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# Professional Entertainers Abroad and Theatrical Portraits in Hand

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## 1. Some Historical Background in Mid-century

Obviously from the title given, you shall be entertained throughout my lecture with a photographic slide show of stage artistes both Japanese and non-Japanese. At the same time, you shall no doubt be directed to a research area that has as yet not been pursued with much interest by historians of modern Japan.

It is widely acknowledged that in Japan a policy of strict seclusion had been followed by the Tokugawa administration over a period of two and a half centuries in the Edo era. However, I would say that I am somewhat skeptical of the validity of this statement. It is true, as a result, that “the Tokugawa order had supported a dynamic cultural and intellectual life<sup>1</sup>” of ours in the past, but it is also true that nothing could be completely, strictly controlled even under such a severe regime as our own. Especially in Nagasaki or in the Kyūshū Isles, located to the west end of the territory, it must have been impossible for the ruling class to be fully dependent on the central government far in the east. Exposed to the outside world of constant change, all they could do, with the aid of Dutch connections, was to become *au courant* as possible and know better in every sense how to carefully balance any loss against the benefit of the nation. Well, I only hope that you will understand by the end of my discussion why I speak out so innocent an idea like this in the beginning.

Prior to the Meiji Restoration in 1868, some Japanese already had chances of visiting foreign countries, more than once in some cases. Among others, performers such as acrobats, top-spinners and conjurers did travel around the world, invited by English and American gentlemen who were then seeking their fortune in the theatre business. One of those enterprising figures was Richard R. Risley Carlisle (1814-1874), generally known as “Professor” Risley. An ex-athlete and circus entrepreneur, the American professor, staying for more than two years in Yokohama from 1864 to 1866, succeeded in bringing a troupe of Japanese jugglers to America and Europe. These stage artistes, unlike the elite of the day, were not especially famous but nevertheless left their footprints in the pages of our history. Still, they were extremely popular amongst those who loved theatre and frequented the houses of amusement. May I not assume your knowledge of a command performance by Queen Victoria, by the way? As a matter of fact, a Japanese



Slide 1: The Matsui family (Author's Collection)

troupe headed by Matsui Gensui had the honour of giving a performance before the British royal family on April 15, 1867 at Windsor Castle<sup>2</sup>.

Risley's Japanese, eighteen in number, and Gensui's troupe of twelve were granted passports on November 25, 1866, issued by the foreign office of the Tokugawa government in Edo<sup>3</sup>. Then, the former left the country for America on the fifth day of December, and the latter for England on the second day of the same month<sup>4</sup>. Here is a photograph in *carte-de-visite* format of the Matsui Family of four (slide 1), which was taken at the photo-studio of Camille Brion in Marseille, France, presumably at the beginning of 1867 before they finally reached London<sup>5</sup>. The troupe made their first appearance at St. Martin's Hall on Monday evening, February 11, following a press preview

at the same house on Saturday afternoon of the previous week. Risley's Japanese, on the other hand, made a debut in San Francisco. Their opening night was on Monday, January 7, 1867, and the venue chosen for them was the Academy of Music. The Academy was then one of the most elegant opera houses in America, and it was owned and managed by a most successful entrepreneur whose name is known to us as Thomas Maguire (c1824-1896). More will be explained of Maguire and Risley's Japanese shortly. So, let us stay for a while in the main line of discussion to get a better view of our theatrical life past and present.

Ever since Commodore Perry had forced Japan to open its gate to foreign countries in the middle of the century, many a visitor had come to our shores. Some left soon, but others never left. In other words, some liked Japan, and some did not. It is worth pointing out here that during the last decade of the Tokugawa period an increasing number of documents, written in *not* Japanese, recorded various events of popular entertainment for visitors from abroad. Inoue Shinano-no-kami Kiyonao, who was appointed the first administrator-in-chief of foreign affairs (gaikoku bugyô) by the government, would often call his artistes to come and entertain diplomats who, in relative isolation and solitude, had plenty of time to kill. Townsend Harris, for instance, gave an interesting account of being entertained by the feats of Japanese jugglers. One of them he compared to "Anderson" in Japan. Anderson is a famous magician from Scotland, better known as "the Wizard of the North" on both sides of the Atlantic. So, Harris must have seen his stage early in 1850s when he visited North America. Equally impressive is that Harris also referred to theatres of Edo, none of which he was allowed to enter<sup>6</sup>.

In order to alleviate their boredom, foreign residents in Japan would often congregate at the legations and in their private dwellings to be entertained by Japanese jugglers and amateur resident musicians like John Reddie Black. Occasionally, travelling artistes from the West were invited for a private performance, when not engaged for a public one. Again, those concerned with such special occasions have left us a considerable amount of writings, mainly in the form of travel literature. "A night in Japan," or a soirée fantastic, was fittingly chosen for their narrative's topic, as it required no language for understanding. Just a couple of examples from major publications will be sufficient for interested readers: George Smith's *Ten Weeks in Japan* (London, 1861) and Ludovic de Beauvoir's *Voyage Autour du Monde* (Paris, 1868), not to mention the very well-known works by Alcock, Schliemann, Humbert.

