūōkōron-sha, Tokyo.

Matsuzawa, H.: *Samazamana Seiyō-kenbun—'Ijō-tansaku' kara 'Yōkō'* (Various Kinds of Accounts of the West from 'Investigations of Hostile Countries' to 'Studies abroad in the West'), in *Seiyō Kenbun-shū (Collection of Travel Documents on Western Countries)*, *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 66, Iwanami-shoten, Tokyo, 1974, pp. 621–679.

¹⁰ *Eikoku Tansaku (Investigations of Britain)* was first published in *Seiyō Kenbun-shū* (see Note 9 above), pp. 479–548 with annotations by H. Matsuzawa.

history at Tokyo Imperial University, prepared an account of the tour in diary form, under the imposing title of *A True Account of the Tour in America and Europe of the Special Embassy*. It consists of five volumes, 100 chapters in all, of which one chapter is devoted to the four-day stay in Sheffield. The work includes not only the record of the tour but also general treatises on the history and geography of countries, regions and towns, for which Kume relied on written and oral information gathered during the trip. There are also chapters on countries such as Spain and Portugal which the mission was scheduled to visit, but in the event did not.

The work was first published in 1878, and between then and 1884 3,500 copies were printed. Although an odd mixture of travel diary and general treatises on history and geography, and thus not particularly readable, it nevertheless proved the most comprehensive and detailed description of Western and of some African and Asian countries then available that was based on first-hand knowledge. We should remember, however, that members of the mission, including Kume, were able to consult the accounts of previous missions and the existing Japanese publications on Western countries, such as the works of Yukichi Fukuzawa, who had been to the West three times before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. It is clear from the descriptions given in the book that Kume read, and was influenced by, Fukuzawa's *Conditions in the West (Seiyō-jijō)*, first published in 1866 and *World Geography (Sekai Kuni-zukushi)*, first published in 1869.

In view of the price of ¥4½, which was prohibitively expensive for the ordinary wage earners of that time, and in view of the fact that only 3,500 copies were sold,¹¹ we must assume that Kume's book was mainly read by the upper-class and intellectuals. Kume's work is mentioned by contemporaries and later writers; some of the reports of the Geographical Society of Tokyo, founded in 1879, reflect his influence; but references to Kume are, on the whole, relatively few. Nevertheless, many of Kume's views and judgements on various aspects of Western countries came later on, in the middle of the Meiji period, to be widely shared by many Japanese intellectuals. It is difficult to say exactly how far Kume's work contributed to the development of a rather stereotyped image of the West amongst the upper and upper-middle class of Meiji Japan. Kume did not give explicit references to his sources of information: they may well have been books and brochures easily obtainable during the mission's tour, and it is very probable that other writers might have consulted the same sources. Furthermore, Kume was compelled to resign his professorship at the Imperial University in 1892 because of his outspoken criticism of the emergence of nationalistic shintoism. These two facts may have led some writers deliberately to ignore Kume's work.

Here we come up against a fundamental problem in the analysis of the images of foreign countries, and, more generally, in the study of perception in geography. Even if we take into consideration the social and cultural backgrounds of the writer and the situation in which he wrote such and such a description, one can always raise an objection to the arbitrariness of the citation. At the time of Kume's work, in the early Meiji period, the channels through which information on Western countries reached Japan were rather limited, and so we may be able somehow to reconstruct the way in which the image of, for instance, Britain, was formed in Japanese minds. After the middle of the Meiji period, however, sources of information become diversified, and the degree of access to knowledge begins to depend on social status: thus it becomes harder to analyse the Japanese image of Britain. The latter period

¹¹ These data are from the editor's notes in the Iwanami edition of the *Jikki* Vol. I. pp. 415-418.

is covered by many diaries and memoirs about Britain, ranging from those of literary figures such as Sōseki Natsume to the essays of the L.S.E. economist Michio Morishima. Their impressions of Britain and the change in Japanese images of Britain through the years are certainly an interesting and tempting field of study. Yet there is always the contentious point as to how far their views are representative of a particular social group and how much their writings were read by “the Japanese,” which is, in itself, an ambiguous and indefinite concept.

In the year of the Iwakura Mission’s visit to Britain, 1872, the *Education System Ordinance* was promulgated in Japan. It stated that:

“Hereafter people must strive so that in every village and in every town there should not be a single family which does not send its children to school and so that no family has an illiterate in its midst.”

