

SIR HORACE RUMBOLD AND JAPAN (1909-1913)

Preface

Sir Horace George Montagu Rumbold (1869-1941) was a distinguished British diplomat¹. He was the Ambassador to Berlin between 1928 and 1933, and well-known as having warned the British Government of the danger of Hitler and National-socialism at the very early stages of the rise of Nazism. Harold Nicolson dedicated the first edition of *Diplomacy* to him, describing Rumbold as “an ideal diplomatist².”

Rumbold had a colorful diplomatic career. He was at the centre of intelligence and diplomatic activity as the Minister at Bern during the First World War, inaugurated the official relations between Britain and then newly resuscitated Poland after the war, and headed the British delegation at the reconvened Lausanne Conference in 1923. He was also an expert on evacuation; evacuated embassy for three times, in Berlin, Warsaw, and Constantinople.

Less known is the fact that he had served as the Counsellor in the Tokyo Embassy from 1909 to 1913. He had been Chargé d’Affaires there three times and had a lot of occasions to talk with the Japanese foreign ministers and prime ministers. He also had an audience of Emperor Yoshihito, although it was rare for the Chargé d’Affaires to be offered such an occasion³. In those days Japan was eager to establish a foothold in

¹ Martin Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, Heinemann, 1973, and T. G. Otte, *Sir Horace Rumbold*, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 are useful for knowing his life. The descriptions of this paper are based on the former if we do not mention otherwise.

² Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1939.

³ Yet, he was not presented to Emperor and Empress because there was no precedent Chargé d’Affaires being presented.

China commercially as well as politically. He later recalled his service in Japan “enabled me to watch the almost too rapid development of that country’s power and to realise the Japanese political and economic ambitions in the Far East and, possibly, even outside that sphere⁴.”

While in Tokyo, he kept a diary, writing down very straightforwardly his observations of the Japanese politics, people and culture⁵. His entries were not on a daily basis and were not systematic. Rather he recorded his impressions and gossip when he had a spare moment. However, his observations and impressions are of interest particularly because of his appointments as head of the mission. His diary is all the more valuable because Sir Claude MacDonald and Sir William Conyngham Greene, the Ambassadors during his tenure at Tokyo, left neither memoirs nor diaries. His diaries also show his keen interest towards home politics and international affairs. They are important sources to learn about his political principles and views towards the wider world, since he did not keep his diaries after 1914.

Early Career

Sir Horace Rumbold, the ninth baronet, was born on 5 February 1869 at St. Petersburg, as the eldest son of Sir Horace Rumbold, the eighth baronet, and Caroline Barney. His father was also a diplomat, serving as the Minister at Athens and the Hague, and then as Ambassador to Vienna (1896-1900).

⁴ Horace Rumbold, *The War Crisis in Berlin July-August 1914*, Constable, 1940, p.2.

⁵ They are included in the Papers of Sir Horace Rumbold, the Bodleian Library, Oxford University. We would like to express our gratitude to Sir Henry Rumbold for allowing us to cite from the Papers. All diary quotations in 1909 derived from MS Rumbold, dep.3, 1910 to 1911, from dep.4, 1912 to 1913, from dep.5.

Rumbold entered diplomatic service as Honorary Attaché in 1888 at the Hague where his father was Minister. In 1891 he passed with highest marks in the competitive entrance examination for the diplomatic corps. A year later he was posted to the British Agent and Consul-General at Cairo and worked under Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) until 1895. He then passed to Tehran and Vienna, coming back to Cairo from 1900 until 1907. While in Cairo he married to Ethelred Constantia (1879-1964), the daughter of Sir Edmund Douglas Veitch Fane, a diplomat, in 1905.

His superior at Cairo was again Lord Cromer. Rumbold's distinct approach to diplomacy could be described as antagonism towards Germany and confidence in the British Empire. While he inherited the former from his father, Cromer's contribution to the latter was significant as Rumbold himself said⁶: "I had served on Lord Cromer's staff at Cairo for nine and half years, and thus had ample opportunity of observing his methods of work and general outlook in affairs. This was of great value to me in the later stages of my career⁷."

Anglo-Japanese relations after the Russo-Japanese War

As his hopes for promotion in Cairo were shattered, Rumbold looked for a new post. After briefly serving in Madrid and Munich, he landed in Japan in May 1909. At that time, Anglo-Japanese relations were considered to be good. The two countries had concluded the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and strengthened their commitment to each other in the renewed alliance during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Their

⁶ As for the relations between Rumbold and Lord Cromer, see Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁷ Rumbold, *The War Crisis in Berlin*, p.1.

close relationship was extended to the fields such as economic, cultural and royal connections⁸.

However, under the surface of friendship, the British felt the Alliance was becoming less important, due to the disappearance of a common threat, Russia. In addition, the Alliance was beginning to weaken with the Japanese expansion in the continent. Keep the “Open Door” and the “integrity of the sovereign” in China – under these slogans did Japan fight Russia. By winning the war, Japan succeeded to Russian leases in South Manchuria, but it was reluctant to open the area to other countries and rather determined to strengthen its own influence there. This was well displayed in Japan’s rejection of the internationalization scheme for Manchurian railways proposed by the US Secretary of State Philander Knox⁹. Japan approached Russia to jointly exclude the interference of other Powers. The two countries concluded an agreement in 1910, by which they affirmed the maintenance of the status quo in Manchuria. The British government took a non-committal attitude towards Manchurian affairs, but it watched the Japanese expansion in the area with some anxiety.

British journalists were also concerned about the growing tension between Britain and Japan. In May 1909, Sir Valentine Chirol, the head of the Foreign Department of *The Times*, visited Japan, accompanying G. E. Morrison, the correspondent at Peking¹⁰. According to Rumbold’s diary,

⁸ Janet Hunter and Shinya Sugiyama, “The Anglo-Japanese Economic Relations in Historic Perspective, 1600-2000: Trade and Industry, Finance, Technology and the Industrial Challenge”, in Janet Hunter and Shinya Sugiyama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Vol.4*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001; Ian Nish, “Meiji Japan’s Ascent towards world power”, STICERD Discussion Paper, 2011; Naotaka Kimizuka, *Jyooou heika no Blue Ribon*, NTT Shuppan, 2004.

⁹ Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23*, Athlone Press, 1972, pp.30-31.

¹⁰ For Chirol’s visit to Japan in 1909, see Linda B. Fritzingler, *Diplomat without Portfolio: Valentine*

Chirol realised that enthusiasm for the alliance was waning in Britain and he was anxious to stop the “dry rot” by means of *The Times*¹¹. Therefore, he told the Japanese that as in everyday life the British and Japanese didn’t come into contact with each other politically, but did so commercially, it was important that the Japanese should do nothing to impair the confidence of the English nation in Japan’s financial and commercial integrity. He was afraid that otherwise a feeling might be aroused in England which would make it difficult for any British Government to renew the alliance. Rumbold shared this anxiety, although he felt Chirol was too favourable to close cooperation with the Japanese in everything¹².

The annexation of Korea

After Japan excluded Russian influence from the Korean peninsula, it acquired the rights to guide and protect Korea by concluding the Japan-Korean treaty in 1905. Britain was not opposed to it and the following treaty in 1907. On 6 July, 1909, the Japanese cabinet decided the annexation of Korea at the appropriate time. They carefully chose the moment to disclose their intention to Britain. The British Ambassador Sir Claude MacDonald was not informed of the news until May 1910. Told by Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō, he thought that timing was inopportune in view of their refusal of Knox’s scheme¹³. The Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey sought grounds on which they could object

Chirol, His Life and The Times, London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006, pp. 334-446.

¹¹ Diary, 22 May, 1909.

¹² Diary, 31 May, 1909.

¹³ Regarding British responses to Japan’s annexation of Korea, see Nish, *The Alliance in Decline*, p.32-36.

to the annexation but in vain. In the end, he decided to give consent as long as Japan respected British economic privileges there.

Although the British government did not criticise formally, suspicion loomed especially among diplomats posted in the Far East¹⁴. Sir John Jordan, the Minister at Peking, feared the Japanese would pursue similar ambitions in Manchuria. Rumbold noted in his diary that he “cannot think why they can’t remain satisfied with their present position in Korea [sic] which is a far stronger one than ours in Egypt¹⁵.” When the annexation of Korea was proclaimed in August, he wrote, “Japan now becomes a continental Power and I wonder how that role will suit her¹⁶.”

In the midst of scepticism, MacDonald’s pro-Japanese inclination stood out. He made a visit of inspection to Korea in November, and came back satisfied with the manner in which the annexation had been carried out. Rumbold commented: ‘his pro-Japanese bias comes in here¹⁷.’ Macdonald’s tendency to be prone to pro-Japanese attitudes was vigilantly watched at the Foreign Office¹⁸. Rumbold had a good relationship with MacDonald, and successfully impressed him to take a cautious approach to the Japanese on some occasions. It resulted in a policy of careful vigilance wrapped in a pro-Japanese outlook. This was observed on the question of the third renewal of the Alliance. Tokyo Embassy objected to the early renewal, a policy implemented in London.

¹⁴ Sochi Naraoka, *Tai-ka Nijuuikkajo Yokyu to ha Nandattanoka*, Nagoya University Press, 2015, pp.47-50.

¹⁵ Diary, 21 May, 1910.

¹⁶ Diary, 29 August, 1910.

¹⁷ Diary, 20 Nov. 1910.

¹⁸ 1 Dec. 1910, Gilbert, p.87.

The renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance

The Alliance was renewed in 1911, well in advance of its termination date of 1915. It was due to the American proposal of arbitration arrangement to Britain in early January 1911¹⁹. As there was a need to reconcile discord between a proposed arbitration arrangement and the Alliance with Japan, Grey informed Kato of the American proposal. The Japanese government was reluctant to commit itself to an arbitration arrangement, but desired to extend the term of the Alliance and modify the article on Korea on this occasion. Grey brought the matter to the Cabinet and on 29 March, they agreed the alliance should be extended for another 10 years.

Tokyo Embassy was not consulted on early renewal of the Alliance at this stage. As Rumbold received the news, he was doubtful. His opinion was “let the present alliance run its natural term and before it expires we shall see more clearly what line our Japanese friends are taking or are going to take in Manchuria and elsewhere. If this line is likely to embarrass us with China and other Powers we should then drop Japan²⁰.” Rumbold was sceptical about the system of alliances itself. In a letter to Cromer, he wrote, “if I had the renewal of the [Anglo-Japanese] alliance I would not renew for more than 5 years, which would bring us to 1920. Events move too quickly nowadays for long-term alliances²¹.”

MacDonald prepared a note of warning against the renewal. In a telegram dated on 5 April, he suggested a wait-and-see policy to decide

¹⁹ For the renewal of the Alliance, see Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan 1911-15: A Study of British Far Eastern Policy*, Macmillan, 1969, ch.1; Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, chs. 3-4.

²⁰ Diary, 18 March 1910.