Thus revisiting travel literature as a well-documented analysis of the bygone stage has brought us a definitely innovative approach to the Japanese history of performing arts research that stands as a separate discipline from studies in Japanese history. The problem, however, lies in the scarcity of theatre historians and their lack of proficiency in foreign languages. Consequently, they are likely to be estranged even from translated works. Scholars of Japan studies, by contrast, seem to be good linguists

in general. The pity is that few of them are seriously interested in theatre.

Incidentally, may I tell you how I was drawn to a study of the Japanese craze in theatre that prevailed in the second half of the nineteenth century? One day in the winter of 1987, I was reading George C. D. Odell's *Annals of the New York Stage* in the library of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Consulting the index of one of those heavy books, I came across a couple of entries of "Japanese". Instantly I thought this was incorrect and that Odell was in error. He could not tell a Japanese from a Chinese, and was merely picking up information from old newspapers. It was surely impossible that a group of Japanese had been given a chance to step out on the stage of New York's opera house before the Meiji Restoration. But, I came to know that I was wrong after a simple, quick search back in Japan, and I have ever since pursued my studies in this area.

It was in March 1987 when I first had a chance to take a look at pictures of the Japanese that appeared in New York in 1867. With those old photographs rather small in size, brought to me *not* upon my request by a thoughtful reference librarian at the Harvard Theatre Collection, I was initially totally blind to their meaning and value. While a picture of Hayatake Torakichi, an acrobat of greatest importance in the Edo era, sat there with Risley's Japanese, I did not recognise him as such. It was only two years ago that Dr. Robert H. Sayers, a cultural anthropologist in America, asking for my opinion, showed me an illustration of Hayatake's funeral in New York in 1868.<sup>7</sup> Although convinced of his identity as a member of the Hayatake troupe of Japanese, I was till then unable to make out the name of the sitter, who strikes a pose in a standing position in the photograph (slide 2: Hayatake Torakichi in 1867, Bayley & Cramer, San Francisco, Harvard Theatre Collection). Now, twenty years have passed since the chance encounter with old photographs, and I am here to illustrate an aspect of cultural history of Japan with those images that have been rescued from obscurity.

Such photographs in *carte-de-visite* format show what Japanese performers actually looked like in the middle of the nineteenth century. They also show details of costume and paraphernalia. They apparently show gesture, posture and expression, sometimes not peculiar to a Japanese of the period. If we have seized upon photography as a means of capturing images of distant performances, and if we have established a methodology of identifying sitters based on works by theatre historians, should we not recognise as well the value of pictorial evidence to Japanese historians in general? Then, we sure will be able to have a broader, deeper understanding of our own history and culture at the dawn of modern times.

## 2. Photographs of Japanese Jugglers in *Carte-de-Visite* Format

Let us begin with an introduction of the principal members of the Hamaikari troupe of Japanese, directed and managed



Plate 1: The younger of the two men is Denkichi, injured on opening night (Library Company of Philadelphia)

by “Professor” Risley. Leaving Japan in December of 1866, they arrived in San Francisco on the last day of the same month of the same year, and opened their stage on January 7, 1867 at Thomas Maguire’s new opera house called the Academy of Music. The first member to be presented is a leader of the troupe named Hamaikari Sadakichi, aged 35 (slide 3: Keeler, Philadelphia; slide 4: Numa Blanc, Paris).

The first accident on stage happened, too. On opening night one of the principal artistes got severely injured, falling from a height of thirty feet by the breaking of a ladder (plate 1). It took the youth three weeks to recover from his injury before he reappeared on stage on January 28. The entire troupe had no choice but to stay in San Francisco much longer than expected. To further complicate matters, by the end of the final close of their engagement there, the whole enterprise was doomed to be taken over by Thomas Maguire for various unexplained reasons<sup>8</sup>.

So, Risley’s Japanese were to be thereafter called “Professor” Risley and T. Maguire’s Imperial Troupe of Japanese’ until the co-management broke up in England one year later. Others concerned with the project were Edward Banks, a deputy marshal of the American consulate at Yokohama, and William F. Schiedts, a clerk at Thomas Glover’s company also in Yokohama. The former was a translator and manager of the troupe, and the latter a treasurer. However, Schiedts seemed to disappear, dropping off from the troupe somewhere in Europe, while Banks,



Slide 6: Kanekichi (Robert H. Sayers’ Collection)

though much later, also absconded from the troupe with the receipts. The deed of dishonour by the former diplomat was deliberately executed on January 27, 1869 when the troupe, with Risley and Banks, finally returned from Europe to New York (slide 5: Edward Banks, Numa Blanc, Paris).

Notice, if you will, the Caucasian gentleman in the center of the picture. To his right is Sadakichi, to his left Sumidagawa Namigorô, to his front Matsugorô, Namigorô’s son, and the remaining one Denkichi, Hirohachi’s adopted son and the second of the troupe. One thing I must tell you now is that a travel diary of this particular troupe was kept by a sole manager for the Japanese, named Takano Hirohachi. At the age of 45, he left the country behind and accompanied them to the very end of their world tour that lasted 850 days in total. While they were absent from the country, the time changed from Edo to Meiji. Interestingly enough, the diarist most certainly knew this fact before he finally came home on March 31, 1869<sup>9</sup>.