Thus began the compulsory national education system.

The writings of the early Meiji authors on the West, the reports of government missions, the education of Japanese students abroad, the teaching of foreign professors and consultants in Japan, all certainly contributed to the success of modernization along western lines. Their direct influence, however, tended to be limited to the upper classes or the intelligentsia. For the majority of Japanese, until the comparatively recent impact of television, the main source of information on the outside world was the institutionalised education system. Many of the authors of school textbooks may have been able to consult first-hand information on foreign countries, and so the descriptions in the textbooks are influenced by the views and perceptions of those who, whether Japanese or foreign, provided the original information. In the Japanese education system explaining the outside world had to play a subordinate role: textbooks had to help maintain and reinforce national unity. To this end geography, history, and Japanese language textbooks were systematically manipulated.

In order to understand the role played by textbooks, let us first examine briefly the development of the education system.

A year after the proclamation of the Education System Rescript, the Ministry of Education issued “Regulations for Primary School Education” which laid down a curriculum. In the same year the Tokyo Teacher Training College was established; it had also the task of compiling textbooks for primary schools. In this initial stage, however, the Ministry of Education had no intention to restrict the free publication of textbooks. In the Ministry’s manual we read:

“. . . the textbooks compiled by the Ministry of Education are only to serve as examples of style and content. The Ministry would very much welcome those who want to write or translate textbooks.”¹²

Moreover, textbooks for the higher grades of primary schools and all textbooks for secondary schools were left completely to private publication.

In 1879 the Ordinance of 1872 was abolished and the Ministry issued a new Imperial Rescript which, in contrast to the idealistic and uniformist character of the previous decree,

¹² Monbushō Hōkokuka: *Hensan Shoseki Toriatsukai Kokoroe*, February 1876. Quoted in Nakagawa, K.: *Kindai-chirikyōiku no Genryū (Origins of Modern Geographical Education in Japan)*, Kokon-shoin, Tokyo, 1978, p. 66.

adopted a realistic and decentralist line. The strong opposition of the then emerging bureaucracy to these decentralising measures forced the government to issue in the following year a revised Rescript, which gave the Ministry of Education control over a range of matters including the adoption of textbooks. This decree opened the way to the Ministry exercising control over school textbooks. In 1903 there occurred what was generally referred to as the "textbooks scandal"¹³ and the government took advantage of this affair to issue an Imperial Ordinance according to which "textbooks used in all elementary schools must be exclusively those of which the copyright belongs to the Ministry of Education." Later on these measures were extended to secondary school textbooks. So began the state compilation system which lasted until the Educational Reform that followed World War II, though the textbooks themselves were revised and recompiled several times.

The postwar education system dates from April 1948. Under the occupation of Japan by the Allied Forces some state-compiled textbooks, especially history and geography textbooks, had been banned because of their ultranationalistic and chauvinistic character under the influence of Japanese militarism. Under the new education system the Ministry of Education gives out guidelines, which are generally revised every six years, for each subject at the primary school, junior high school, and senior high school levels. The textbooks are all published by private companies, and must conform to the ministerial guidelines in order to receive ministerial approval. Thus the state authorization system, a kind of ministerial censorship, still remains. Nowadays, however, under pressure from international and domestic public opinion, the Ministry cannot take any measure which might distort historical facts or offend against freedom of speech. When the Ministry wanted to instruct publishers to change references to "aggression" against Asian countries to something like "Japanese advances," many Asian countries which Japan had "advanced" on during the Second World War strongly protested to the Japanese Government and the Ministry in the end revoked this instruction. In addition, some textbook authors have taken legal proceedings against ministerial instructions.

Thus we have seen that, except for the first years after the Restoration of 1868, the state has always exercised influence, directly or indirectly, over the contents of textbooks. In considering the changing images of foreign countries in school textbooks, which have played such an important part in the formation of Japanese views of the outside world, we must therefore take into account the fact that the changing attitudes towards foreign countries over the last one and a quarter centuries on the part of those holding power in Japan, and on the part of the Japanese intelligentsia, have been of decisive importance.

