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James Murdoch (1856–1921): Historian, teacher and much else besides

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James Murdoch (1856–1921)

Historian, Teacher and Much Else Besides

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Ten years ago one might have said that there was no need for an article on Murdoch—that his three-volume *History of Japan* and his association with William Lane's 'New Australia' commune in Paraguay were a sufficient guarantee against oblivion. But in 1977 the Japan Foundation printed a review of Japanese studies in Australia in which Murdoch received no mention.[1] This, no doubt, would have afforded him some amusement. It is to Sansom that we owe the image of Murdoch's shade "happily pursuing his studies in the Elysian fields, arguing now and then in his own Doric with Rhadamanthus".[2] Throughout his life he expended much ink jousting with establishments. Perhaps he remarked to Rhadamanthus how satisfying it is to the iconoclast to find that he and his works have escaped becoming authorities.

The third, posthumous, volume of Murdoch's *History*[3] includes a 4,000-word biographical foreword (lifted without acknowledgement from the obituary columns of the *Japan Chronicle*[4]). Insofar as this was written by someone who was obviously acquainted with

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[1] *Japan Foundation Newsletter*, 5:1, April 1977, p. 12. According to this review, the Department of Oriental Studies at Sydney University (to which Murdoch was appointed in 1918) was founded in 1922 by Arthur Sadler (Murdoch's successor)!

[2] G. Sansom, 'Address at the Annual Ceremony of the School of Oriental and African Studies', 1956, reproduced in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 24:4, 1956, p. 566.

[3] J. Murdoch, *A History of Japan: Vol III, The Tokugawa Epoch 1652–1868*, edited by J. H. Longford, London, 1926.

[4] This journal (which appeared in both a daily and a weekly edition) was known until 1905 as the *Kobe Choronicle*. It then changed its name to the *Japan Chronicle* but remained under the previous editorship and ownership. Throughout this article it is referred to merely as the *Chronicle*.

Murdoch and his work,[5] one may ask whether, since it is readily available in any library, there is any need to go over old ground. But the following reasons alone seem sufficient to justify another biographical article: (i) the obituary contains a number of inaccuracies and sometimes in its description of Murdoch's achievements is more adulatory than informative; (ii) the author appears to lack first-hand knowledge of Murdoch's activities before his second visit to Japan (1889) and after his return to Australia (1917). These are unfortunate gaps. To the Australian historian, Murdoch's writings in the first period provide an interesting example both of the rapid and thoroughgoing acculturation of the British migrant in Australia and of radical colonial thought on such important issues of the day as republicanism, land ownership, social equality and coloured immigration. Similarly, his activities in the later period cast some light on the origins of the military intelligence community in Australia and on the emergence of distinctively Australian attitudes towards the 'Pacific Question'.

Early Years

James Murdoch, the son of William Murdoch and his wife, Helen (*née* McDonald), was born in the parish of Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, on 27 September 1856. About his parents the parish records[6] tell us little more than at the time of their marriage the previous year they were employed as a "farm servant" and as a domestic at 'Redcloak' (a farm which lies within the parish about a mile outside the town of Stonehaven), and that Helen died of tuberculosis when James was ten months old. But Murdoch, himself, tells us something. I have little doubt that in his short story, 'The Wooing of Webster', Murdoch, through the mouth of Francis Webster, is speaking about his own family:

[5] *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, 17 November 1921. As the *Chronicle*'s obituarist we may exclude two likely candidates, Yamagata Isō (his former student) and Miyata Mineuchi (his assistant in Sydney). Neither was in Japan at the time of Murdoch's death. Furthermore, Miyata would not have placed Murdoch's chair in the wrong capital, Melbourne. Robert Young, the *Chronicle*'s editor, would himself have had sufficient knowledge of Murdoch for the task; he had published the first volume of Murdoch's *History* in 1903 and, in the years that followed, Murdoch had written numerous articles for him.

[6] Reproduced in Sugiyama Tamaki, 'James Murdoch (II): A Bibliographical Study', *Okayama Shōdai Ronsō*, 19:2, 1984, pp. 2–6.