In the meantime, a good explanation may be necessary for the reason why it was possible for Japanese thespians to go abroad *on business* before the Meiji Restoration. Early in the spring of 1866 the Tokugawa government made a decision of much importance that a Japanese citizen would be allowed to leave the country, if granted a passport from the office of foreign affairs of the government. However, who would dare such a risky and expensive exercise? But, many in fact left the country, being employed by foreigners who wanted the Japanese to work on stage and bring money



Plate 2: Koman (Library Company of Philadelphia)

to them. They were so smart as to capitalize on the unfair trade in currency between Japan and the exclusive powers of the West. In a word, they knew better the schemes of such things. One exception is, as you may know, Shimizu Usaburô, a merchant who was brave enough to go to Paris to join the exposition in 1867. As Usaburô is a well-known figure in the history, it is worth showing instead a picture of his assistant Kanekichi (slide 6: Numa Blanc, Paris).

Undoubtedly, “Professor” Risley is the one who was most pleased with the decision of our government. Risley came to Japan in the spring of 1864 with his equestrian circus from Shanghai. Due to unfavourable circumstances, his show went broke in a short time, but he did not leave but stayed in the country, expecting “the day” to come. Passing over the details of his life in Yokohama, I will show you a second photograph of Sumidagawa Namigorô (slide 7: Numa Blanc, Paris). Revealingly, he is the very person who was granted the first official passport from the government. A passport in the earlier period carried no photographic image of a holder, but his distinctive feature written therein is well recognisable in this photograph.

Next is most probably an image of Namigorô’s wife Koman, a holder of the second passport issued (slide 8: Numa Blanc, Paris). Another *carte-de-visite* photograph is discovered in Philadelphia (plate 2), but there remains a slight possibility that this third picture by Numa Blanc is she, with Chôkichi (slide 9). It is, therefore, much expected that works of advanced technology by Dr. Kuramochi’s research group will tell us in the end who she is<sup>10</sup>.



Slide 15: Little “All Right” (Yûshôdo Shoten)

Now we come to a large photographic collection of Umekichi, a star acrobat of the Hamaikari troupe. Called Little “All Right” in English, he became so popular that “All Right” craze in no time blanketed the society of the Western hemisphere. Accordingly, there seems to exist quite a few photographs of this little boy (slide 10: Keeler, Philadelphia; slide 11-13: Gurney, New York; slide 14 and 15: Numa Blanc, Paris). The first of these images, it is known, was used for a cover illustration of a sheet music titled “All Right Polka,” composed by E. Mack and published by Lee & Walker in Philadelphia, which I had an opportunity to show elsewhere<sup>11</sup>.

Of the eighteen members of the troupe, one was a male top-spinner whose name is Matsui Kikujirô (slide 16: Numa Blanc, Paris). Unfortunately this Japanese gentleman suffered from a consumption disease, and he died in London on Wednesday morning, April 8, 1868. Five days later, the Easter engagement at the Lyceum opened without him under the management of our professor, his new partner Van Gieson, and Edward Tyrrell Smith (1803-1877) who was then a lessee of the house<sup>12</sup>. As you may have noticed, he looks very much like someone else you have already seen. Indeed, there has been a rumor that Kikujirô is a younger brother to Matsui Gensui (slide 1). The rumor proved to be true and Gensui is without doubt a biological parent of the boy and the girl in the same,



Slide 16: Ainosuke (Author's Collection)

identical photograph.

An unending parade of Risley's jugglers aside, let us look to a separate troupe of Japanese that left the country in the same year as Risley's. Its name is Tetsuwari. In Japan the Tetsuwari family, like the Hayatake, used to be one of the best clans in show business of the nineteenth century. However, documents on them, including ephemera, are so scarce that little is known of their family history, as well as their performance records. Now, you are asked to remember the diarist of Risley's Japanese. In the first part of his diary is discovered an entry that should not be left unnoticed. He says that he met in San Francisco a troupe of Tetsuwari Fukumatsu, that is to say the troupe had been there for a certain period of time before he came with his troupe. Whatever does it mean? To make a long story short, when Sumidagawa Namigorô received his passport at home, a number of his brethren already had gone out of the country, legally or illegally. No other literature written in our language seems to indicate their departure from Japan, but what they had done on October 29, 1866 was evidently an open secret among foreigners in Yokohama<sup>13</sup>. Was it not a carefully plotted scheme by them, I suspect?

With such a history thus disclosed, probably your

interest in images that come from America and France is beginning to fade, so I am going to show you three photographs from Cuba. All of them were taken at the studio of Lopez de Molina of Santiago de Cuba, either before or after an engagement in Cardenas that came to a close with a benefit of "Pequeño All Right" on Thursday, December 19, 1867 (slide 16: Tetsuwari Ainosuke; slide 17: Rinkichi; slide 18: Shinkichi)<sup>14</sup>.

A search of their route in North America is still under way, but we know their goal after a long circuit is decidedly in Tokyo. The evidence is an epitaph on a stone grave. It was put up by Tetsuwari Fukumatsu in 1870 for one of his artistes whose father, apparently a retired juggler, had died during their absence from Japan for as long as four years. The old grave quietly sits in the garden of Ekôin Temple in Ryôgoku, by the way. I assume that the troupe, without Rinkichi alias "Pequeño All Right" in Spanish, came home on September 25, 1870 on board *China* from San Francisco, with a delegate of William Seward, a former Secretary of the State, who was on their way to China for business of commerce. In his book on travels around the world Seward refers to an expert Japanese juggler who entertained them in the cabin<sup>15</sup>. Since his artistry of sleight of hand was the most suitable for a drawing-room entertainment in the evening, the juggler must have been Ainosuke (slide 16).