In the first years of the compulsory education system (that is, in the period up to about 1885) the compilation of school textbooks was entrusted mainly to private initiative and was not under the strict control of central government. This coincided with the period in which the slogan "civilisation and enlightenment" (*bunmei-kaika*) was much to the fore. "Civilisation and enlightenment" were considered to be synonymous with "westernization." In other words, in this happy period there was no fundamental contradiction between government policies and the ideologies of the authors of the textbooks, who at this time, were for the most part pro-western. Masanao Nakamura, who, as early as 1866 had gone to Britain on a Shogunate scholarship, returned to Japan on the collapse of the Shogunate, and pub-

¹³ Many cases of bribery by publishers of school and educational authorities were disclosed in this year.

lished in eleven chapters between 1869 and 1871, *Saigoku-Risshihen*, which translated literally means: Stories of Self-made Men in the West. This was in fact a translation of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859). In the preface the author writes:

“. . . is it true that a strong army secures public peace and order! Do you mean that the strength of Western countries derives from military might? No. The strength of Western countries relies upon people's strong faith in Heaven's way. In other words Western countries are strong because the people's right of self-government is widely recognised there and both administration and legislation are based on this principle.”

Then follows Smiles's text, which begins with the sentence: “Heaven helps those who help themselves.”

Here we can see the attitude that it is not enough just to have a superficial knowledge of Western culture: its moral basis has to be understood. This was the very attitude which governed the activities of the Iwakura Mission. Kume in his book stresses the cultural and institutional foundations which support the technological progress of Western countries. We should note here that Nakamura's work, of which a million copies were printed, was also used as a textbook in several schools in the first decade of the national education system.

Another example is Yukichi Fukuzawa's *World Geography* of 1869, which I have already mentioned. This also sold at least a million copies: we cannot be sure exactly how many copies were sold, because there were many pirate editions. Like Nakamura's book, it had been widely read before the establishment of the national education system in 1872, and was then used as a textbook in many primary schools. This book was written in a five-seven-five syllable verse style which made it easy to read aloud and memories. It begins:

“The world is large, comprises many countries, and is divided into five continents, called Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America; besides there is Oceania, which is a southern continent. The customs and manners of people vary according to different places. One can be a really worthy human being only when one knows all these changing features of various places.”

Thus at the very outset Fukuzawa tells his readers that if they are to deserve well as human beings they must study the geography of the world. For him, learning must be accessible to all.

In another best-selling book, *The Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumon no Susume*) published in 1872, he encourages people to learn so as to get on in the world. He begins with the sentence: “Heaven does not create one man above another, nor one man below another,” which is evidently a paraphrase of the beginning of the American Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal.” For Fukuzawa learning meant, first and foremost, learning from the West. In *World Geography*, after writing that Europe is actually the centre of the world, he continues:

“Their industries are successful and their trade prosperous; their armies are strong and well-armed. They enjoy a peace of which they are proud. If we seek the source of all this prosperity, we find that it is the blossom on the branches of a tree, whose trunk is learning. Never envy the flowers which

blossom on branches without a solid trunk. Devotion to learning may look a diversion, but it is the only way to arrive at progress. Let us take this path so that we might see the Western flower in our country.”

This description, in a primary school textbook, is a clear declaration of the views of the Meiji Occidentalists, who recognised the necessity of fundamentally studying the Western culture which formed the foundation of the material prosperity of Western countries.

Another distinctive feature of early Meiji geography textbooks is a strong faith in the possibility of economic development. For a country such as early Meiji Japan, which is just beginning to pursue economic development, such a belief is perhaps not surprising. Backwardness was never ascribed to physical factors such as climate: this might lead to a fatalistic attitude. Rather it is put down to the laziness of the people, misgovernment and so on. For instance, China had been defeated in the Opium Wars and had become a semi-colonial country because it was ruled despotically and its people were apathetic. By contrast the United States, thanks to its democratic system and the industriousness of its people, had become comparable to Great Britain in industry and to France in culture.

Almost all textbooks of world geography from this period, such as Fukuzawa's book, or Masao Uchida's *Yochi-shiryaku (Short Description of the World)*, published in 1870, group countries on the basis of a rather simple unilinear evolutionist concept. For example, Fukuzawa divides countries into three categories: barbarian or uncivilised, semi-civilised, and civilised. Japan was considered a country which was rapidly getting rid of its semi-civilised status and was on the point of entering the civilised Western group. Even among European countries Fukuzawa finds a difference measured by a degree of "civilisation." For example, he writes that Spain ". . . was formerly a famous country, but the character of the people has become lazy, and through the loss of their industrious spirit their national income has fallen. They produce many fewer goods and their civilisation is less advanced than that of Britain and France." Amongst European countries, Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia were considered the five important powers. Of these Britain and France were the most important. Naturally differences between the two countries were noted. Britain was more advanced industrially and had a talent for invention; France excelled in fine arts and related fields. Perhaps Britain received a somewhat higher appraisal at this time because of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and because the communards' insurrection in Paris made an unfavourable impression on Japanese intellectuals, who were looking to build a strong and well-integrated nation-state. Perhaps it was also because Japan was introducing more technology and institutions from Britain.