> My folks had been swinkers and hedgers and hinds and drudges on the lands of a master off and on for generations. That's my father's forbears. But, notwithstanding that, we have our coat-of-arms, and can trace ourselves right away back to the day of Bannockburn, when we got them. My mother—she died when I was a brat in the cradle—was a Macdonald of Glencoe. And if we didn't have the dollars to maintain our dignity, we had pride enough any way to say nothing about it. My governor, in spite of his drudging, was the most outspoken wight in the country-side, and made Minister and Laird alike sit up and listen when he had a mind to. When the innovation in the posture of prayer came about in the kirk,[7] he stood up like the valiant man he was and led a forlorn hope of one against the embattled authorities. God rest his soul—he had spunk and smeddum for a barnful.
>
> But he had also a plentiful lack of bawbees, because he was too honest to get rich by overreaching his neighbours.[8]

This was written some months after Murdoch had received the news of his father's death; and other parts of the same short story are, demonstrably, autobiographical.

Very little is known about Murdoch's boyhood. According to his obituary in the *Aberdeen University Review*, his help was required at home and it was not until he was about eleven that he started at the local school.[9] Furthermore, he soon had to leave and work as a grocer's boy.[10] This suggests further that Murdoch and Francis Webster may be one and the same person:

> I was thirteen when I was introduced to the dignity of labour and the blessings of industry, and twelve hours a day was the tale of my toil, and fourteen on Saturdays, which was payday—it being highly proper that apprentices should be duly prepared to appreciate the holy calm of the Sabbath . . . Four hungry years of this soul-eating treadmill, during which my only joy was stolen snatches of books I kept hid in holes all over the shop. . . .[11]

Years later an Aberdeen book-seller remembered the boy who

[7] This controversy began in the presbytery of Aberdeen. The congregation of East Church on the initiative of the incumbent, Revd J. M. Lang (1856–1858), adopted the practice of kneeling for prayer and standing for singing, until required by the Presbytery to abandon such innovations (W. T. Maxwell, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 167–68).

[8] 'A. M.', *From Australia and Japan*, London, 1892, pp. 97–98.

[9] *Aberdeen University Review*, vol. 9, p. 109.

[10] M. W. MacCallum, 'Professor James Murdoch', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 1921.

[11] *From Australia and Japan*, p. 98.

"would walk in the sixteen miles from Stonehaven for a new book and walk back again".[12]

Murdoch was a pupil at Fetteresso parish school when, on 13 April 1875 at the age of eighteen, he gained a free place at the Grammar School, Old Aberdeen.[13] Presumably he had resumed his studies at the parish school after some years at work. Perhaps, like Francis Webster, he had returned to the parish school as a hard-ridden pupil-teacher. He was at the Grammar School for six months, cramming for the Bursary examination for entrance to the University of Aberdeen. It was a small establishment—about forty boys aged from about seven to eighteen divided into two classes, studying Latin, Greek, mathematics and English, with the emphasis on the first two. Since Latin prose composition attracted one third of the marks at the Bursary examination, one hour a day, four days a week was devoted to it.[14] As critics of the system pointed out, at the examination "the most accomplished linguist in Scotland might compete in vain against a Banffshire plough-boy who hardly knew his own language, and not one word of any other living language, but had acquired the knack of writing grammatical Latin prose".[15] Such a régime equipped Murdoch in after years readily to master a number of written languages and to express himself powerfully, though without grace or economy, in his own.

Murdoch topped the Bursary examination. The announcement of the results in King's College quad was one of the proudest moments in his life:

> That was a moment, my son! A moment worth two years, six years, ten years of an ordinary life! I have never heard, and never shall ever hear, music like that cheer. You see, I had just as good as breasted the tape first from fifty yards back of scratch in the quarter, and they knew it and shouted like wild things.[16]

[12] W. L. Mackenzie, 'My Friend James Murdoch', *Aberdeen University Review*, vol 9, p. 228.

[13] Archivist, University of Aberdeen, to author, 14 July 1982 and 6 September 1982.

[14] Education Commission (Scotland), *Report on the State of Education in the Burgh and Middle-Class Schools in Scotland* (Great Britain, House of Commons, Papers, 1867–68, vol 29), vol 2, pp. 24–26.

[15] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 115–16. For a defence of the system see W. D. Geddes, *Classical Education in the North of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1869, pp. 25–33.

[16] *From Australia and Japan*, p. 101.