### 3. Professional Entertainers in Nagasaki

Once permitted to leave the country, our jugglers could not resist accepting offers from foreign gentlemen who made approaches to them. Consequently, one engagement followed another. After the first triple departure of artistes was reported at the end of 1866, not less than six separate additional troupes left Japan the following year. An even greater number applied for passports after the close of the Edo era. A mass exodus as such, I assume, lasted up until the prewar period of the 1920s.

It is a great pity that exceeding exportation of our popular artistes caused an eventual decline of popular theatre in Japan. As to this devastating loss of a cultural heritage we do not have time to deplore now, while we are quite prepared to explore the past. Although we have just got to know the secret departure of the Tetsuwari troupe from Japan, it is still too early to know who were the earliest of the professional entertainers to leave Japan at the end of the Edo era. The third chapter shall deal with this subject. No other place other than Nagasaki would be more appropriate for the occasion.

Up to the present, outgoing Japanese on the eve of the Meiji Restoration have been the mainstay in my discussion, but there is no denying that the incoming of foreign artistes must have been witnessed at the same time. Of them, one who came earliest to Japan was undoubtedly Dr. Lynn (c1835-1899), who later became a magician of note in Great Britain. When he came to Japan in 1863, he called himself Washington D. Simmons, though (slide 19: Dr. Lynn, Davies, Melbourne; slide 20: headless Lynn, Davies,

Melbourne).

“Dr. Lynn’s real name was John Simmons, a native of Bristol, England born about 1835. He says he joined the navy at a young age and was a member of the crew of the HMS Exmouth where he made himself popular through his conjuring tricks. Leaving the Navy in 1861, he obtained employment in that same year as an assistant to Dr. Shaw, a fellow of the London Chemical Society who was a chemical ‘conjurer,’ taking advantage of the chemical advances of the day and the Victorian fascination with science and technology.

“Simmons departed from England on the 6th of October 1862 for the Australian Colonies and arrived in Melbourne by the “British Empire” on the 15th of January 1863. Suddenly a magician appears on the bill posters and in the amusement columns of the town.<sup>16</sup>” He followed a travelling circuit which operated in the colonies and areas of foreign residence for a while. In May he left Sydney for China, and for Japan, with his three travelling companions. They are Robert Sparrow Smythe (1833-1917), an ex-journalist and theatre impresario in Melbourne, Miss Amelia Bailey, a singer who later became Mrs. Smythe, and James “Marquis” Chisholm (1836-? in Toronto), a musician who was a pianist to Simmons.

When all the four finally landed in Nagasaki in mid-August via *Dolphin* from Shanghai, awaited them another musician Signor Agostino Robbio, a violinist who had left them behind for fear of an epidemic of cholera in the Chinese settlement. In fact, a French pianist Eduard Boulanger, who was about to leave with Robbio, died of it at a hotel of the French concession. Blame not the Italian. It follows, therefore, that Simmons, together with the other three, was strictly speaking not the first entertainer that came to Japan for business of his own<sup>17</sup>.

Most certainly the company had opportunities for giving a concert with a magic show at the newly-built bungalow of Thomas Glover (1838-1911), and, according to Simmons, he had a chance of appearing on the stage of a Japanese theatre, presumably Yawata-za in downtown. In the auditorium of the theatre an entourage of Prince Satsuma was discovered, of which he proudly mentions in his book “Here Prince Satsuma and his suite honoured me with their presence. The Japanese wear two swords—one for self-defence [*sic.*], the other for self-destruction; it is quite an ordinary occurrence for a Japanese to disembowel himself. When Prince Satsuma entered the theatre he left one of his swords at the door, this being a polite intimation that he felt perfectly safe in my company<sup>18</sup>.” This is what happened immediately after the battle between Satsuma and England was over. Where were postwar international tensions?

As to the five visitors to Nagasaki in the summer of 1863, this is all we know at present except for incomplete shipping intelligence of theirs discovered in Shanghai and Yokohama. However, some extra activities of Simmons apart from the others are of much interest. During his stay in Nagasaki, he had a quarrel with his manager Robert



Plate 3: Washington Simmons in Yokohama

S. Smythe and split up the partnership. Subsequently, he began to move around freely between Japan and China, which would cause a terrible confusion should you be interested in finding out his itinerary in late August through the end of October of that year. It seems that Simmons, after giving his magic shows at the Yokohama Hotel on October 27 and 29, left Japan for San Francisco, seeking another fortune in North America before going back home two and a half years later.

By the way, his announcement in the columns of English papers in Yokohama brought us the first commercial advertisement that has ever been witnessed in newspapers of Japan<sup>19</sup>. On his arrival from Shanghai on October 24, for promoting publicity “Professor” Simmons must have handed out his double portraits as shown above throughout the community of Yokohama. One curious staff writer of the *Nihon Bôeki Shinbun*, not surprisingly, put up a sketchy drawing of the headless magician in the issue of October 27 with an extremely good translation of the announcement (plate 3). One other drawing presumably from a photograph of the same type is discovered in the New York *Clipper* dated April 23 and 30, 1864, if I may add<sup>20</sup>.