This kind of evaluation of foreign countries in the early school textbooks coincides with that made in the accounts of the Iwakura Mission. As I have already mentioned, in the initial phase of the national education system, government controls over the contents of textbooks, at least as far as the view of the outside world is concerned, were few and far between. It was to prove a short and, as it turned out, unrepresentative period in which there was no great conflict between the views of the occidentalist intellectuals and the government's westernization policies.

As I have said, the middle of the 1880s was a turning point. Not only was there an

¹⁴ Citations from school textbooks in this paper are all from *Nihon Kyōkasho Taikei, Kindai-hen (Collections of School Textbooks of Japan; the Modern Period)*, Vol. 15, Vol. 16, and Vol. 17, Kōdansha, Tokyo, 1965-1966.

institutional change in the system of compiling textbooks, but also there was a general change in Japan's modernisation process. There was a reaction against Westernisation, an emphasis on the mystique and divinity of the Emperor, the beginnings of colonial expansionism and so forth. It was the start of the true period of "Japanese spirit and Western learning" (*Wakon-yōsai*). Ironically this slogan was derived from the traditional Japanese attitude of "Japanese spirit and Chinese learning" (*Wakon-kansai*).

The first marked change in school textbooks took place with the introduction of the system of ministerial approval. This was the reduction of the coverage of foreign countries, their societies and cultures. For instance, in the primary school curriculum the history of foreign countries vanished completely, and was only taught in connection with Japanese history and very much from a Japan-centred viewpoint. Even the Chinese and Western histories taught in secondary schools and in the non-compulsory two further years of primary school, were either political history or often little more than the listing of dynasties. There was no description of the cultural origins of Western civilisation as found in the book by Nakamura. Although there was always World Geography at the primary school level, more and more emphasis came to be laid on physical and economic geography.

Britain was always considered the most important and most powerful country in the world. For example, in the second edition of *World Geography for Beginners* (*Bankoku Chiri Shoho*) published in 1893¹⁵, we read:

"... the people of this country are mainly engaged in manufacturing industry but also engage in agriculture. The wealth and power of this nation come originally from the abundance of iron and coal. . . . British people are also very able in commerce and make great profits from world trade. . . . Britain is the centre of world trade, one third of which is in her hands. For this reason Britain is very important for Japan as a partner in international trade. . . . The mainland itself is smaller than our country, but they possess vast territories which cover one sixth of the world's land-surface and which have a population of 300 millions. . . ."

In this way, Britain's economic prosperity was attributed to her wealth in natural resources and to her colonial possessions. Such reasoning when applied to a Japan with few natural resources and no colonial possessions, could easily serve to justify a policy of imperial expansionism.

In this and other secondary school textbooks, besides such environmentalist explanations, there are to be found the sorts of racial descriptions which hardly existed in the early Meiji textbooks. When discussing the population of each country, racial differences are always highlighted: thus, for instance, the misery of the American Indians is put down to their "primitive and simple nature." The Caucasians are considered the most advanced. As a parallel to this, the uniqueness and superiority of the Japanese is stressed in comparison to other, inferior, Oriental races. It is at least partly because of such racialist education, that the racial prejudice of the Japanese was, and to my deep regret still is, especially strong towards Asian peoples.

A few intellectuals stood up against this trend. Kinnosuke Natsume, later professor of

¹⁵ The first edition of this textbook was published by Gakkai Shishin-sha in 1894, and the revised edition in 1895. The citation is from the first edition.

English Literature at Tokyo Imperial University, and famous as a novelist under the pen-name of Sōseki, wrote in his diary in 1901 when he was in London:

“It is a problem that the Japanese dislike to be considered Chinese. China is a far more honourable nation than Japan. . . . We should pause to think how much Japan is historically indebted to China. Westerners often say by way of compliment that they like the Japanese but not the Chinese. How stupid it is to rejoice over such flattery; it is like rejoicing at hearing a neighbour being slandered to whom one owes a debt of gratitude.”¹⁶

In 1902 the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance was signed in London. The event was celebrated in Japan because it meant that Japan had taken her place among the world powers. In subsequent school textbooks this treaty was always cited as a symbol of Japan's entry into the community of advanced nations. In particular these books always refer to Britain as the most industrialised country, with its forest of factory chimneys and well-developed transport network.