²¹ Rumbold to Cromer, 17 Dec.1910, MS Rumbold, dep.14

to renew alliance or not²². Rumbold was deeply involved in drafting the telegram²³. It was, however, received coldly in London. Grey and Sir Arthur Nicolson, the Permanent Undersecretary, thought the Tokyo Embassy was judging the alliance too exclusively from the Far Eastern standpoint, and ignoring its European implications²⁴. In his reply, Grey emphasised the importance of securing both the naval assistance from Japan and an arbitration treaty with the United States. It was a time the senior hierarchy of the Foreign Office unanimously saw Germany replacing France and Russia as the threat to the European peace²⁵. If Tokyo Embassy was seeing the Alliance from the Far Eastern standpoint, Whitehall was considering it from the European perspective.

The negotiation was mainly conducted in London between Grey and Kato Takaaki, the Japanese Ambassador, from April to July. Meanwhile, Rumbold was in charge of the embassy as MacDonald went back for the coronation of King George V. He attended an interview with Komura. He thought an article on the mutual defence of the Indian and Korean frontiers objectionable, for the reason that it would produce a bad effect on Indian people²⁶. He requested its omission, and at the meeting with Komura on 6 July, he was told it was dropped from the revised draft. That was his last meeting with Komura. "Komura looked worn and ill," he noted on that day.

²² Nish "Claude MacDonald," p.90.

²³ Diary, 5 April 1910. "Sir C., Hampden and I have been making de la plus haute politique this morning as a result of which a long telegram has gone home which will somewhat startle the F.O. Sir C. has sounded a very necessary note of warning but it may be too late as our people seem to have committed themselves very far. Am thoroughly enjoying helping to pull the strings in a matter of the highest importance."

²⁴ Lowe, *Britain and Japan*, p.42; Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p.56

²⁵ Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 2nd ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp.188-189.

²⁶ Diary, 6 July 1911.

On the news of Komura's death four months later, he wrote to his father, "he [Komura] was one of Japan's leading men²⁷."

On 13 July, the renewed Alliance was signed in London. Its article implicitly stated Britain would not be obliged to enter a war with the United States. A month later, the Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty was signed on 3 August. However, the Senate resented the treaty which would curb its power to give consent to diplomatic policy, passed the treaty with reservations which were not acceptable to both US and British Governments. In the end, the Arbitration Treaty was not ratified, and the very objective for which the British renewed the Alliance was not achieved.

The reaction of the Japanese public to the renewed alliance was ambivalent²⁸. Rumbold concluded that it "had been received coldly, rather than otherwise. The J's do not share our enthusiasm (or the enthusiasm of our Govt) for unlimited arbitration. We have got all we wanted and are only concerned to keep it. They are a growing Power and wouldn't admit that they had got all they wanted. There lies the difference²⁹." The third Alliance started in a less cordial atmosphere.

The renewal of the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty

Three months before the third Alliance treaty was signed, the Anglo-Japan Commerce and Navigation treaty was concluded on 3 April 1911. By signing the treaty, Japan obtained tariff autonomy, a long desired achievement for the Meiji government. Yet the commercial treaty

²⁷ Rumbold to his father, 27 Nov. 1911, MS Rumbold, dep.15.

²⁸ For the detailed account of press reaction, see Kobayashi Michihiko, *Taisho Seihen*, Chikura Shobo, 2015, pp.300-301.

²⁹ Rumbold to his father, 5 August 1911, MS Rumbold, dep.15.

negotiation disclosed antagonism towards Japan among commercial circles and Japan had to acquiesce in the British demands in order not to affect the alliance negotiations.

Japan's basic strategy for the commercial treaty renewal was, among 12 countries with which it expected negotiations, to grant conventional tariffs only to major protectionist Powers, namely, France, Germany and Italy. Britain, the Japanese argued, being a free-trade country, did not have something to offer in return, Japan would not be obliged to arrange conventional tariffs with them.

Japan's lack of sensitivity to British exports irritated the British commercial and industrial circles. After the Japanese treaty proposal became public in the spring of 1910, the Board of Trade received many complaints from chambers of commerce and Far-Eastern trading companies³⁰.

The Japanese proposal embarrassed the Liberal government of Herbert Asquith. The tariff reformers argued that a free trade country was at a disadvantage at the negotiating table³¹. Free traders, on the other hand, accused tariff reformers for utilising the issue of the Japanese tariff to strengthen their position at home³². Observing their disputes, Rumbold concluded, "They [Japanese] have given our Tariff Reformers an excellent weapon³³."

³⁰ The National Archives, BT55/1, Memorandum on New Japanese Customs Tariff, Summary of representations received by the Board of Trade with regard to the proposed new Japanese custom tariff, pp.1-18.

³¹ *The British and Tariff Reform Journal*, 2 July 1910, p.17, 3 Sept, 1910, pp.223-224.

³² *Free Trader*, 18 Aug. 1910, pp.8-9.

³³ Diary, 2 July 1910.

From July, the negotiation started in London but it was soon locked in stalemate. Britain proposed a scheme by which she would guarantee free trade status to major Japanese exports while Japan granted low conventional tariff to major British exports. But the Japanese rejected it as non-reciprocal. There were growing antagonisms toward Japan in Britain over tariff negotiation. Rumbold observed: "There is no doubt that the popularity of the Alliance has waned and that the Japanese are becoming increasingly unpopular."

The Japanese press criticised their government for hurting the feelings of their Ally over the commercial issue. In order to break this stalemate, Ambassador Kato strongly advised Komura to compromise on the tariff convention³⁴. He was afraid the entanglement over tariffs would exacerbate the relations with Britain. Rumbold sensed the change in tide by the autumn. "The Japanese Government seem to be trying to find a way of meeting us in regard to their new tariff³⁵." In November, Komura, who once was convinced that reciprocity should be achieved, abandoned such belief and acquiesced³⁶. The negotiation picked up and the new commercial treaty was signed with a tariff convention attached. The process of commercial negotiation shows the British government treated its commercial and political interests in the Far East intertwined to each other and demanded Japan compromise in order to reconcile the controversy at home over free trade.

Observations on social events in Tokyo

³⁴ Gaimusho ed., *Nihon Gaikobunsho, Tsuho Joyaku Kankei*, 1-1, nos.249, 252.

³⁵ Diary, 6 Oct. 1910.

³⁶ *Nihon Gaikobunsho Tsuho Joyaku Kankei*, 1-1, no.257.

Reflecting a period of good relations between Britain and Japan, distinguished figures visited each other's countries and a variety of social events for displaying their mutual friendship or respect were often held in both countries. Rumbold's diary covers his observations on the social events in Tokyo.

In November 1909, Horatio Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of India, came to Japan after visiting Manchuria and Korea. Japanese people enthusiastically welcomed Kitchener and all the generals in Tokyo headed by Field Marshal Oyama Iwao met him at Shimbashi station in Tokyo³⁷. Between 2 and 9 November, Rumbold was invited to two lunches and five dinners held to entertain Kitchener. He did not like Japanese food and some of the occasions bored him because they lasted such a long time, but the dinner party sponsored by the Japan-British Society on 15 November impressed him. After dinner, the attendants watched more than eighty geisha girls dancing. According to his diary, they practically had the pick of the geisha from all over Tokyo and MacDonald and his secretary, Davidson, whom Rumbold described as an expert, said that they had never seen such a good and large collection before. He concluded his diary of the day by writing "We then broke up after one of the best evenings known in Tokyo."³⁸

Rumbold's diary depicts how the British royals occupied a special place in the Japanese public opinion. Upon the death of Edward VII on 6 May 1910, the Japanese expressed deep sorrow. On the day the service for the late King took place in Tokyo, "the Banks were shut and flags half-masted everywhere. All the trams flew little British and Japanese flags

³⁷ Diary, 2 Nov. 1909.

³⁸ Diary, 15 Nov. 1909.

draped with crape. In some streets every house had hung out a flag draped with crape and there were any number of houses which displayed the flags of both countries crossed³⁹.” The memorial service was attended by the Japanese Crown Prince and Princess, Japanese officials, and the diplomatic corps. The next day, the Buddhist memorial service was held for the King at Nishi-Honganji. Rumbold described the proceedings in detail and wrote: “we were greatly impressed. Never before has a service of this kind been held in honour of a foreign sovereign⁴⁰.”

The coronation of George V took place on 22 June. For this occasion, Rumbold, as Charge d’Affaires, organised a garden party. The feature of the day was the enormous lantern procession in which 20,000 people took part. “There was one continuous roar of cheering” Rumbold wrote, “and I shall never again be cheered by so many thousand people⁴¹.” Mutual respect between two countries began to soar, and Japanese popular sentiment toward Britain remained cordial.

Observations on Japanese politics

Rumbold had access to the very top of the Japanese government and gives us sharp insights into Japanese politics. One of the notable accounts in Rumbold’s diary is his attendance at the court for “the High Treason Incident”, in which 26 men were arrested for the plot against the Emperor in 1910. He applied to observe the courtroom proceedings and was allowed by the court. The Japanese government was anxious to evade the accusation by other Powers that it was trying to process the

³⁹ Diary, 20 May 1910.

⁴⁰ Diary, 21 May 1910.

⁴¹ Diary, 22 May 1911.

case behind closed doors. It remained vague to him for what sin these men were convicted, because it was only referred as “High Treason.” Yet, overall he thought the case was conducted in a fair manner and the accused were well represented⁴². His report sent to the Foreign Office was read out in parliament as evidence that the Japanese judicial system was functioning properly when Keir Hardie, the Labour MP, demanded that the government should complain to Japan over the “barbaric” court decision.

In 30 July 1912 Emperor Mutsuhito died. Rumbold considered his death would open a new era for Japanese monarchy. On the Emperor’s death, he commented: “it may be safely said that he will have been the last Emperor to retain the semi-sacred character of his office and that the attitude of the Japanese nation towards succeeding Emperors will be more or less free from any element of worship⁴³.” Regarding the new Emperor Yoshihito, he pointed out “As far as can be seen at present and, having in view the prevalence of European and American ideas, loyalty to the Throne is more likely to be stimulated by satisfactory economic conditions than by appeals to Shintoism⁴⁴.”

After the new emperor acceded to the throne, the political situation began to collapse. In December 1912 the problem of the expansion of armaments triggered the collapse of the second Saionji administration and Marquis Katsura Taro succeeded to the premiership. But the majority of the press was fiercely opposed to the formation of the new government as it saw the new prime minister pulling the strings. As a result, heated

⁴² Diary, 28 Dec. 1910.

⁴³ Diary, 30 July 1912. Emperor’s funeral took place on 13 September. Foreign delegates from 20 countries attended, which included Prince Arthur of Connaught from Britain and Knox from the US. 500 men of guards of honour from China squadron of the Royal Navy took the part in the funeral procession. Kampo, especial edition, 14 Sept. 1912; Diary, 10 Oct. 1912.