Last but not least important is that in Nagasaki Simmons learned from native jugglers many tricks of Japanese conjuring arts, among others the top-spinning on a single thread and the butterfly trick. Let us have a quick look at Namigorô’s photograph for the second time (slide 7), in which he is cool showing off the same trick. We are curious to know who taught him this famous, extremely



Slide 22: Tannaker's artiste (Robert H. Sayers' Collection)

hard-to-do trick. My assumption is that a juggler of Tannaker Buhicrosan's troupe was a possible and probable instructor to him.

My apologies for having brought in a new figure of a strange name rather abruptly. However, if you have never heard of him, you may have heard of the Japanese Village in London that opened on January 10, 1885 at Knightsbridge. It is this Tannaker Buhicrosan who was a known producer of the bizarre exposition of Japanese, which was held in the same year as Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* was first performed in London. Born in Nagasaki presumably to a Dutch father and a Japanese mother, he was most probably brought up in a certain troubled community. He got married with a Japanese woman who came from Mogi, and some eight children of mixed blood were further born to the couple.

When Buhicrosan came back to Japan in 1884 for recruiting some eighty Japanese to be exposed in natural settings of Japan to the English, he paid a visit to the office of the *Yūbin Hōchi Shinbun*, where he met the editor-in-chief of the paper and a staff who translated for the two. From the newspaper accounts that came out on August 21 and 22 following the interview on August 18, it is obvious

that the two journalists were incapable of recognising him as a Japanese. Attired himself with a poor accent of Japanese, the visitor from London introduced himself as T. B. N. Buhicrosan, a Dutchman. A detailed description of the scene is reviewed in a book called *Japan in London in English*<sup>21</sup>, so look for it should you be interested in the problematic interview, and the exposition itself.

I am much grateful to Terry Bennett, a photo-historian in England. From the trove of his recent acquisitions, here are shown three photographs: two in *carte-de-visite* format and one cabinet card of the Japanese (slide 21: a tub artiste of Tannaker, Asplet & Green, Jersey, UK; slide 22: a conjuror of Tannaker doing the butterfly trick, Asplet & Green, Jersey, UK; slide 23: a young girl of a Caucasian face in kimono wearing her hair in Japanese style, cabinet card, unmarked and attributed as the Japanese Village).

According to the official guidebook of the Japanese Village, Otakesan Buhicrosan, a native lady who contributed her essay to its introduction, is no doubt Tannaker Buhicrosan's wife. Born in Japan, she had been a resident in England for as long as eighteen years under the blessings of Christianity<sup>22</sup>. From the figure as disclosed here, we could make out the date of her departure from her native country in 1867. But early in October 1868 the Tannaker's troupe of Japanese were still touring around Australia, as is evident in Dr. Sissons' paper on Japanese troupes in Asia and Australia<sup>23</sup>. A trip to England from St. Kilda, if so ever, must have been a little later than that. Her memory is not necessarily incorrect, though.

Dr. Lynn, or "Professor" Simmons, apparently tried to prevail on Japanese jugglers to go with him. However, the time was too early for him to get them to do so. The magician soon gave it up probably because the Japanese were, by law, not permitted to leave the country. Not because the wanted jugglers never dreamed of going out to see the world. Certainly, it is very safe to say so, if you read between the lines of his book of adventures. Therefore, my hypothetical argument now to be put forward is as follows. Tannaker Buhicrosan alone, or those artistes who looked *un-Japanese* could have gone out of and come back to the country before 1866, without having a risk of being caught by Japanese officials in Nagasaki. In fact, as early as in 1862, a show engagement by the Japanese and the Chinese was reported in a Brighton paper<sup>24</sup>. A further study of this particular engagement remains to be carried out.

After all, I am coming all the way only to repeat my skepticism, as for the insular policy of our country, which I expressed at the beginning of my discussion. In many respects Nagasaki was quite an advanced, international town in the Edo era. Should we accept this, we, for the first time, would be sure to have a better reading of Miyaoka Kenji's fascinating book (in 1959) on Japanese *gone out and defunct*, in which he mentions that in 1866 a troupe of Satsuma's left Nagasaki, "purchased" by a certain Englishman<sup>25</sup>. The book, written for the general public, carries not a single note to support his arguments, but we should consider his inimitable sense to historiography



of modern Japan as an experienced businessman of international trade. We should try to understand his schemes of things described therein.

Finally, a brief mention of the troupes of Satsuma's Japanese may be of our interest. As far as I know, one Australian engagement of one Satsuma troupe was recorded in April of 1871, while the other Satsuma's New York engagement was also recorded in the same month of the same year. Then, it follows that there seemed to exist at least three separate troupes of the same name. For the latter proved itself to be a reorganised troupe of Hayatake's Japanese, and it is absolutely impossible for one troupe to go on a travelling circuit for six years without drawing any public attention anywhere in the world-wide community of the British Empire. In addition, a possibility that the first Satsuma was identical with Tannaker cannot be left out. As Miyaoka was totally at a loss what to do with *his* Satsuma about fifty years ago, we are yet unable to solve the Satsuma riddle.

