APPENDIX TWO

THE TIMES 1910 JAPAN SUPPLEMENT

Compiled from information supplied by Hugh Cortazzi,
Ayako Hotta-Lister and Ian Nish

The Times published a special edition about Japan on 19 July 1910 during the Japan-British Exhibition at White City, Shepherd’s Bush. This was a massive volume of over seventy broadsheet pages. It was later issued as a hard-covered book. It was encyclopaedic in its coverage of Japan, its government, trade, industry and institutions. It also covered Japanese overseas interests in Karafuto (Saghalien), Formosa, Korea and Manchuria. Anyone who wants to learn what Japan was like in 1910 will find in this publication a mine of information.

A key role in the emergence of this Supplement was played by Robert P. Porter (1852–1917), an American journalist who had become head of the Special Supplements department of The Times. In conjunction with the foreign editor, Valentine Chirol, he was entrusted with arranging supplements for special occasions.\(^1\) It is not known whether the idea that a special Times supplement should be produced to coincide with the Japan-British Exhibition originated with The Times or with the Japanese who were becoming very publicity conscious at this time. At all events, Porter who was well known in Chinese and Japanese circles travelled to Japan in 1909 and held discussions about the possibilities with interested parties. It should be added that he also had a personal motive, namely, to collect material for a book he was writing on Japan. This was eventually published in 1911 by A. Frowde under the title The full recognition of Japan, being a detailed account of the economic progress of the Japanese Empire to 1911. Porter was later to become a formidable publicist for Japan.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Porter published Japan, the new World Power, being a detailed account of the progress and rise of the Japanese Empire (1915) and the posthumous works Japan (1918); and Japan, the rise of a modern power (1918).
Ayako Hotta-Lister has recorded that there seemed ‘to have been evidence that the Tokyo government had attempted to buy up the whole publication of 48 pages at £200 a page on condition that they would be allowed to supply all the information required. [Sir Claude] MacDonald, [Britain’s ambassador in Tokyo], advised Porter who was visiting Japan to promote the special edition to turn the idea down as the information supplied from a purely Japanese source would be of the most optimistic description and would present everything “in a rose-coloured light” and could not be impartial. Despite MacDonald’s sound warning, however, we could probably assume that Porter might not have fully accepted his advice since the Japanese Edition bore considerable traces of being influenced by the Japanese government.’

As the materials for the Supplement were being assembled, the contents grew well beyond what was initially intended. A large proportion of the articles were clearly provided by Japanese organizations and, although largely factual, they lacked any critical analysis. The most interesting section for modern readers is the central ‘editorial’ section put together presumably by the foreign department in London advised and assisted by Captain Frank Brinkley, the long-standing Tokyo correspondent of the paper, who wrote a significant proportion of the articles in this section. Brinkley who had a Japanese wife and had lived most of his life in Japan was strongly pro-Japanese. It is not, therefore, surprising that little criticism is made of Japanese policies in relation to home or overseas affairs.

When the Supplement eventually appeared, it created a storm in London, not because of its substance so much as its funding. The fact that Japan in her advertising favoured The Times was resented by the jealous rivals of Printing House Square, who presumed that the Supplement had been heavily subsidized. The story created a lively controversy at the high point of the Exhibition. In the midst of this, Dr George Ernest Morrison, The Times correspondent in Peking, arrived in London on leave from China. In a letter to a friend, he gave his impression that:

The Times has lost much credit by its publication of the Japanese supplement, towards which the Japanese government contributed £10,000. If such subsidy had been kept secret, it would not have done so much injury but, as

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3 Hotta-Lister, p. 99.
4 Frank Brinkley was the subject of a biographical portrait by Dr J.E. Hoare in H. Cortazzi (ed.), Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, vol. 3, Folkestone: Japan Library, 1999.