Sōseki, who in 1902 was still in London, and complaining of the suffocating smogs and the infernal noise of the underground,¹⁷ took a more detached view. In a letter to his father-in-law he wrote: “. . . I read in the newspapers that a great fuss is being made in Japan over the Treaty. It's just like a poor peasant family making much ado in celebrating a matrimonial alliance with a magnate family. Nowadays in international affairs, naturally, national interests outweigh moral principles. . . .”¹⁸ Sōseki was no anti-establishment radical. But clearly the views of the state-authorized textbooks were not shared by some intellectuals. By this time there had developed in Japan an intelligentsia in the proper sense of the word, namely, those whose knowledge and moral conviction had made social outsiders.

Between 1903 and 1930 the images of foreign countries as found in school textbooks underwent no radical change. Images became stereotyped: the British love plain and steady living, are attached to traditional ways, are proud of their country and make much of the navy; the Germans are plain, frugal and patriotic, and take great account of education, learning and the army; the Americans are progressive and philanthropic and lay a stress on education and research only second to that of the Germans; the French are cheerful, love art and elegance and work passionately but capriciously; and so on and so forth. I need not continue. These sorts of stereotypes are not only found in Japanese textbooks.

The 1930s witnessed a growing militarism and ultranationalism in Japan, accompanied by increasing international isolation as a result of the Japanese invasion of China. In order to justify the change in Japan's international position and to convince the new generation of the necessity of preparing for war, and of sacrificing themselves for the sake of the state, the Ministry of Education several times revised and recompiled the textbooks, especially those in the fields of history, geography and civics. In the primary school textbooks, both the 1935 edition of the history textbook and the 1936 edition of the geography textbook make China out to be the villain of the piece. Thus the League of Nations' condemnation of the Japanese intervention in Manchuria and the setting up of the puppet state of Manchukuo,

¹⁶ Natsume, S.: *Nikki*, Meiji 34-nen Sangatsu 15-nichi (*Diary*, March 15, 1901).

¹⁷ Natsume, S.: “Rondon Shōsoku” (Corresponding from London), *Hototogisu*, 1901.

¹⁸ Letter from Kinnoyuke Natsume to Shigeichi Nakane, March 15, 1902, published in Sōseki's *Shokanshū* (*Letters*).

and the consequent Japanese withdrawal from the League are all blamed on the machinations of the Chinese of Geneva and elsewhere. As for the disarmament conferences in Washington and London, in 1921 and 1930 respectively, the following account was given: "Japan promised, together with the United States, Britain, France and Italy, progressively to reduce naval armaments for the sake of world peace." According to the 1941 edition of the history textbook and the 1939 edition of the geography textbook, the two conferences were held "with the wicked intention, on the part of the Western powers, and especially Britain and the United States, to check Japan's well-deserved development." Thus "Japan had regretfully to repudiate in 1934 the Agreements with the United States, owing to the requirements of national defence in the changed international circumstances."

This manipulation of school textbooks by the state culminated in the 1943 edition of the history textbook for fifth and sixth years, and the 1943 and 1944 editions of the geography textbook for fifth and sixth years. Here I can claim a first-hand knowledge since I was in the fifth and sixth years of primary school in 1943-5. These textbooks were banned in September 1945 by the Allied occupation authorities: hence I belong to the only class which thoroughly studied these books, which represent the culmination of Japanese ultranationalism and militarism.

From the point of view of the history of the textbook, they contain many interesting and innovative points, but, in practice they had little effect: they were only in use for one or two years, and even children in the fifth and sixth years of primary school were very often mobilised to do farm or other work in order to release soldiers for the front, and, in my experience, in a suburb of Tokyo, in 1944 and 1945 classes were interrupted by repeated air-raids and naval bombardments virtually every day. Textbook descriptions of foreign countries were one thing: but when that same outside world started dropping bombs on you the books lost much of their impact!