#### 4. Theatrical Network of the Pacific Rim and of the Globe

As I mentioned earlier, Robert Sparrow Smythe, who came to Japan in 1863 as a theatrical manager to young Dr. Lynn and the others, was throughout his life a celebrity of the Anglo-Australian society. For instance, Smythe invited Mark Twain to Australia in 1895 and supported the great writer's world tour by becoming his manager and traveling companion<sup>26</sup>. Not for Smythe alone, but for people who moved to live in Australia in mid-century, China and Japan, in particular, were of greatest concern to their business for the near future. Due to especial scarcity of information on Japan, they wanted to know more about the country via any reliable source. They must have devoured every word from the mouth of he who had a chance to see a real life of the Japanese. No wonder Albert William Hansard and John Reddie Black each started a newspaper business in Nagasaki and Yokohama early in 1860s. As the English had already based themselves in major cities on the Pacific Rim as well as the rest of the world under the flag of the British Empire, current topics of informed sources naturally spread out all over the world. If belatedly, it was only a matter of speed at a time of marine transportation.

Unlike the most articles of journalists in the third person, many autobiographical records of men of importance in Nagasaki and Yokohama, with notes and diaries by the hand of temporal visitors of varied professions from the West, are uniquely interesting all the more for their viewpoints. The two pieces of work by Dr. Lynn and his pianist Chisholm<sup>27</sup>, therefore, should not be left out from the list of historical documents *par excellence*. What we learn from the legacy is that such a close relationship they made in the international society that was still small enough to know each other. Especially at the last decade of the Tokugawa shogunate, the foreign relationship as described so far was nothing but the Anglo-Australian connection with Japan.



Slide 24: Willie Edouin (Author's Collection)

From the viewpoint of a theatre historian, we must now understand that a theatrical network of the Pacific Rim including East India came to be full established by the middle of 1860s. As a matter of fact, by the spring of 1866 such artistes as George and Annie Yeamans, with their daughter Jennie, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Birch, Willie Edouin (1845-1908) came to Yokohama to entertain us with their artistry (slide 24: Willie Edouin, picture card, UK; slide 25: W. A. Birch, in 1870 in Australia?).

The Yeamans were a family of thespians and appeared in circus in Australia. Settled in America after a sojourn in Yokohama, both ladies became actresses of fame on the musical stage. Mr. Birch was a diorama artiste and his wife accompanied him as a pianist. Their performance records have been found in Melbourne, Yokohama, San Francisco, and again in Yokohama. Willie Edouin was a famous law comedian on both sides of the Atlantic. Born in England, and one of the Lewis-Bryer family members of theatre in Australia, he came to Japan via China with the Birches. His theatrical activities in Yokohama are in the dark, while his burlesque of Tetsuwari's juggler (slide 16) in San Francisco was quite a historic performance to be remembered<sup>28</sup>.

It is no surprise that all of the performers remarked above were closely related to "Professor" Risley. From that point, more words of observation may be required for them. In all probabilities the Yeamans and Risley met in Australia through the management of Row's Circus from California in the 1850s. After the family moved to Yokohama, they became business partners when the professor opened his

The brokenhearted milkman and the bluff piece of ground



Plate 4: Risley as a broken hearted milkman in Yokohama

amphitheatre in November 7, 1864<sup>29</sup>. Worth noting is that they had produced a “Japanese performance” before the first month passed by. The evening entertainment took place on December 2. Who appeared for that occasion we do not know, while it is worth noting again that Asakichisan, a butterfly trick specialist to Gensui’s troupe, and Namigorô (slide 7) of Risley’s Japanese, with his wife and son, gave a couple of joint performances at John Reddie Black’s residence about three months before<sup>30</sup>. We should not forget to mention that James Marquis Chisholm was there throughout the programmes of the early autumn season.

On the other hand, the Birches, in 1866, wrote a comic song of Risley based on the melody of a music-hall song of the day “Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green or the Broken Hearted Milkman<sup>31</sup>.” On February 22, 1866, Risley came back from San Francisco with his cows to provide the Yokohama community with fresh milk. Many died in the storm on the way. Therefore, his dairy business that opened in the beginning of April was the talk of the town, where the Birches and Edouin appeared to reconstruct a stage of a music hall in London<sup>32</sup>. The rest of the story is self-explanatory. Charles Wirgman, too, illustrated the August issue of his *Japan Punch* with Risley as a broken hearted milkman (plate 4).

Incidentally, is it not strange that we can never get sight of the comedian Willie Edouin, however hard we keep trying to find the slightest reference to him in newspaper accounts? Should he really be around, it would be most difficult for us to picture him staying idle behind the stage of Mr. Birch and Mrs. Birch at her pianoforte.

A mystery no longer remains. Truth to tell, all the contrivances are disclosed in an extremely long review article of the *Japan Times* that appeared in the issue of June 2, 1866. Mr. Birch’s superb narrative of “monopolylogue” had been all supported by a “dumb orator”

whose name was Willie Edouin up until the very final scene of the farewell benefit for the Birches. When such a full programme as usual was drawing to an end, the dumb orator for the first time appeared before the audience as a proper person to make a speech that used to be a custom on the stage of the benefit.