⁴⁴ Annual report of Japan for 1912, Rumbold dep.15.

public opinion led to the downfall of the cabinet in February 1913. Rumbold watched this political crisis with great interest. He concluded that Japan was walking its way toward constitutional government, if not yet fully. In the annual report on Japan for 1912, he wrote, “The manner in which Marquis Saionji resigned office gave a marked impetus to the movement in favour of constitutional Government as understood in the Western Europe. But it must be remembered that the introduction of complete constitutional Government would mean a break with the methods of Government which have been in force in Japan for many century past. ... An abrupt change in the methods of governing this country would, especially in view of the inexperience and want of personality of the new sovereign be a dangerous experiment. It may be assumed, therefore, that the evolution towards complete constitutional Government will be gradual and made up of small endeavours all tending to the same end⁴⁵.”

Departure of the MacDonalds and Arrival of the Greenes

Having spent 12 years in Japan and with the Alliance in force, MacDonald had unrivalled influence on the Japanese Foreign Ministry among foreign diplomats⁴⁶. Rumbold once described the Ambassador as “persona grata with the Japanese Government⁴⁷.” “He certainly had considerable personal influence with this Government and could talk to them in a way they would not have stood from any other Ambassador or

⁴⁵ Annual report on Japan for the year 1912, MS Rumbold, dep.15.

⁴⁶ Nish, “Sir Claude MacDonald,” in Hugh Cortazzi, Ian Nish, Peter Lowe and J. E. Hoare (eds), *British Envoys in Japan, 1859-1972*, Japan Society, 2004, pp.94-102.

⁴⁷ Diary, 19 May 1910.

Minister⁴⁸.” When he left Japan on 4 November 1912, the Japanese press unanimously expressed their gratitude to him for his efforts to promote Anglo-Japanese understanding. On the day of MacDonalds’ departure, all members of the cabinet, the Elder Statesmen, and the entire diplomatic corps gathered at Shimbashi station to see them off⁴⁹. Rumbold wrote to his father, “I was never more sorry to say goodbye to anybody⁵⁰.” He wrote a report emphasizing MacDonald’s contributions to Anglo-Japanese relations and sent it to the Foreign Office which he felt did not appreciate enough the significance of his chief’s role.

The successor, Sir William Conyngham Greene, arrived at Tokyo in March 1913⁵¹. Rumbold had known him when they were serving together at Tehran. Greene had a calm personality and could see East Asian affairs from a fresh perspective⁵². On the other hand, he could not exert as much weight on the Japanese government as his predecessor and had found himself in a difficult position to restrain Japan’s ambitions in China. Anglo-Japanese relations grew strained mainly due to the friction on the continent during his tenure at Tokyo.

Rumbold leaves Japan

By the middle of 1911 Rumbold was anxious to be transferred to Europe, partly because he was afraid of losing touch with European affairs, and partly because he wanted to be near to his aging father. As he wrote

⁴⁸ Diary, 5 Nov. 1912.

⁴⁹ Diary, 4 Nov. 1912.

⁵⁰ Rumbold to his father, 10 Nov. 1912, MS Rumbold dep.15.

⁵¹ *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 6 March 1913.

⁵² Peter Lowe, “Sir William Conyngham Greene,” in Hugh Cortazzi, Ian Nish, Peter Lowe and J. E. Hoare (eds), *British Envoys in Japan*, pp.103-113.

in his diary, he was “rather tired of the place, its politics and its people.”⁵³ While the new Ambassador settled in, he thought it was time for him to go. Frustrated that no favourable reply came from the Foreign Office, he decided to apply for leave and returned home to wait for his next posting.

Learning that he would not come back to Japan, Japanese people invited him to farewell parties day after day. On 7 June, Makino Nobuaki, the Foreign Minister, held a lunch in honour of Rumbold, collecting about 30 people including Prince Tokugawa Iesato, the President of the House of the Peers⁵⁴. It was an unusual compliment to be given to a departing Counsellor.

Rumbold left Tokyo on 12 July 1913, with nothing definite for the next posting. But it turned out that his work in Tokyo was appreciated in London; the annual report for 1912 he had written was highly rated. Gregory, the head of the Far Eastern Department, told him it was “not pigeon-holed as so many of these reports are⁵⁵.” In the autumn, he was posted to Berlin as Counsellor, where he was to witness the outbreak of the First World War.

Conclusion

In Rumbold’s diary, both affection towards the Japanese and distrust towards their diplomatic policy are observable. Britain was still popular among the Japanese public although discord over their policies was becoming evident. Rumbold watched the Japanese policies in Korea and

⁵³ Diary, 24 April 1913.

⁵⁴ Diary, entry under 3 May 1913, with the comment, “(The following portions of this diary were written up some 4 months afterwards.)”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

China carefully. He observed that Japan acquiesced with Britain over the tariff negotiations in order not to undermine the Alliance and understood the Alliance functioned as a lever to restrain Japan's activities. He was then strongly opposed to the early renewal of the Alliance from the fear that it would give Japan a blank cheque and encourage it to take an ambitious approach in China. He foresaw Japan's relationships with China, Russia and the US would deteriorate and its friction with China, particularly over Manchuria, would become more serious. "That day is not yet, but may be nearer than some people think⁵⁶." His prediction proved to be accurate. Japan's relations with China, Britain and the United States became increasingly intense after Japan presented the "Twenty-one demands" to the Chinese government in 1915.

He also noted how the Japanese were "wounded by" the land law of the Californian legislature, which excluded Japanese immigrants from owning lands in California. "The people feel that after, and in spite of, the heavy sacrifices they have made in two wars and of their position as a Great Power, they are not yet treated on a footing of equality with the subjects of other Powers⁵⁷." This feeling of inequality eventually led Japan to challenge the European-oriented international order and fight the Second World War on the side of the Axis. Rumbold never came back to Japan and died without witnessing the outbreak of the war in 1941.

⁵⁶ Diary, 29 August 1910.

⁵⁷ Diary, entry under 3 May 1913.

JAPAN'S SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY: The Twenty-one Demands of 1915

On 18 January 1915 the Japanese minister to China called on the President of the Chinese Republic, Yuan Shikai, and passed over his country's 21 Demands. Historians love anniversaries and centenaries which enable them to look afresh and reassess past events. This topic has not been the subject of much attention this year. But it has seen the appearance of an expert study by Professor Naraoka Sochi.. I shall offer some thoughts on that aspect of Japan's Demands. The topic is politically controversial and is clouded by discrepancies in the Japanese and Chinese views of the event. As so often in history, the issue is not clearcut. In Japan as in China opinion was divided and diverse and deserves a further look. (1)

When war began in Europe in August 1914, the statesmen of Japan hailed it as a moment of opportunity for their country. Inoue Kaoru, the senior civilian member of the Elder Statesmen, spoke of it as the blessing of the gods for the Emperor of Japan (tenyu). Like many others he thought of it as an invitation to consolidate Japan's expansion on the continent of Asia and possibly extend it. But the wise men of Europe were saying that the war would be over by Christmas and so the Japanese had to be quick in seizing the occasion. Opportunity was knocking but it had to be grasped straight away. They declared war on Germany on 23 August.

Turning to China, 1915 was a bad time for the Chinese Republic which had only come into being in October 1911. She found herself on the worst possible terms with Japan which had joined the allied powers fighting Germany in Europe. The Chinese authorities were broadly in favour of

the Allies but it is thought the military was pro-German. As part of her cooperation with the Allies, Japan announced that she would attack the German fortress of Tsingtao in Shantung province and drive out the Germans from their leased territory. President Yuan offered to join forces in the operation. But the offer was not accepted and the Japanese invaded part of Shantung province.

China took the precaution of declaring a neutral zone and defining a war zone only in Germany's leased territory in eastern Shantung. But the Japanese army, despite the navy's objections, announced that Tsingtao could not be captured without an approach from the rear over a broad swathe of Chinese territory well outside the war zone. Its armies landed at Lungkow on the north of the province on 2 September. They occupied Weih sien, an important junction on the German-owned Qinan-Qingdao railway line. This was a prelude to the occupation of the whole of the track. Shortly the Japanese army took over the Shantung railway as far west as Tsinan on the ground that it was being used by Germans to move reinforcements and armaments from central China to Tsingtao. So the needs of the war were used as the justification for the invasion of Chinese territory. The British Minister, Sir John Jordan, raised the matter rather sarcastically with his Japanese colleague, Hioki Eki:

‘As Tsinan lies in the opposite direction to Tsingtao, the need for this move was at least questionable and Mr Hioki did not deny that Japan's actions ran counter to the spirit of her assurances. He was, or professed to be, much upset.’

The campaign was dogged by heavy rains and abominable flooding. A small German force of less than one thousand was no match for a Japanese expedition of 20 thousand. The Japanese army was exhilarated

by its success over Germany, regarded as the leading military power in 1914. But in order to minimize hostility by the Yuan regime, it enforced tight discipline on its troops. According to one military observer, “The conduct of Japanese soldiers who were mainly billeted in Chinese houses was reasonable except for the odd instance of rape and violence.” (2).

Britain sent small contingents from Tientsin and Hongkong consisting mainly of a few hundred infantry from the South Wales Borderers and a company of Sikhs which were placed nominally under the command of General Kamio. But they were told not to collaborate with the Japanese. They landed at a different location, Laoshan Bay, within the Tsingtao perimeter and did not therefore violate the limits set by the Chinese government for military operations. Despite all London’s diplomatic assurances to the contrary, this small force was intended to serve as a restraint on the Japanese military activities. This was not, however, how the Chinese saw the ‘joint operation’. They referred to it thereafter as ‘the Anglo-Japanese attack on Tsingtao.’ On the other hand, the Japanese press condemned Britain’s purpose as designed to limit Japan’s ambitions.

DEMANDS COMPILED AND PRESENTED

Tsingtao fell after heavy artillery bombardment on 7/8 November. While this difficult campaign was being fought, Japan was active in planning for the future. A key figure was Hioki Eki (1861-1926) who took up his appointment as minister in Peking in 26 August. The new minister was presented with a list of outstanding topics unresolved between China and Japan countries for the purpose of clearing up various matters, i.e. “*Tai Chugoku shomondai kaiketsu no tame*”. Hioki approved of their being referred to Tokyo. (3)

Work in the Foreign Ministry came under the control of the new Okuma ministry which had come into power in April 1914. Kato Takaaki (1860-1926) was the new foreign minister and Koike Chozo who had been Seimukyokucho since Oct 1913 was chosen to prepare the necessary documentation. The Foreign Ministry received advice and contributions from the military (including the general staff and the army in Manchuria), the parties, finance and business circles and the general public. There were forces all around wanting to take advantage of the Opportunity created by the preoccupation of foreign countries involved in the European war. Many memoranda told government what price it should demand from China for liberating her territory from the Germans. (4) Important too were the views of the Elder Statesmen, partly supportive, partly hostile, though the Foreign Ministry did not regard them as superceding others.