Geography in these textbooks is limited to that of East and Southeast Asia and Oceania, namely the so-called "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*). At the beginning of the geography textbook there is shown, instead of the conventional Mercator projection map, a specific projection map deliberately centred on Japan, and her position is explained geopolitically to be "apt for extending her influence northward and southward, westward and eastward." Except for the emphasis on Japan's geopolitical advantages, there are neither environmentalist nor racial interpretations. Everywhere the activities of Japanese emigrants are exaggerated. For Hawaii we read:

". . . in the island of Oahu, in the gentle valleys between volcanoes there are vast fertile fields where many Japanese live. In all the Hawaiian Islands there are 170,000 Japanese; this corresponds to 40% of the total population. Because many economic activities are in the hands of the Japanese we can consider Hawaii as Japanese Islands."

This is an example of the demagogic contents of the textbook. It is, of course, well-known that Japanese-Americans, including those from Hawaii, were amongst the bravest American soldiers in World War II, despite the fact that their families, unlike those of Italian- or German-Americans, suffered discriminatory treatment.

In the history textbook there is, for the first time in a Japanese textbook, an explicit accusation of Western colonialism: "From about 400 years ago, first Portugal and Spain,

and then Holland, Britain and Russia, and finally the United States [what about France?] have greatly exploited East Asia. Japan quickly saw through their intrigues and firmly defended herself, and has acted as an encouragement to other East Asian countries in striving to oust Western powers from East Asia.”

In the description of India we read:

“. . . the majority of Indian people live in really miserable conditions because India came under British rule 130 years ago. Nowadays 380 million Indians are governed by less than 200,000 Britishers. . . . The British deliberately make the Hindus and Moslems hostile to each other and also divide India into directly-ruled areas and princely states in order to prevent India gaining its independence. . . . Now is the time for these poor Indians to rise up. Our work of constructing Great East Asia aims at letting each Asian people have their due status. This is the future task of us Japanese.”

The British policy of “Divide and Rule” was well-known in academic circles but had never appeared in textbooks at primary school level.

After 1948, except for some model textbooks compiled by the Ministry of Education in 1948, all school textbooks were published privately under the ministerial approval system. For each subject there are several textbooks published by different companies, but the contents of the textbooks tend to become similar, not merely because of the existence of the ministerial guidelines, but also because each company, for commercial reasons, tries to meet all the multifarious requests put forward by school teachers.

As I mentioned before, there are nowadays many sources of information on foreign countries; radio and television, a flood of publications, the increase in foreign travel, the growing numbers of foreigners visiting Japan, and so on. Yet school textbooks, even though their role has diminished, are still giving a stereotyped, sometimes exaggerated, sometimes contradictory, and sometimes out-of-date image of foreign countries. On the one hand, Britain is still “the workshop of the world,” as Denmark is the country of dairy farming and as France is the country of fashion. On the other hand, Britain is a decayed Empire, with empty and rusting dockyards and ruined cotton mills, just as Italy is a bankrupt and chaotic country infested with robbers and the mafia, or as Sweden is a social-welfare paradise. Of course, such stereotyped images go to show the difficulty of understanding a foreign country with its cultural diversity.

But what is worth noting is that, after World War II, instead of the ultranationalistic and geopolitical point of view of the pre-war and wartime period, the economic suprematist view now predominates. Here nations are compared according to economic criteria. The cult of G.N.P., which, at least until the middle of the 1970s, infected the majority of the Japanese, is clearly reflected in the school textbooks. Thus, for instance, now that Japan’s per capita G.N.P. is higher than Britain’s, Japan is therefore more advanced than Britain. As you know, G.N.P. is, in short, the total of the annual flow of goods and services. It does not represent the benefits accruing from the national heritage, even less so cultural aspects. Thus, the economic suprematists tend to ignore the fact that, even if the British standard of living nominally measured by G.N.P. is a little lower than that of the Japanese, the British enjoy substantially better and richer lives.

We can say that the Japanese have, for several decades, lacked the same sincere desire to

learn from the outside world that Meiji Japan possessed. That is, the will to learn totally, not merely the material achievements, but also the moral and cultural foundations, is no longer there.

In the behaviour of the Iwakura Mission, which I mentioned at the beginning, we can clearly see this spirit of Meiji Japan. This is the spirit we now need to restore at a time when Japan's economic, political and cultural relationships with foreign countries are superficially much closer. I believe that this newly established Jerwood programme has just such an aim: to encourage in both Britain and Japan a mutual understanding of the cultural foundations of each country.

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