University Student (1875–1880)

The Scottish arts degree was broader than the typical degree taken by classics students in England. It embraced four elements: Latin and Greek; philosophy; mathemetics (including 'natural philosophy', that is, physics); and English. At Aberdeen there was, in addition, a compulsory science subject, natural history.[17] The philosophy was taught at a relatively high standard. At the same time as they were doing very elementary Greek and mathematics, Scottish students were able to pursue arguments on such topics as Hume's theory of causality and Berkeley's theory of perception.[18] The undergraduate course was of four years duration. In his first year Murdoch took Greek, Latin and English and topped the examinations in each.[19] In his third year he took seventh place in logic but failed in senior mathematics and secured only a bare pass (forty-second place) in natural philosophy. As these third year results are identical with 'Webster's' we may accept the latter's explanation of them:

> I just did nothing, or rather I allowed higher mathematics and physics to go to the devil, instead of wrestling with them like a man, as I ought to have done that session. I read snatches of Philosophy, and became a mild sort of Cyrenaic. And novels and romances, and all the literary pastry, and jam, and sponge-cakes, and the rubbish generally that gives you incurable mental dyspepsia, I devoured till I was surfeited and scunnered . . . Towards examination time I did try to pull up a bit and make up the leeway, but the stuff I did was as pithless and worthless as moist muck. . . Well, the smash came, and it *was* a smash! A miserable last prize in one class, gulfed in another, and ploughed in the third . . . The First Bursar and First Prizeman utterly ploughed. . . .[20]

Perhaps with Murdoch, as with 'Webster', it was the response to rejection by a woman in favour of a more affluent and socially presentable suitor. In his fourth year Murdoch achieved first class honours in classics, second class honours in mental philosophy, honourable mention (nineteenth place) in moral philosophy, and a

[17] *Report of Royal Commission on Scottish Universities* (Great Britain, House of Commons, Papers, 1878, vol. 32), p. 24.

[18] G. B. Davie, *The Democratic Intellect*, Edinburgh, 1964, p. 12.

[19] Murdoch's results for each year of the course are reproduced by Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (II)', pp. 9–11, from University of Aberdeen, Faculty of Arts Students Register, vol. 1, 1860/61–1891/92.

[20] *From Australia and Japan*, pp. 10–11.

pass (forty-second place) in natural history and was awarded the Simpson Greek Prize, the Seafield Latin Medal and the Fullerton Travelling Scholarship (£100 per annum for two years).[21]

In the obituary published in the Glasgow *Bulletin* we have the following picture of Murdoch as an undergraduate as seen by a contemporary:

> At Aberdeen University he was regarded by seniors as well as us juniors, with admiration approaching to awe of his extraordinary cleverness. He was otherwise different from the common undergraduate. He had worked himself up to University level with very little tutoring or schooling, and as he was older than most of his classmates [by about three years], it is probable that he had to work for his living at the same time, though he seemed to pass through his course with financial ease. Anyhow, he was not only aloof and inclined to be dogmatic when drawn into debate but he had a curious mental twist that might have repelled worship. It did not; his queerness did not count against his scholarship and quickness of apprehension that was quite out of the common. . . True to character, he had a queer start in workaday life, and I have always wondered how he 'got on' with fellow writers in Japan and Australia, but he certainly made a fine use of his exceptional brain. . . .[22]

Too much should not be made of Murdoch's aloofness as an undergraduate. It does not appear to have prevented his participating in student politics. A brief item in the Aberdeen *Free Press* of 7 November 1878 indicates that he was one of the small group that (unsuccessfully) ran Disraeli's Home Secretary, Cross, against the young Lord Roseberry in the election for the Lord Rectorship of the University:

> Mr Murdoch next ascended the platform and having somewhat ostentatiously flaunted the blue ribbon on his 'Glengarry' proceeded to assert that Imperial politics had nothing to do with university affairs—('Oh', applause and hisses). They did not bring forward Mr Cross as a conservative candidate—(groans and cheers). The arguments to the contrary were claptrap—(uproar). They brought forward Mr Cross because he would be able to carry the university reforms through Parliament—('Oh', and groans). At this stage a tremendous row took place at the back of the hall.[23]

Nor did this aloofness prevent his participating in student pranks.

[21] University of Aberdeen, *Calendar*, 1881/1882, p. 104.

[22] 'A Scottish Scholar' by "D", *Bulletin* 30 December 1921. "D" is presumably James Davidson, the *Bulletin*'s assistant editor, who graduated from Aberdeen in 1881.

[23] Murdoch himself refers to this in *Japan Echo*, 15 November 1890, p. 34.