After Germany had surrendered, Hioki was recalled to Tokyo and instructed to prepare a formal list of demands to be put to China which would coordinate all the advice Kasumigaseki had been receiving. He went back to Peking a month later with instructions to present to the Chinese president 14 demands (yokyu joko) and 7 wishes (kibo joko, desiderata) The wishes were described as 'nozomashii' and were in some ways most far-reaching. They were to be included in Group V which was to become the most controversial part of the submission. Clearly Kato and Hioki were personally involved in drawing up the terms. But there seems to have come a moment when both realized that they were the ones who would have to negotiate with the Chinese and deliver results for all these influential groups in Japanese society. I suspect that they toned down the

21 Demands which became in fact the Lowest Common Denominator of Japan's aspirations. (5)

Kato's approach to China in 1914-15 was uncharacteristic of him. He was an experienced and accomplished diplomat and foreign minister before he began to operate as a political party leader. Kato was content at this juncture when he had hopes of repairing Sino-Japanese relations merely to produce a compendium of suggestions by other parties. Merely to compile Demands on the basis of what interest groups had put forward was a bizarre way to present a case. We may speculate that the reason was that Japan's Elder Statesmen who had not been formally consulted stepped in during September and protested to Prime Minister Okuma about Kato's high-handed and uncommunicative style. What was required, they argued, was a more consensual approach, consulting interested parties. The genro in general were deeply hostile to Kato, the man, his methods and the slant of some of the Demands. The personal standpoint of Yamagata Aritomo, the chief genro, was to support the Okuma Ministry's view that Manchuria was 'Japan's life-line' but to criticize some of the things being demanded from China as trivial and demeaning to Japan. He showed the drift of his opposition in his later remarks :

“while the nation must resort to arms when it is involved in a national peril, it would disgrace the honour of Japan.....to apply force on China for the disposition of such trifling matters as the acceptance of foreign advisers...as stated in Article [group] V of the current negotiations. Thus I have been making every effort to halt the present negotiations.” (6)

When Hioki returned, President Yuan was away from the capital for two weeks. One wonders why. I suggest that Yuan's advisers sensed that

something was afoot. It seemed odd that days after Japan's victory at Tsingtao, Hioki should be recalled to Tokyo and stay there for almost a month. From Peking's standpoint it would be advantageous for Yuan to take a short break from the capital. The best that Hioki could do was to recommend to Tokyo that an audience should be sought in the middle of January. The delay was, therefore, largely caused by the Chinese. But it also suited Kato who did not want to start negotiations while the Japanese expeditionary force were still not withdrawn from Shantung. That would give the army too much power on the spot at a critical time.

When Hioki eventually met Yuan on 18 January, he presented the case in terms of friendship and common mutual objectives. He is alleged to have said: 'You have the reputation of being the arch-enemy of my country. By granting these requests, you will clear yourself of that reputation and gain the lasting friendship of Japan.' He called for complete secrecy and recommended that there should be no disclosure, in other words, no leakages to the Diplomatic Body or the press. WH Donald as interim - Times correspondent and editor of the Far Eastern Review, writes: 'The Chinese were scrupulous not to let the 21 Demands out to the press' in the short term. GE Morrison's letters agree with this. This runs in the face of many books which talk of leakages taking place straight away. In past crises China had commonly sought help from the foreign press and friendly countries. In fact that did not take place in 1915. Yuan kept the terms close to his chest for a while, partly because of the Japanese warning and partly because China had no reliable friends. Peking journalists from the world's press who suspected that something was in the wind but could not extract anything from the president's office.

Japanese journalists who had no hope of getting information from Tokyo could make no headway in Peking. (7)

THE DEMANDS

In Article 1 of Japan's agenda pride of place went to the future of the territory which surrounded the port of Tsingtao and more broadly the province of Shantung. There clearly had to be some agreement to settle administrative matters before the military occupation could end and the railway which was being controlled by Japanese troops could be regulated. China had called for the Japanese troops to be withdrawn as soon as the Germans surrendered; but it soon became clear that the Japanese proposed to keep some troops in the province. Control of the former German railway was all-important to the Japanese strategists. They saw that it would be valuable to control Tsinan, the provincial capital, because the proposed extension of the Shantung railway to a point on the Peking–Hankow line would enable it to become the centre of railways from the four points of the compass. In an age of continental railways that was an important consideration for army officers. In Tsinan Consul Pratt's view was that the Japanese were 'in military occupation of a railway zone in Shantung from which they hoped to dominate the whole province just as they dominated Manchuria from the zone of the South Manchurian Railway.' (8)

Group 2 of the demands concerned Manchuria with which Kato in particular was primarily concerned. He had discussed that territory with Sir Edward Grey in January 1913 when he was leaving London after a spell as ambassador. Kato had put to the British foreign secretary that in 1905 Japan had lost many lives and much money in rescuing Manchuria from the hands of the Russians and returning it to China. But under the

Sino-Japanese Treaty of December 1905, there were only 10 years of Japan's Kwantung lease still to run; and when the lease expired in 1923, no government in Japan would be strong enough to give the territory back to China in the face of public opinion. Grey limited himself to saying that he saw the difficulty which Japan would face without either approving or disapproving. Grey had not demurred. Japan wanted an extension of the period of the Japanese lease in Manchuria beyond 1923 so that investment could continue.

Manchuria also featured in the notorious Group V which was not revealed in the first tranche. Described by Kato as 'miscellaneous' and considered in a different category, it covered land-holding, advisers, police, the rights of Japanese resident and officials, the right to promote religion and was especially targeted at Manchuria. China appealed to the Powers against Japan's Demand that she use Japanese political, financial and military advisers; employ Japanese police; purchase weapons from Japan; give Japanese rights to build railways between major cities; and allow Japanese Buddhist missionaries to preach. Some scholars who say how harsh these Japanese 'requests' were, have been rebuked by others with the counterargument that such privileges were basically the same as most colonial powers were already enjoying in their Informal Empires. It is certainly true that Group V combines some features which Britain enjoyed in Egypt (which had just become a dependency). (9)

PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

The two sides embarked on a lengthy set of 25 negotiating sessions (which lasted until 26 April). There was much prevarication on the Chinese side and much thumping on the table by Japan. Foreign journalists

inferred from their interviews that the thumping was the role of Obata, the legation counsellor in Peking rather than Hioki. They concluded that “Obata rather than Hioki was Japan’s main spokesman and was known for his aggressiveness” and that it was quite noticeable how Obata seemed to dominate Hioki. (10) The Demands were passed over to foreigners, just before the first conference on 2 February. Japan had passed them to Britain rather earlier, but the notorious Group V was withheld a little longer on the ground that it was only a talking point. (11) Chinese officials now did everything they could to leak demands internally to newspaper editors as well as overseas. Chinese students studying in Japan protested about the Demands at demonstrations. “Chinese public opinion was aroused to an unprecedented extent”. The impact of Chinese opinion on Japan’s negotiations is difficult to assess but one can say that some concessions were made. (12)

In the face of this resistance, the Okuma ministry increased the number of troops stationed in South Manchuria and in Shantung (*Santo Shubihei*). Minister Jordan estimated that Japan landed 20-30,000 men in Manchuria and at Tsingtao. This was clearly a threat which clouded the talks from then on. In Japan it was a broadly popular move and may have influenced the outcome of the general election on 25 March where Okuma did well and the rival Seiyukai party came off badly.

There was, however, widespread opposition among the elite. Senior Genro Yamagata who had no love for Kato described his feelings over Manchuria but confirmed his opposition to China policy:

“I told Kato that if it became necessary to resort to arms in order to dispose of the present Manchurian problem, I would throw my

support to the move immediately. Manchuria is for the Japanese the only region for expansion. We must secure for our people the guarantee that they can settle there and pursue their occupations in peace. If this problem cannot be disposed of by diplomatic means, then we have no alternative but to resort to arms.” (13)

On other matters he and his fellow Elder Statesmen were generally hostile.

At this critical juncture Yuan cleverly sent Dr Ariga Nagao, his Japanese political adviser, over to lobby in these upper echelons of Japanese politics. He saw Matsukata, Inoue Kaoru and ultimately Yamagata in Kyoto. Ariga knew that the Genro were making trouble, alleging lack of consultation and general disagreement with the treatment of China, and hoped to exploit the influential opposition which was undermining Kato. (14)

One effect of this was that concessions were made by Japan. Japan undertook to return Tsingtao to China at the end of the war subject to various guarantees. In the bilateral negotiations over Group V which took place at 3 sessions in April, 'Kibo' were not distinguished from 'Yokyu' but it was agreed that they would be postponed till later, i.e not cancelled. Kato had always disliked Group V and was prepared to abandon it in the light of Chinese and unanimous foreign objections. Grey had even asked his ally to withdraw Group V. (15)

The Japanese finally lost patience with China's intransigence early in May. They passed over an ultimatum (saigo tsuchoan, a final notification, a 'document of advice and hope') which had been endorsed by the cabinet, genro and the Imperial Council in the presence of the emperor. Yuan was

told to accept the amended demands less Group V by 9 May or face hostilities. This was not technically an ultimatum and one cannot estimate whether it was perceived in Peking as threatening but the presence of seasoned troops carried a message. Yuan and most of his cabinet opposed conflict with Japan and accepted the notification 2 days later in a remarkable change of tack from the rhetoric of one week earlier. The two Sino-Japanese treaties were signed on 25 May, one of which related to Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. We are concerned only with the Sino-Japanese Treaty regarding South Manchuria and the eight notes dealing with Manchuria which were exchanged between the 2 signatories.

In Article I the signatories agreed to extend the terms of the lease of Port Arthur and Dairen, and the terms relating to the South Manchurian and Antung-Mukden Railways to a period of 99 years. Clauses also provided for Japanese to hold land, travel and reside in South Manchuria and pursue with the citizens of China ventures in agriculture and industries in Eastern Inner Mongolia.

The original Group V applied to the whole of China, not just to Manchuria. After its cancellation Kato was insistent that the substance of the Demands should apply in respect of Manchuria. The Chinese agreed that “Hereafter if foreign advisers or instructors in political, military or police matters are to be employed in SM, preference will be given to Japanese.” This was one of the Group V demands that was granted. In other cases the article was not dropped but ‘postponed for later discussion’. Kato was firm in procuring a privileged position for Japanese in Manchuria but did not push other aspects so strongly. (16) Pratt who was a major observer in this whole episode as consul at Qinan and the closest foreign witness

described it as the 'emasculated treaty of August 1915', implying that the initial Demands had been watered down. (17)

Japan had tried to phrase the Demands cordially, arguing that the two countries were complementary and could derive mutual benefits. Japan took the optimistic view that the Chinese and Japanese could still be working partners in spite of the crises. But one cannot disguise the fact that the Demands were like a 'hostile takeover bid'.