The last performance of the night was J. M. Morton’s popular farce *Box and Cox*, in which Edouin’s new reading of the character of Mrs. Bouncer a landlady against two tenants put in one room acted out by local talent was highly appreciated. From my knowledge of the nineteenth century theatre and from Edouin’s brilliant career as a versatile low comedian, the closing remark of a critic that “the farce fitly concluded the most successful evening’s entertainment that has yet been given in Yokohama” is definitely not a flattering compliment as was too much heard in addresses on such occasions as the benefit. And, undoubtedly, all the three, especially the fair sex, earned a substantial amount of money for their trip as well as honour and praise for the next possible visit.

In consequence, it is most certain that the quality of theatrical activities then witnessed in Yokohama quite reached a standard of the day although the quantity yet fell short, compared with the other foreign settlements in East Asia. Then, it becomes more urgent than ever that we should understand Robert Sparrow Smythe’s earliest arrival in Japan was of great significance for the birth of our modern theatre in Japan.

The title of this paper consists of two English phrases, the former of which is adapted from the title of Smythe’s account “Professionals Abroad<sup>33</sup>” that appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* of London in February of 1871. A man of the West, he must have used that word quite naturally for his purpose, but we may find in it another different meaning he was unaware of. “Professionals” included not only the Occidental but also the Oriental, that is, the Japanese. In short, whether they were Japanese or non-Japanese, those professionals tended to be mobile. And, no matter where they visited, they had their photographs taken at a local photo-studio to promote their business and to sell themselves as known artistes. Surviving the destiny of ephemera, those theatrical portraits, aged and faded, are thus placed in our hand for proper inspection.

\* Due to circumstances, select images are shown in this paper. Instead, sources of the images used for the original presentation are given in the body of the text. The photographs of plate 1 and 2 are by courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the plate 3 by Yûshôdô Shoten in Tokyo.

\* Special thanks go to Dr. Robert H. Sayers, Terry Bennett, the late Dr. Doris E. Abramson, and staffs at the Nagasaki University Library.