In later years he related how he was taken into custody by the police just as he was completing the task of collecting two dozen door-knockers and bell-pulls from the front entrances of eminent citizens. One of these belonged to Professor 'Davie'[24] who, Murdoch writes, "had an unreasoning and unholy 'down' on me ever since I had the ill-advised temerity to argue matters with him when he insisted on fining me". Reluctantly compelled to return the bell-pull, Murdoch evened the score a few days later when he introduced a large and none—too—clean boar through the window of 'Davie's' drawing-room while he was entertaining "the intellect and fashion of the University".[25]

Classics were taught at a considerably lower standard in the Scottish than in the English universities. Hence when Murdoch and other Scotsmen of promise went on to Oxford they enrolled as undergraduates. Murdoch entered Worcester College in October 1879 and was awarded a Sir Thomas Cookes scholarship and Lady Holford exhibition. There is, however, no record of his taking any University examination after Responsions, which he passed in March 1880.[26] He was back at Aberdeen during the 1880–1881 session as Assistant to the professor of Greek. His duties included taking the advanced stream of the first year Greek class[27] and lecturing on Sanskrit.[28] A possible explanation of why Murdoch cut short his time at Oxford is his marriage. On 26 June 1880 at Lyme Regis he wed Lucy Parkes, the twenty-year-old daughter of a minister of the Independent church residing there. Possibly Murdoch felt that, with a wife to support, Oxford was a luxury that he could not afford. The *Chronicle* obituary states that, after Oxford, he went on to Göttingen, where he studied Sanskrit under Benfey, and to the Sorbonne. The fact that in March 1881, at a meeting of the Aberdeen Literary Society, he presented a paper on the *Ramayana*[29] confirms that Sanskrit must have been one of his prin-

[24] Presumably David Thompson, Professor of Natural Philosophy (W. K. Leask, 'The Two Davies', *Interamna Borealis*, Aberdeen, 1917, pp. 122ff. I am indebted to the Archivist, University of Aberdeen, for drawing this to my attention).

[25] *Boomerang*, 18 May 1889, p. 17.

[26] Assistant archivist, Oxford University, to editor, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 10 October 1980.

[27] Mackenzie, 'My Friend James Murdoch', pp. 229, 231.

[28] In the advertisement for his *History of Japan* appearing on the end-paper of his Inaugural Lecture at Sydney (*Australia Must Prepare*, Sydney, 1919) he is described as "sometime Assistant-Professor of Greek and Lecturer in Sanskrit in Aberdeen University".

[29] This was published, after Murdoch's arrival in Australia, in the *Victorian Review* 6:33, 1882, pp. 326–49.

cipal interests in 1880. Nevertheless, his period with Benfey (and at the Sorbonne) must, of necessity, have been brief. It was also, no doubt, for family reasons that, when in November 1880 the *Athenaeum* advertised the headmastership of the new Grammar School at Maryborough in Queensland, with a salary of £500 per annum and a six-roomed residence, Murdoch applied. The telegram informing him of his appointment was despatched to him on 8 March 1881.[30] A month later, on 10 April at Lyme Regis, his first and only child, Kenneth Macdonald Murdoch, was born.

Murdoch in Queensland 1881-1888

The Murdochs arrived in Queensland on 30 July 1881 aboard the British India vessel, *Dorunda*.

There are strong overtones of agnosticism and anti-clericalism in Murdoch's paper on the Ramayama. A statement in the *Athenaeum* advertisement that "no Clerk in Holy Orders or Public Minister of Religion" was eligible for appointment to the headmastership may have led him to hope that at Maryborough he would be among kindred spirits. If so, he was to be disappointed.

In the first week of February 1885 Murdoch on his return from an education conference in New Zealand tendered his resignation, to take effect on 30 June.[31] It was accepted. On 5 March, however, the trustees summarily dismissed him for resisting their authority to require members of his staff to give lessons at the Girls' Grammar School as well as at the Boys'.[32] This may not have been an isolated issue. It is possible that Murdoch had already become unpopular with the trustees for other reasons. For example, one reader of the *Wide Bay and Burnett News* wrote to the editor that

> there have been hints and inuendoes thrown out that Mr Murdoch's dismissal has nothing to do with the working of the school, in fact, is on purely domestic grounds; in other words the little demon—scandal—has crept within the Grammar School confines and has chosen another besides the head *master* for its victims. . . .[33]

[30] I am indebted for this information to Mr J. R. L Hyne, C.M.G., of Kent Street, Maryborough, who has custody of the first outwards letter-book of the Grammar School's Board of Trustees.