Not unusually both belligerents claimed victory. Yuan claimed victory because he had forced the Japanese to climb down from their initial arrogant demands. He argued that it was vital that conflict had been avoided, because a divided China as a whole was ill-placed to take on Japan militarily. But he also had in mind his personal ambitions. Japan did not need to claim success; her gains from these China treaties were immense. But there was a spirit of dissatisfaction in Tokyo: many said she had not got enough considering how weak and divided China was and the number of casualties their forces had sustained. Japan was in a very strong position when all European powers were afraid to challenge her.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been written on the assumption that external pressure did not much count with either the Yuan government or the Okuma government. Influence is most difficult to measure. Dr Xu Guoqi, in his account of the bilateral negotiations (confirmed by Professor Tang Chihua) says China received no real support, diplomatic or military, from the Great Powers. Yuan in the main had to fight his battles for himself, mobilizing Chinese opinion as best he could through the press. The anti-Japanese

rallies in Chinese cities, the hostility of Chinese students in Japan and the boycott of Japanese goods and factories, a tactic which the Chinese were to use increasingly, were telling factors with Japan. (18) Government policy wavered because it did not have the support of a united front in Japan. There were powerful lobbies which were still active and polarized. Some were dissatisfied with the outcome, calling for more, others felt that Japan had gone too far in concessions. Kato was aware of the power and influence of those in opposition. But he also knew that the world opinion was against Japan though there were no signs of any willingness of the Powers to act together and intervene. It was important to get the talks finished, even if it meant giving up some of the demands.

It would be wrong to say that it was because of the outbreak of the first world war that the 21 Demands crisis took shape. Kato was so set in his determination to get guarantees over Manchuria that these at least would have been requested from China while he was foreign minister, whether there was war or not. The operation against the Germans in Tsingdao determined the timing of the approach and its scope; but it was only one element in the equation.

Most to suffer was Kato who was forced to resign on 10 August. He still maintained that his policies were justified. He made a speech at the University of Kyoto in 1917 which was an attempt to explain before a friendly audience, if not to justify, his particular approach. What comes over in this is Kato's primary interest in rectifying Japan's tenure in Manchuria which he explains to start with and securing guarantees for those Japanese who had invested in Manchuria, especially in the rail

network. Shantung which was to dominate Sino-Japanese affairs after 1919 was very much in second place in his thinking in 1915. (19)

Japan's international reputation suffered from the 21 Demands crisis but the rest of the world was still dependent on her goodwill while hostilities continued. In autumn 1915 when China attempted to join in the world war on the allied side as the allies had been asking and Yuan was inclined to agree in order to acquire guarantees of future Allied support, Japan blocked the manoeuvre. Thus Japan prevented China from building up too much international goodwill and got her own back from any humiliation she had suffered. (20)

1915 was certainly a moment of opportunity for Japan. But was it a turning-point in Japanese domestic history? Her problem in the first half of the twentieth century was who held political power: the army or civilians? The army had claimed more power after 1905 and was generally backed by the Choshu-dominated Elder Statesmen. It had definite ideas about continental policy: it intervened in the political process to promote colonial expansion and was obsessed by other railway developments such as the Trans-Siberian. When Japan seemed expansionist in 1900s, Ito Hirobumi or the genro had acted as restraining influences. After Ito's death in 1909, it was the Foreign Ministry which was the civilian voice of restraint. Kato was an apostle of autonomy for the Gaimusho against the genro who felt that their age and authority justified them in interfering. In 1914/15 Kato took the unusual and ill-advised course of collecting demands from far and wide and prepared a document which gave the army and entrepreneurs what they wanted. This seems to have been because Okuma told his Foreign Minister to listen to the concerns of the Elder Statesmen in the

preparation of the Demands. When the Foreign Ministry itself adopted more extremist policies, it could no longer profess to be a voice claiming to curb the extremists or pacify international opinion. Its influence was diminished thereafter.

ENDNOTES

1. Some studies on this topic are Madeleine Chi, *China Diplomacy, 1914-18*. Sochi Naraoka, *Tai Ka 15 Yokyu to nan datta no ka*, Nagoya UP, 2015; Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-15*, Macmillan, 1969, ch.VII; Frattolillo, O and Best, A, *Japan and the Great War*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015
2. John Pratt (British consul in Tsinan) in British Documents on Foreign Affairs, 1914
3. *The Correspondence of GE Morrison*, vol. II, Cambridge UP, 1978, p. 507. Morrison praises Hioki, while his friend, WH Donald, dislikes him. TF Millard, *Democracy and the Eastern Question*, Century Co, 1919, p. 90
4. According to Japanese army estimates, casualties (shishosha) were 1250; German casualties were 900.
5. FR Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-19*, Harvard, 1999, ch. 3. These are discussed in detail by Professor Naraoka, pp. 142-52
6. WT de Bary (ed.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, Columbia UP, 1958, pp.716-17
7. Morrison, *Correspondence*, II, p. 369. C.Collie, *The Reporter and the Warlords*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, pp. 124-5
8. JT Pratt, *War and Politics in China*, p.177ff. BDOFA, vol. 15, doc.392.
9. Republican China had the habit of hiring government advisers from abroad. They were, however, taken equitably one from each country (US, Britain, Japan, US etc). The Japanese new proposal was that the majority should come from Japan. See Dickinson, pp. 80-3

10. Morrison II, pp. 463 and 507.
11. Lowe, *Britain and Japan*, ch. VII
12. Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War*, Cambridge UP, 2005, p.72 .
Paula Harrell, *Sowing the Seeds of Change*, Stanford UP, 1992, p. 219
13. de Bary, p. 717
14. Lowe, *Britain and Japan*, p. 241. Paula Harrell, 'Ariga Nagao' in *Asia for the Asians: China in the Lives of 5 Meiji Japanese*, MerwinAsia, 2012, Ch. V
5. Morrison *Correspondence*, II, p. 368, 8/2/1915. 'At Saturday's meeting there was a complete change of attitude of Mr Hioki' who did not seem to push Group V
16. *China Year Book* for 1921-2
17. Pratt, pp. 176-7
18. Xu Guoqi, p. 73
19. Kato speech, 24/10/1917. It is a lengthy document and is set out in full in the appendix to Professor Naraoka's book, pp. 423-45
20. JD Gregory, memorandum of 19 May 1916 [A. Chamberlain papers]

‘THE MOST SHAKY OF OUR ALLIES’: British Propaganda in Japan during the First World War with reference to Japanese reactions to it (1)

INTRODUCTION

This study covers Anglo-Japanese relations during the Great War, when Britain resolved to do something about the deteriorating situation between the two allied nations, particularly, the anti-British and anti-alliance voices which were prevalent in Japan from the early part of the war. Although these four years may seem a short period, even seen from the twenty years of the alliance, it was crucial and the turning point of the relationship. What Britain undertook in the end was a propaganda strategy on the allied side. For the main part of this paper, I am aiming at focusing on what Britain did to alleviate the situation, what the Japanese public reactions to British propaganda were, and to what extent the propaganda was effective. This study, therefore, inevitably involves substantial research on public reactions in Japan, examining Japanese media in some details, investigating what the country's trends and inclinations were and what kinds of people were criticising Britain and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In this period, of course, 'public reactions' were expressed principally in print.

There have previously been a few authors dealing with the subject of British governments' actions in propaganda in this period researching extensively in detail, (2) on which I have often to rely so as to grasp the wide perspective in this context. However, significantly, there has been uncertainty as to Japanese reactions to British propaganda focusing on

Japan, as it has not yet been researched. It seems that, though much has been written on the Great War, it has generally been regarded as a European war, and few have touched upon Japan's participation in the war, though there have been quite a few scholarly books on its centenary to remedy this oversight.

Although this study is focused on British propaganda in Japan, it does not mean, of course, that Britain was the only country that used propaganda during the war and that Japan was the only object of British propaganda. On the contrary, British propaganda throughout the war concentrated initially on the domestic audience and neutral countries including China, but, principally, the United States in order to persuade them to join the Allied side. Many countries directly fighting the war did likewise, targeting different countries in different degrees. Conyngham Greene, British Ambassador in Tokyo, for example, reported to Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, that the French government was going to do their bit at the end of 1916 by launching a weekly journal in Tokyo, the first publication of its kind in Japan, edited by the Tokyo correspondent of the *Petit Journal* and supported by Messieurs de Vitry who was connected to *Le Temps*, in order to challenge German press policy and to stamp out pro-German sentiment in the Far East. Greene noted that the first number would contain articles written by Anatole France, Clemenceau, Pichon, Bergsen, and other well-known intellectuals. (3)

Unlike Germany, which had a well prepared and organised propaganda strategy, disseminating German ideas in many countries using various methods, Britain had been reluctant to use the press as informing and influencing medium before the First World War. No press secretary or

press bureau was in existence, although the British Foreign Office had been aware of propaganda. Edward Grey, during his period as Foreign Secretary (1906-16), did nothing to alter this until 1914, and the Foreign Office was not concerned with foreign propaganda. However, having been greatly disturbed by German malevolent propaganda, specially directed towards the United States, Britain seriously entered the field, when Lloyd George, who had always had an interest in the press, raised the matter in the cabinet in August 1914. After careful consideration, it appointed C.E.G. Masterman, who created, as head of a propaganda bureau, an office generally known as 'Wellington House'. It was the main centre of British propaganda organisation, working very effectively in secret so that even parliament was largely ignorant of its existence. A method of work was duly established: to study the foreign press and keep in touch with the trend of public opinion in a country; to translate and publish any matter likely to have a favourable effect; and to directly deal with individuals. (4) It was this first task, finding out public opinion, that the British Embassy in Tokyo concerned itself with.

By the time of the War, the Japanese media had grown enormously in terms of the number of newspapers and journals, and their circulation. Most of the press and journals, some of which were affiliated with government, mushroomed towards the end of the nineteenth century. While many newspapers tried to attract a wide spectrum of readers by providing them with popular articles, some others, particularly, small periodicals, contained high quality articles, often analytical and critical, which had been contributed by intellectuals on current affairs including politics, economics and foreign affairs. With the rise of an educated elite, the increase in general and ordinary citizens' awareness in current affairs,

and in readership, there was rising competition amongst the press and journals, despite some restrictions on the press imposed by the government. In addition, quiet gatherings of like-minded people for common purposes had become not uncommon, protesting against matters of concern. Such activities may be seen as partly responsible for government collapses such as the third Katsura cabinet in 1913 and Terauchi's in 1918. It is fitting, therefore, that this is the period generally known as 'Taishō Democracy' and the power of public opinion in Japan had reached the stage that it could no longer be ignored by governments.

On the eve of the war, the annual circulation of Japanese newspapers is believed to have been as follows: the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 350,000 copies; followed by the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, 330,000; the *Kokumin Shimbun*, 190,000; the *Jiji Shimpō*, 60,000; the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 120,000; the *Chuo Shimbun*, 110,000-120,000; the *Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun*, 110,000 -120,000; the *Hōchi Shimbun*, 240,000; the *Yamato Shimbun*, 110,000-120,000. The circulation of journals/periodicals, such as the *Taiyō*, the *Gaikō Jihō*, the *Dai Nippon*, the *Nippon Oyobi Nipponjin*, the *Yorozu Chōhō* and the *Chuō Kōron*, is difficult to estimate but was certainly much smaller than those of the major newspapers. (5) The British Embassy staff were very vigilant, keeping their sharp eyes and ears on the development of the Japanese press, the smaller journals as much as the larger ones.

WHY BRITAIN FIND IT NECESSARY TO ORGANISE PROPAGANDA IN JAPAN?