## Notes

1 Huffman, James L., *A Yankee in Meiji Japan The Crusading Journalist Edward*

- H. House, Lanham, MD, U.S.A.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2003, p. 48.
- 2 *Illustrated London News*, April 20, 1867, p. 387. The following day the troupe appeared again at Windsor Castle, according to the *Era*, April 21, 1867, p. 15. A follow-up article of the *New York Herald*, June 8, 1867 draws our attention; “The Japanese were accompanied by Mr. J. Mitchell, Mr. E. Prior, Mr. W[illiam]. Grant and their manager, Mr. [Andrew] Nimmo, Mr. Osborne Williams officiated at the pianoforte.” (Insertions with square brackets are mine.)
  - 3 The date of issue is November 23, 1866, according to the Western calendar.
  - 4 *Daily Japan Herald* (Yokohama), December 3 and 6, 1866.
  - 5 *Times* (London), February 5, 1867. They arrived in London, on February 2, with a delegate of fourteen Japanese (bakufu ryūgakusei), and part of their life on the way is reported in the paper. Particularly interesting is a description of one of the female artistes, as her face is identified in a couple of photographs, taken in Germany and Italy, of Robert H. Sayers’ Collection.
  - 6 *New York Times*, November 20, 1858. The source of this account is letters from Lieutenant A. W. Harbersham who joined an East Asian expedition in 1850s. Illinois’ *Oleney Times* (December 10, 1858) reads “Harbersham’s letters describing Japan.” Different editions are discovered in Iowa’s Davenport *Daily Gazette* (November 29, 1858) and in Wisconsin’s Manitowoc *Weekly Tribune* (February 2, 1859), for instance.
  - 7 *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, February 29, 1868, p. 380. A German edition was also available in a different format.
  - 8 See Mihara, Aya, *Nihonjin Tōjō: Seiyō gekijō de enjirareta edo no misemono (Enter Japanese: A Night in Japan at the Opera House)*, Tokyo: Shohakusha, 2008, Chapter 8. A man who, in San Francisco, sold Maguire all his interests of this Japanese business is De Witt C. Brower. A wealthy merchant in Yokohama, he was a sole sponsor of the original project.
  - 9 Takano Hirohachi, *Nikkichō*. A select bibliography relating the diary and the world tour are as follows: Yasuoka, Shōtarō, *Daiseikimatsu Sākasu*, Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1984; “Professor Risley and Japanese Acrobats Selections from the Diary of Hirohachi Takano, a Manager for the Risley Troupe, during the World Tour 1866-1869” in *Nineteenth Century Theatre* (Amherst, MA) Vol. 18, Nos. 1 and 2, 1990, pp. 62-74; “Takano Hirohachi Nikki” in *Iino Chōshi* vol. 3., Fukushima: Iino-machi, 2005.
  - 10 See his paper elsewhere in this issue.
  - 11 Mihara, Aya, “Umi o watatta nihon no misemono” in *Bessatsu Taiyō*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2003, pp. 38-43.
  - 12 Opening night was on Monday, April 13, 1868, and they stayed there to the last week of June.
  - 13 *Daily Japan Herald*, October 30, 1866. The *Japan Times* of the following day carries a brief account of three separate departures of troupes of Japanese, which is later transcribed in the *Times* (London), December 29, 1866. The Public Record Office in Kew holds a relating document of foreign affairs (a letter of William Grant to F. G. Myburgh, Yokohama, dated November 12, 1866). The accession number is F. O. 1866, 6951-4-32-1, No. 51, Encl.4.
  - 14 A monochrome broadside elaborately designed for the benefit performance on December 19, 1867 is known (Robert H. Sayers’ Collection).
  - 15 Seward, Olive Risley, ed., *W. H. Seward’s Travels Around the World*, New York: Appleton & Co., 1873, p. 32. Cf. Henderson, Daniel M., *Yankee Ships in China Seas Adventures of Pioneer Americans in the Troubles Far East*, New York: Hastings House, 1946. In its reprinted edition, published in 1970 from Books For Library Press, Freeport, New York, Henderson says “In the evening, Japanese jugglers entertained the company in the cabin (p. 194).”
  - 16 Hardiman, Allister, “Who was Doctor Lynn?” on <http://www.uelectric.com/pastimes/lynn.htm> (2004/05/26).
  - 17 One more musician Rudolph Sipp joined later, but he is not in our focus now. Sipp is a son to Robert Sipp who was a violin teacher of Richard Wagner, according to Allister Hardiman.
  - 18 Lynn, Dr. H. S., *The Adventures of the Strange Man, with a Supplement Showing How It’s Done!*, Leicester: Edward Lamb, 1877, p. 11. We do not know yet whom he meant by “Prince Satsuma.”
  - 19 *Japan Herald*, supplement issue, October 24, 1863. There must have been at least one different version of the announcement, because the translation, of which I will explain below, was definitely not from the one that appeared in this *Herald*.
  - 20 In April 1864, Simmons had a two-week engagement at Tremont Temple in Boston. Interestingly, his advance agent was James Waterman Wilder (1833-1889), who later became the same to Thomas Smith’s Imperial Troupe of Japanese, i.e., the Tetsuwari troupe. And, all by coincidence, they also appeared at Tremont Temple in March of 1867.
  - 21 Kurata, Yoshihiro, *1885-nen Rondon Nihonjinmura (Japan in London)*, Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1983.
  - 22 Otakesan Buhicrosan, edited by R. Reinagle Barnett, *Japan, Past and Present The Manners and Customs of the Japanese*, London: the proprietors of the Japanese Native Village, London, 1885.
  - 23 Sissons, David C. S., “Japanese acrobatic troupes touring Australasia 1867-1900” in *Australian Drama Studies* No. 35, October 1999, p. 85.
  - 24 *Brighton Gazette*, September 25 and October 9, 1862. More records of the same are discovered in *Era* of London, for instance. The sources are newspaper clippings typewritten by the late Kathleen Barker, a theatre historian in Bristol.
  - 25 Miyaoka, Kenji, *Ikoku Henro Tabigeinin Shimatusho*, Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1978, pp. 17-18. As far as I know, no document of their departure seems to be discovered.
  - 26 Interestingly, for young Mark Twain, Risley’s troupe of Japanese was his archrival, as each of the two made a debut in New York on the same night, Monday, May 6, 1867. Twain’s letter to his mother, dated May 1, 1867, is strongest evidence. For details, see works of the Mark Twain Project. The Anglo-Australian connection is in part discovered here. Those related to each other in 1861 to 1867 are Robert Sparrow Smythe, John Henry Anderson (magician aforesaid), Edward Peron Hingston (agent to Artemus Ward and Risley’s Japanese), Washington Simmons, James Waterman Wilder (agent to Simmons and Tetsuwari’s Japanese, old friend to Artemus Ward), Artemus Ward, Robert Heller (magician whose agent in 1864, 1867 was Hingston), Edward Howard House (journalist to the *New York Tribune* who assisted Twain’s debut there), and Mark Twain.
  - 27 Chisholm, Marquis, *The Adventures of a traveling musician in Australia, China & Japan*, reprinted from the “*Glasgow Herald*,” London, 1865. When it was published, Chisholm was visiting the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, as a manager of a Chinese giant Chang whom he had met in China in 1864. So, the date of its preface, written by him, is November 20, 1865.
  - 28 Edouin’s representation of the Japanese juggler was first performed on Saturday, December 8, 1866 at the Metropolitan Theatre. Since a preview of the Tetsuwari Japanese was held in the afternoon of December 7 at Maguire’s Opera House, another sensation broke out by his comical characterisation of “Professor Ichaboo the great Japanese magician.”
  - 29 *Japan Herald*, November 5, 1864.
  - 30 According to the *Japan Herald* from August 27 to September 17, four evening concerts were held every week starting August 29.
  - 31 The song, written and sung by Harry Clifton, was such a smash hit in 1865 that in no time it found its way not only in every corner of England but also in major cities of America from Boston to Chicago (Sheet music, Boston: Oliver Diston, n. d.).
  - 32 They arrived from Shanghai on April 12, 1866, and left for San Francisco via Honolulu on June 7, 1866 (*Japan Times’ Daily Advertiser*, April 13 and June 10, 1866).
  - 33 He writes it in the third person, but it is obvious that the article is based on Smythe’s personal experiences on tour. The editor of the journal is his ex-colleague in London, Frederick Greenwood. My gratitude for this knowledge goes to Allister Hardiman and Dr. Edwin A. Dawes, professor of chemistry at University of Hull and member of the Magic Circle in London.