The main reason why Britain needed to go ahead with developing

propaganda in Japan, if rather reluctantly at the beginning, was that there had been so many Japanese intellectuals, doctors, academics and military people who had been trained in their professions in Germany, and who were naturally German sympathisers. Ever since Prussia had won the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the Meiji Government, which had regarded France as a model for her army, dropped it and switched to the newly united Germany instead. It was also perceived that the admiration of Germany was on the rise, seeing it as a good model for modern Japan. A British military attaché to Japan, Malcolm D. Kennedy, who arrived in Japan in late 1917 and mixed with many Japanese army officers, noted that '[admiration of Germany] in the higher ranks of the Japanese Army was most pronounced' and that 'There was another reason for their lack of a whole-heartedness in wishing for Germany's defeat.....Military leaders should hesitate to wish for the downfall of the model that they had, for so long, considered superior to all others. The defeat of this exemplar, they felt, might reflect seriously on their own powers of judgment.' (6) Accordingly, most articles opposing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance or expressing anti-British sentiments were written by those pro-German leaders, mainly intellectuals. However, it should be noted that some leaders and intellectuals voiced at the advent of the Nichi-Doku Sensō, ('the war against Germany') that it would be a timely opportunity for Japan to obtain revenge on Germany for the Triple Intervention of 1895, as well as to fulfil future continental plans.

By contrast, those Japanese who had been trained in the navy, whose teachers could well have been trained in Britain, tended to be pro-British. Malcolm Kennedy also perceived this partisan distinction while he was in Japan. Indeed, that was an obstacle to seeing the situation impartially

was taken up on 1 July 1916 by an article in the *Nippon Oyobi Nipponjin*, a small paper, entitled, "Criticism of the European War by Military and Naval Officers" as, '.....the models taken by the naval and military services of Japan have made the officers respectively pro-English and pro-German to such an extent that they are incapable of impartial assessment of the future of the war.'

The majority of the general public in Japan were not aware of what was going on in Europe in detail. They could not visualise the suffering in Europe caused by the war. Kennedy himself says that, in Europe, '...there was probably hardly a family that had not sent a father, sons, brothers or other close relations to fight. Most families had sad personal losses to mourn. I myself had lost a brother, an uncle, several cousins, a host of friends, and my other two brothers and I had all been wounded. ' and, he continues, '...the vast distance separating that country [Japan] from the main theatres of active operations made it difficult for its people to appreciate the magnitude and horrors of the fighting.' Kennedy, himself being on the spot then, away from Europe, understood that the sheer distance of Europe from Japan was one of the many obstacles preventing the Japanese from appreciating the situation in Europe. (7)

One of the main critical issues raised in the Japanese press was the repeated requests by Britain and other Allied countries to send Japanese ships and troops to Europe, particularly after Japan's successful occupations of Tsingtao and former German islands around the Equator, when Japan thought that her task in the war had been accomplished. Various complaints made by the British against Japan became, in turn, the subject of criticism in the Japanese media. For example, when some

Japanese Indian sympathisers in Japan became involved with Indian nationalists on the run, trying to help them by offering, for example, refuge in Japan or on Japanese commercial ships out in the East Asian sea, the Indian Government made official warnings to the Japanese authorities. After a few incidents of British ship captains boarding ships flying the Japanese flag in search of fugitives without warranties, these in turn, provoked complaints by the Japanese authorities against the Indian authorities. These became the issue in many media articles, making the writers well aware of the Indian clause which had been inserted in the Second Alliance back in 1905 and, in turn, induced the Japanese authorities to address the issue of the Indian Government's prohibition of Japanese doctors working in India. Therefore, there seemed to be endless dialogue between the two governments, which were entangled by these incidents that the British/Indian governments could do without.

Frequent grievances based on commercial rivalries were made against Japan by British residents at treaty ports in China and this often triggered some response by Japanese opinion leaders refuting such complaints. In this respect, it may be useful to introduce one of the articles written in May 1916 in a periodical, the *Taiyō*, which generally accommodated intellectuals' articles, by Suehiro Shigeo, Professor in International Law at the Imperial Kyoto University, who was regarded as a liberal-minded intellectual and had long cherished the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, also criticising the 'Twenty-One Demands' and Japan's foreign policies. He pointed out that, 'it had been regrettable that the question of the Alliance with Britain had recently become a frequent topic of discussion or criticism as to whether it should be continued or abrogated. However, at this juncture, when Britain had been engaging in a horrendous war against

Germany, it was obviously not the time for Japan as an ally to raise the matter now'. For the quarrels between the British residents in China and the Japanese over their rivalries, he continues to suggest that 'if you think about what the Japanese in China, Manchuria and elsewhere were doing, for example, a monopoly over Japanese made goods there, no wonder the British are complaining about the unfairness.' He, therefore, suggests that both governments should order both nationals to restrain themselves. He also criticised Japanese foreign policies in the *Gaikō Jihō*, another periodical on diplomacy, early in 1915, particularly, Japan's eagerness to join the war as though waiting with much anticipation to be asked by Britain first, when 'we have no obligation whatsoever to join the war based on Clause Two of the Alliance.' (8)

The British Foreign Office and Embassy were puzzled why the Japanese government did not censor such articles, despite occasional warnings they made to the Japanese authorities. It has been assumed that the reasons for it might have been that, 'the Japanese press was freer than most foreigners imagined and that it was much easier for a ministry to control the large newspapers and journals and ignore the small ones. A further factor is that intellectuals like Yoshino Sakuzō and the pro-German professors were allowed considerable scope for criticism, and it was more comfortable for the ministry if they chose a foreign target. (9) Some of those intellectuals had studied law, often international law, predominantly in Germany and made their personal contributions in these small journals. If their articles are examined it is not difficult to see where they had cultivated their intellect during their formative years of study.

One good example, amongst many, that the British authorities had picked

up might illustrate the final decision to go ahead with propaganda in Japan. One of the most valuable documents at the time was a long personal letter sent in June 1916 by Colin J. Davidson, Consul-General in Yokohama, in reply to an inquiry by the Foreign Office, entitled "Anti-British feeling in Japan" which might sum up the reactions of what the British residents in Japan like him who were observing on the ground. The Foreign Office may well have needed to sound out the current situation in Japan from an appropriate man on the spot before it would fully commit itself to go ahead with propaganda in Japan. According to Lampson, Davidson had been 'a foremost pro-Japanese member of H.M. Service and he knew the Japanese language, literature, and even their music--as few Europeans do--and was.....recently one of their most devoted admirers.' He alarmingly continued that, 'All the more striking then in this letter....' I believe that it is worthwhile to give the following long quotation, revealing what Davidson truly thought of Japan.

In your letter you say that you were beginning to think that the dry-rot was becoming universal in Japan. Well, I don't think you are far wrong, in fact you might describe it more adequately as malignant fungus which is gradually spreading its tentacles over a large section of the Japanese people. You know how great an admirer I was, rudely shaken by recent events.....Indeed they are at heart a nation which is utterly selfish, mean and craven.....In early part of the war when things were not going well for the Allies, there was a general feeling amongst the Japanese that they had put their money on the wrong horse, and many of them did not hesitate to say

so openly.....The army was against us and pro-German almost to a man,they were genuinely frightened of what the Germans would do to them when they had finished with the Allies,....In fact, had things gone a little bit worse for us, there was, I think grave danger of their throwing us over altogether. In fact, as you doubtless know, the Imperial Rescript, issued after the Declaration of War, expressly permitted the Germans to reside here and continue their business, and ordered the Japanese to treat them kindly and benevolently in every waythe greatest mistake of all [for Britain] was I think, our participation in the Tsingtao campaign which irreparably damaged our military reputation in the eyes of the Japanese and placed us in a most humiliating position. I should perhaps mention that latterly since the situation has become more favourable to the Allies there has been a marked improvement in the attitude of the Japanese towards us. Not only have the Government been more disposed to fall in with our suggestions and requests, but apologies have even appeared for the hitherto unfavourable tone expressed in some quarter towards us. This is satisfactory even if it is not edifying. The Navy has, I think, been solid for us throughout, and the Army is not as hostile as it was.

(10)

Davidson believed that there was little doubt that the Germans had been secretly at work in Japan and found many willing ears for their slander and lies and many willing hands to receive their money. He believed that the

attitude of the Japanese Government towards Indian seditionaries was the most unsatisfactory of all. He was sure that, knowing how universally popular the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had been in Japan a year or two year earlier, more powerful influences than the utterances of newspapers such as the *Yamato* and the vapourings of irresponsible professors and other writers were at work beneath the surface to undermine its popularity. He continues further in some detail of what he felt on the relations of the two nations and concludes his letter by saying 'it grieves me to write in this strain about a people in whose honour and loyalty I had formerly, as you know, the utmost confidence, but events since the war began have, I regret to say, compelled me to considerably modify my opinion regarding them and to look upon them with very considerable distrust.' (11)

WHAT BRITAIN PROPOSED TO DO

The idea of Britain seriously acting on propoganda in Japan began in the spring of 1916, half way through the war, when the British Ambassador in Tokyo, Greene, sent a letter to Grey, Foreign Secretary, recommending Robertson Scott (Scott, hereafter), a private individual living in Japan, to carry out the task. Scott who had previously worked as a professional journalist in Britain had been in Japan for a year in order to conduct research on agriculture. He persuaded the Foreign Office to publish a bilingual review in Japan as the English language press there had been mainly for intellectual expatriates, and there was potential for a high quality bilingual review directed at the Japanese. He passed a long memorandum to Greene explaining why it was necessary to publish such a review in Japan, trying to convince the Foreign Office and, indeed, Wellington House. (12) However, Wellington House clearly had stated at

the inauguration of the propaganda bureau back in 1914, that it was important that the Foreign Office and the Embassy in Tokyo should not be seen to be involved with such tasks. Accordingly, it was discussed and carefully considered whether such a task was worthwhile and viable for the purpose, taking into account the necessary preparations. Organising such work involved lengthy frequent exchanges amongst those who were concerned, setting up a couple of related committees, finances, distributions, employment of translators and others in Japan and elsewhere. For all necessary positions, appropriate experts were needed both in Britain and Japan. Foreign Office documents at the National Archives at Kew contain a mountain of related papers, entitled 'Propaganda in Japan', mostly confidential, of frequent correspondence between Britain and Japan, and Wellington House, for about a year before the Review's first publication in Japan in June 1917.

During the elaborate preparations to publish the proposed bilingual review, Scott was doing something that he felt he had to do independently. Having lived in Japan for a year observing the country from various angles and making friends, Scott, like Kennedy, perceived and was shocked that, despite the extensive war raging in Europe, Japan as a whole seemed to see it as a fire on the other side of a big river. Such attitudes of the Japanese, supposedly an ally of Britain, prompted him to write a couple of his own pamphlets, one of which was entitled '*Japan, Great Britain and the World: a letter to my Japanese friends*' and the other, 'The Ignoble Warrior' in both languages. The former was written in order to reply to an author of an article, Asada Kōson, in the March 1916 issue of the periodical called the *Taiyō*. The Japanese language version of his response was published in the April issue of the *Taiyō*.

Since a few scholars have already written brief biographies of Scott, I will avoid repetition, but it might be useful here to reveal some of the other interesting articles he wrote while he was waiting for the Foreign Office's approval of his proposal. (13) During July 1916, Scott wrote a series of five short articles in Japanese in the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun's* column called 'Kyaku Sō Go' ('a small window of words by a guest writer'), which could have been specially created for him, as there seems to have been no such column in the newspaper otherwise. Seeing the topics selected, Scott tried within his capacity to clarify some things that seem to have puzzled the Japanese who were mistaken and ignorant with regard to Britain and Germany. (14)

The work of Scott was greatly admired and appreciated by many officials and all those who had been involved with the Review's preparations. Ambassador Greene sent an appreciative letter to Scott on 1 December 1916, at the start of his editorial work, saying '...how very heartily we all wish you well in this big task you are undertaking, and how much we trust, with our knowledge of you and the good use you have made of your time of study here, that you will achieve remarkable results.' (15) It is worthwhile here to pay attention to one particular letter of the British Embassy which shows us an insight into what Scott had to endure to go through the gargantuan task he had to undertake.

"The *New East*" started its career and is steadily improving. The difficulties of starting and running a bi-lingual Review in this country, where trained assistants are not to be found, are very great. Scott and his wife have worked like slaves and I am mainly anxious lest he should not have a nervous

break-down owing to over-work. I fear that he and [Hugh] Byas, who gave up his post on the “*Advertiser*” to come and help, do not get on well together. The latter is canny and popular amongst the British commercial community, whilst the former cultivates the Japanese and is consequently not in sympathy with the “Treaty Port spirit”. I think that his work talking with Japanese journalists and politicians, who are not very accessible to the diplomatic world and would be quite uncommunicative if they were, is a very important part of his activity here and that his Review is doing good in spite of the disparagement of the Foreign Community. (16)

The *New East* was to last until December 1918, when the war ended and sponsors withdrew the fund for the Review, exactly the time that the original contract had specified.

BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN JAPAN

The publication of the *New East* (*Shin Toyō*), which was the major British propaganda in Japan in terms of manpower, finance, time and energy, was by no means the only method of propaganda Britain used. Indeed, there had been many suggestions that had been raised in 1916 from many quarters. They were, firstly, the publication and distribution in Japan of war pictorials called the *Senji Gahō*, in broadsheet size, printed in London, which was often referred to as a Japanese version of *Cheng Pao* or *Al Hakikat*, with brief captions in both languages, occasionally supplemented by the *Senji Jihō*, an illustrated paper with some news of the war, and *Little*

Lesson in English for schools, which had been prepared by Scott; secondly, the showing of films selected particularly to impress the Japanese public; thirdly, the use of Japanese journalists in London. As for the *Senji Gahō*, the British Embassy Tokyo commented to the Foreign Office as follows.

The *Senji Gahō* is being most useful and is very popular. We could doubtless distribute an unlimited number gratis, and I am inclined to think that we should increase our circulation to some extent;if we sell the *Senji Gahō* on a paying basis, we shall lose most of our circulation amongst the very people whom we can best influence by an illustrated paper. (17)

It had been resolved that, as a large proportion of the Japanese reading public are inclined to skip the greater part of the “War News” supplied by various telegraphic agencies news, the use of pictures appropriately selected would ultimately project the message that they were on the Allied side. The pictures would attract them more and make it easy to understand what was going on in Europe. They would be distributed fortnightly. A Tokyo Committee had been set up with Charles Wingfield of the British Embassy as Chairman and other members earlier, including Scott, and, at the first meeting on 9 January 1917, they unanimously agreed on the employment of Mr. S. Kondo who would do the actual work of distributing the *Senji Gahō*. There had been much correspondence between Wellington House, the Foreign Office and the British Embassy in Tokyo as to the ideal number of copies of the *Senji Gahō* and its distributions. For example, Masterman felt that ‘if we were challenged on the point it would be exceedingly difficult to justify a distribution of 10,000 copies being considered adequate among a population of some 50 million,

especially amongst those who were, perhaps, the most shaky of our Allies.’
(18)

The recipients of just over 10,000 copies of the *Senji Gahō* were classified into about 30 categories such as schools (normal to universities), government departments, railway stations, newspaper companies, members of the House of Peers, Members of the Diet, higher tax payers, members of Christian churches, bankers, retired naval admirals and army officers, medical men and hospitals, electrical companies, mission societies, army and navy schools, and their regiments, Japanese clubs, warships, libraries etc. In addition, 400 copies were sent to prominent Japanese in England and to certain seaports where Japanese seamen were likely to see them. (19) As to the photographs in some of the *Senji Gahō*, they were carefully selected so as to give the impression that the Japanese were on the side of the Allies and emphasising that the current war in Europe was not only their affair but also Japan’s, as one of the participating belligerent nations.

As for the idea of showing films, the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas (PLBO) in Tokyo had requested in May 1916 Ambassador Greene’s help to show films as part of propaganda in Japan. (20) A Committee had been set up in Yokohama, upon which Crowe represented the British Embassy, with appropriate personnel working. Wellington House had arranged to send several copies of a film to the Foreign Office to show in India, China and Japan, suggesting that the PLBO might show it around September or October 1916 in Japan. (21) According to Wingfield, ‘the persons who had seen the films seem to have been very interested; and the thing that seems to have impressed the Japanese most was the fact that the King

went about amongst his soldiers and sailors freely, spoke to them, and instead of fearing for his life, was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by all of them.’ The first films, he continued, ‘which the Ambassador exhibited, were afterwards shown to the Emperor, who was very impressed, I understand.’ (22)

It had been suggested to give opportunities to Japanese journalists based in London to invite them to the Foreign Office for “News and Views” and to the Naval Bases to show them the British Grand Fleet and the authorities resolved that their reports on these visits in their newspapers in Japan would have a good influence on readers. Accordingly, the authorities had organised such occasions in July 1916, inviting London correspondents of the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun* [highly likely, Katō Chokushi], Maita Minoru of the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* and others, as well as some British journalists, as the authorities had thought such occasion would give the journalists of the two allied countries the opportunity to mingle together. The correspondent of the *Nichi Nichi*, as had been expected, indeed, reported in his paper on 9 July 1916 ‘his delight at the unexpected fulfilment of his desire to see the fleet’, and added that there must have been some reason for the Admiralty’s invitation. He continued writing in his newspaper that he had often wondered what the British fleet as a whole were doing.

Of course, they are blockading the German Navy and German commerce in an effective manner. The preservation of security in England at the present day is entirely due to the strength of the Navy. In silence, the Royal Navy is incessantly carrying on a glorious work, self-respecting and self-esteeming. Patience is its keyword.

The Royal Navy has the right to demand of the nation the same patience. In other words, there is now the need to educate the British respecting the duty of the Grand Fleet.

Maita's report to his newspaper on 10 July entitled "Anglo-Japanese journalists' visit to British Grand Fleet" included an illustration, with a text saying 'Admiral Jellicoe invited some Japanese and British journalists to visit the Grand Fleet at a certain place and, as we were Britain's ally, we were treated very courteously. On the deck of the battleship, *Lion*, Captain Chatfield proudly explained to us about the victory of the *Lion* over the German ship, *Brussels*'. These two articles on their visits probably impressed their readers so it must have been a quite a successful method of influencing opinion. Wingfield later said in his letter that these were good examples, commenting on propaganda in Japan, that 'the best propaganda is done by the Japanese who come back from Europe and report what they have seen. I am glad to say that the reports they are now bringing back are creating a good impression, even amongst the German-trained army Officers.' (23)

Similar effects to what Japanese journalists were reporting in their newspapers were created by quite a few officers and reporters writing to the Japanese press, often on their own initiative, as quite a few of them were, thus, unknowingly supporting British propaganda. One such example was written by Rear-Admiral Akiyama Saneyuki of *Mikasa* fame, one of the naval strategists in the Russo-Japanese War. Akiyama and his group had been sent by the Japanese Navy to Europe to inspect, and communicate with, their counterparts in the Allied Forces and witness the

war situation in Europe. Leaving Japan in March 1916, they travelled by the Trans-Siberian Railway to visit Russia, Finland, Britain, France and Italy and returned to Japan around October 1916 via the U. S.A. In early June in Britain, he met Commander Pakenham, who had been the naval attaché in Tokyo during the Russo-Japanese War and an observer of the Battle of Tsushima, and Admiral Jellicoe, both of whom had just returned to Britain after the Battle of Jutland. Before taking up his next post, he often gave lectures on his views and also wrote, at least, two long articles dated 30 and 31 December 1916 in *the Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, entitled "The psychological/mental cause of the European War" explaining in detail the main cause of the current war: the German mentality was of strong self-interest and, in order to fulfil her ambition, she had meticulously prepared for the war regardless of others for many years. (24) He continued

.....What Germany is good at are minute things, there is therefore nothing that Japan could admire as a model. However, while I have been travelling in Europe and surveying the true cause of the war extensively, amongst other duties, I have detected in the air a certain scepticism of Japanese intentions and a fear of Japan turning her back on the Allied Force and throwing our lot in with the Central powers. Japan should never do such a wrong thing.

In a similar article in the *Taiyo*, Akiyama writes

Sometime ago I said that the dominating factors of the European War are British sea-power and financial

capacity and German military strength. After visiting the theatre of war in Europe, it appears to me that what I said was right, and that these three factors control the situation. It goes without saying that France, Russia, Great Britain and Italy all have powerful armies, and Germany and Austria are not without navies or money; but these are not dominating factors, since their influence is only brought to bear in direct or indirect cooperation with other factors. The three factors I have mentioned will decide the Great European War, and I therefore propose to express my opinion on their rise and fall. [he concludes, if his three dominating factors of the war were correct,] the issue of the war is already evident..... We can no more foretell the future of this great war than we can predict the weather of to-morrow. Therefore we must, I believe, be prepared to face greater struggles yet to come in order to conclude the war successfully and adapt ourselves to the situation arising after the war. (25)

It seems that Akiyama's article was regarded as a positive view in favour of the Allied cause, so it was included in the series of the pamphlets written by eight other influential dignitaries: for example, articles written by Edward Grey entitled 'Why Britain is in the War and What she Hopes from the Future'; and by Arnold Toynbee, 'The Belgian Deportations'. It may be assumed that the British authorities thought it ideal if the view of an eminent and influential Japanese were to be included in the series, and Rear-Admiral Akiyama was indeed such a figure who happened to have been in Britain and seen top leaders including Admiral Jellicoe.

JAPANESE PUBLIC REACTIONS TO BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN JAPAN

Japanese public opinion expressed through the press and periodicals was something truly irritating and menacing to Britain during the first half of the war. Good examples in this respect were the many articles written in the *Yamato Shimbun*, one of the most influential newspapers in Tokyo at the time, which was regarded by the British Embassy in Tokyo as the most vicious newspaper in Japan and was often quoted in their reports. Here, one short simple paragraph will suffice, '....the *Yamato* observed that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was concluded because the contracting parties were convinced that it was to their advantage at the time. It was not ordained by God, and should be abandoned if no longer useful. The Japanese people are not blind fools who cannot see beyond England, nor will the Japanese newspapers act as mere masters of ceremonies at the bidding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs....' (26) It seems that the Japanese Foreign Ministry had also become a target of criticism.

It may be worthwhile spending time on the main reason why the articles in the *Yamato Shimbun*, by which the British Embassy in Tokyo was constantly irritated, were targeting the Japanese government at the time, including Okuma and, especially Katō, as well as Britain and the Alliance. The answer could be found in its Editor, Hanzawa Tamaki. Although Hanzawa had not studied in Germany and had worked earlier for the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, by the time he became an editor of the *Yamato*, he was well-known to have been leaning to the Yamagata faction, knowing his mentor personally. Terauchi Masatake and Gotō Shimpei, the two influential protégés of Yamagata, had close relationships with him and,

naturally, befriended army officials. Terauchi (Prime Minister, Oct. 1916-18) and Gotō (Home Minister 1916-1918), Foreign Minister, had both studied in Germany. Terauchi's remark in the notorious *Outlook* interview in March 1918 that Japan might switch sides is well noted. Hanzawa was, like many others, ambitiously interested in Japan's continental schemes in China, Manchuria and Korea. To him and indeed most army leaders, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and Britain were obstacles to Japan's expansion, hence, whenever opportunities arose, fierce anti-British campaigns were carried out by the press. (27)

Scott's first article on 'Japan and Great Britain....' had been published in its Japanese version in the April issue of the *Taiyō* in 1916 in reply to Asada Kōson's March article, as noted earlier, and immediately attracted criticisms from the Japanese media. At first, at the end of Scott's article, Asada himself commented that, much as he appreciated Scott's article to counter his own, Scott had misunderstood Asada's view. He denied that he had been suggesting that the Alliance should be abrogated and that he had been pro-German. Asada concluded that he would have continued had there been more space available. The bilingual version was printed in a pamphlet form later. It also attracted fierce criticism in the *Yamato Shimbun* on 27 April 1916, entitled 'From Japan to England'. Knowing that Scott had written the article in reply to Asada's article, Hanzawa attacked him saying

he uses such un-gentlemanly phrases as "the daily paper that is equivalent to a standard of secondary school stage 12" or "the irresponsible publication". However, I am not accusing him of doing so because we have a capacity to see that the author had a certain prejudice. My

conscience and responsibility is to let the author and his dear British peers know that we are not exclusive and narrow-minded as to argue with him, being 'a small British', who utilises a method that would use such phrases with short-sighted views. I am going to attempt here to reveal British opinions and their views of Anglo-Japanese relations that have come to notice.

He then continued his argument in the same series 'From Japan to England' on 28, 29 and concluded on 30 April.

In reaction to the first few editions of the *New East*, some papers such as the *Nippon Oyobi Nipponjin* were reported to have replied to Scott's strong full-throated advocacy of the alliance 'If changes in Russia and China should continue as they are doing today, we cannot treat the alliance as if it was a lifelong bond or thing to be relied on'. Ōniwa Kakō and Akamon Gakuto strongly refuted Scott's two articles written in the September issue as well as the contents of his two pamphlets. Interestingly, the latter, who was using a pen-name hinting that he was a student at the Tokyo Imperial University, seems to have known the supposedly confidential background of the *New East*. He alleged that the journal was a mouthpiece of Britain; that Scott was an employee of the British Embassy in Tokyo; and that it was financed from London. (28)

Scott may have become an easy target for criticism by the *Yamato* and the other press in Japan and many reasons can be considered for this. The other English language press in Japan such as the *Japan Advertiser* and the *Japan Chronicle* were owned by the Americans and the British

respectively, written only in English, mainly for expatriates living in East Asia, though some translated articles were included. There was a limited Japanese readership and they escaped direct Japanese criticisms. It was clear for most Japanese at the time that the *New East* was Scott's periodical, just as his earlier pamphlets, written in both languages, attracted more Japanese readers than the English language press.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have set out the reasons why Britain thought it necessary to go ahead with propaganda in her ally, Japan. Other countries at which British propaganda was directed were mainly neutrals selected to persuade them to join the Allied side. The result of British campaigns were quite clear, in some countries such as China and the U. S., which eventually joined the Allied side; hence, to some extent, the propaganda was regarded as successful. However, the case in Japan was quite different from the other cases, not as simple as them, a very delicate, prickly and complicated case. However, men on the ground at the time, such as officials like Greene, Wingfield, Davidson and Kennedy, working at the British Embassy, Tokyo, and someone like Scott, were all able to grasp the situation clearly from their observations and feel the atmosphere quite accurately. Many of them complained, and were shocked by, how indifferent the Japanese had been on a whole as to what was actually happening in Europe. As Wingfield said, even the intellectuals who were supposed to explain the situation in Europe to the ordinary citizens were often ignorant of it. However, as many observers were emphasising, the sheer physical distance between Europe and Japan seems to have been one of the reasons that the majority of the Japanese had no idea how horrendous the war in Europe was. Furthermore, they were frustrated to

learn that most Japanese did not know that their country was one of the Allied countries which were participating in the war against Germany. Therefore, the methods of British propaganda in Japan were slightly different from others targeting neutral countries. With that in mind, one of the aims of British propaganda in Japan seems to have been to educate those Japanese who did not know the situation outside Japan. Another aim was to target and convert the pro-German Japanese Press to a pro-British and pro-Alliance attitude. Of the two aims, it is the latter which must have been much harder than the former to do successfully. In order to tackle the latter, the British authorities chose to publish the bi-lingual Review, the *New East*, at great expense, though with private funds, and, for the former, to distribute the war pictorials, the *Senji Gahō* and some others.

On the whole, the effectiveness of British propaganda in Japan is very difficult to determine. There were some criticisms, as Kennedy reiterates in his book. Summing up the comments that others made, he writes that it did not start until half way through the war and, 'British propaganda in Japan left much to be desired.....Instead of concentrating so much attention on showing up the misdeeds of the enemy, better results might have been achieved by striving to bring home to the Japanese the immense difficulties to be overcome and the superhuman efforts that were being made to overcome them.' (29) However, Britain might have been over sensitive to the reactions of the small Japanese press and periodicals.

As for Japanese reactions to the British propaganda through the media, some journals expressed anti-British and anti-Anglo-Japanese Alliance sentiments and often directly attacked Scott, the editor of the *Shin Toyō*

(*the New East*). There were articles in small newspapers and periodicals whose editors were often pro-German, mostly contributed by intellectuals who were pro-German, and had been educated in Germany in their professions, often with expansionist leanings. They often fiercely attacked the Anglo-Japanese Alliance for obstructing Japan's economic and territorial expansion. It seems that those who read articles in the *Shin Toyō* were intellectuals, while those who subscribed to other British propaganda media such as the *Senji Gahō* and saw propaganda films were most probably ordinary citizens who might not have known much about what was going on in Europe and might not have been as articulate as the readers of the *Shin Toyō*. Even though there were articles related to the war in major newspapers, often reporting what the situation in Europe at the time was, as well as stressing Japanese involvement in the war, the general public on the whole seems to have regarded it as part of a conflict not directly related to them, as they were more concerned with their own daily affairs than things happening far away. This might have been the reason that the readers of the former had critical views of Britain and the Alliance, while the latter had not.

NOTES

1. FO395/91, [31811], Gowers, Wellington House, to Montgomery, F. O., 9 Feb. 1917, The quotation was from Masterman, the head of Wellington House.
2. They are, to name, but a few: *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*, by M.L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor (1982); *British propaganda and the state in the First World War*, by Messinger, Gary S., (1992); *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale*, by Monger, David (2012).

3. FO395/172, [187499] (File 41960), 30 Sept. 1916, Greene to Grey, 'Japanese Government and Press'.
4. Sanders, Michael Lewis, *Official British Propaganda in Allied and Neutral Countries during the First World War with particular reference to organisation and methods*, Unpublished thesis, (University of London, 1972), pp.10-11 and pp.16-18.
5. The Tamai Kiyoshi Research Centre, 'Japan's Entry to the First World War and the Japanese Media', Political Studies, Law Faculty, Keio University, *The Research Materials for the Modern Japanese Politics, Series 12*, (11 Nov. 2006), p.19.
6. Kennedy, M. D., *The Estrangement of Great Britain and Japan 1917-35*, (Manchester University Press, 1969), p.14.
7. Kennedy, M.D., *Ibid.* p.13.
8. Suehiro, Shigeo, 'The Japan-German War and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in *Gaikō Jihō*, Vol. 244, 1. Jan. 1915.
9. Nish, I. H., *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23*, (Athlone Press, 1972), p. 192.
10. FO395/172, [164323], (File 41960) Colin J. Davidson to Miles Lampson (F. O.). 29 June 1916.
11. FO385/172, [164323], *Ibid.*
12. FO395/91, [20564], Greene to Grey, 14 Oct. 1916.
13. Nish, I. H., op. cit. pp. 229-232; 'Introduction: J. W. Robertson Scott' in *Critical Readings on Japan, 1906-1948: Countering Japan's Agenda in East Asia*, Series 1: Books, Vol.2, by P. O'Connor (Ed.), (Folkestone 2008), pp. vii-x; Nakami, Mari, J. W. Robertson-Scott and his Japanese Friends' in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits Vol II*, Nish, I (Edited), (Folkestone 1997) pp.166-179; O'Connor, Peter, *The English-Language Press Networks of East Asia, 1918-1945*, (Folkestone, 2010), pp.46-49.
14. The five articles Scott wrote in the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* in Japanese on 14, 16, 18, 19 and 20 July 1916.
15. FO395/91, [36251], Greene to Robertson Scott, 1 Dec. 1916.
16. O'Connor, Peter, Hugh Fulton Byas (1875-1945): 'The fairest and most temperate of Foreign writers on Japan's political development between the wars', *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Vol. VI, (Folkestone 2007) pp.289-290; FO395/91,

- [236348], Wingfield of the British Embassy in Tokyo to Montgomery of Foreign Office in London. 29 Oct. 1917,
17. FO395/91, [236348], Wingfield to Montgomery, 29 Oct. 1917.
 18. FO395/91, [31811], Gowers, Wellington House, to Montgomery, F. O., 9 Feb. 1917.
 19. FO395/91, [69344], Greene to Balfour, 27 Feb. 1917;
FO395/91, [241764], F.O. to Greene, 4 January 1918.
 20. FO395/91, [107125], PLBO to Greene, May 1916.
 21. FO395/91, [126445], Gower, Wellington House, to M. Lampson, F. O. , 30 June 1916.
 22. FO395/91, [236348], Wingfield to Montgomery, 29 Oct. 2017.
 23. FO395/91, [236348], Wingfield to Montgomery, 29 Oct. 1917.
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