[31] *Maryborough Chronicle*, 7 February 1885.

[32] *Wide Bay & Burnett News*, 12 March 1885. Cuttings on this subject dated 12 and 17 March are included in file EDU/BC 251 in the Queensland State Archives.

[33] *Ibid.*, 17 March 1885, emphasis in original.

This suggests that Murdoch's first marriage may already have begun to disintegrate. Another letter to the editor demanded that the boys be taught "by teachers who at least respect the common religious beliefs, which are the foundation of character and fitness for our Christian way of living".[34]

According to the *Maryborough Chronicle*, Murdoch on 6 March "took formal leave of the boys, who have good reason for viewing his departure with genuine regret, for in school, in the playground or in the social circle, Mr Murdoch has ever placed himself on the best terms with his pupils and posed before them as the scholar, the friend and the gentleman".[35]

From Maryborough Murdoch went as second master to Brisbane Grammar School. His first year there must have been exhausting; for concurrently he was reading for the Bar examinations. He sat these at honours level in April 1886. There were eight two-hour papers each consisting of fifteen questions. He received 80 per cent in one paper and good marks in another five. In two papers, however, he secured only 24 per cent and 25 per cent and this reduced his overall average to 47 per cent. Consequently, he was failed. He then brought an action against the Board of Examiners in the Supreme Court, claiming that his performance had been sufficient to entitle him to admission. His counsel contended that the Board in setting questions that were too difficult to be answered in the time allotted had acted *ultra vires*. The judge accepted this and referred the matter back to the Board for their reconsideration, urging on them the desirability of conducting a *viva voce* supplementary examination. The Board, however, appealed to the full court, which rejected Murdoch's argument. It was not, however, without sympathy for him, and confirmed so much of the the original order as would enable him to go up for reexamination without paying a second fee. In his summing up, the Chief Justice pointed out that part of the trouble had been Murdoch's mistaken belief that he was obliged to answer every question and that the effort to do this had been too much for him.[36]

Murdoch did not persist with his intention to join the legal profession and remained at Brisbane Grammar School until the end of

[34] *Ibid.*, 12 March 1885.

[35] *Maryborough Chronicle*, 7 March 1885.

[36] *Brisbane Courier*, 12 June 1886 and 4 August 1886; *Maryborough Chronicle*, 15 June 1886 and 6 August 1886. I am indebted to Mr W. G. Rendall of Maryborough for bringing this incident to my attention.

1887.[37] He was well regarded there, the headmaster noting at the time of his departure that he had served the school most ably and faithfully.[38]

For about three months Murdoch worked as a journalist for Brisbane's new radical weekly magazine, *The Boomerang*.[39] For him this was not an entirely new departure. At Maryborough he had been supplementing his headmaster's salary by freelancing for local newspapers.[40]

'Overflowing China'

At the end of March 1888 he set out on a visit to the Far East. This was to last a year. It seems possible that he undertook the journey in order to free himself from the frustrations (or from the recollections) of an unhappy marriage. Lucy did not accompany him and he eventually remarried in Japan in 1899.[41]

The following lines occur in some verse that Murdoch published in 1890:

The obied maids o' Dai Nippon are a sicht richt fair tae see,

[37] S. Stephenson, *Annals of the Brisbane Grammar School*, Brisbane 1923, p. 15.

[38] Headmaster to G. Souter, 9 June 1866 (Souter Papers, Fisher Library, University of Sydney).

[39] *Maryborough Chronicle*, 17 November 1887.

[40] In the *Japan Echo*, 15 November 1890, he claimed that he had "been slinging ink for some seven years off and on" in the course of which he had covered most social events of importance "from a Wide Bay Blacks corroboree up to staid and solemn gubernatorial receptions and Parliamentary banquets". Indeed it seems highly likely that, at the time of his dismissal at Maryborough, the author of the article in the *Wide Bay and Burnett News*, 17 March 1885, lampooning the Board of Trustees was Murdoch himself!

[41] What had become of Lucy we do not know. I am indebted to the editors of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* for the information that in the State of Queensland during the relevent period: (i) no registration of her death was made; (ii) no letters-of-administration for her estate were issued; (iii) no decree of divorce was granted. Professor Hirakawa Sukehiro's excellent and comprehensive article on Murdoch ('*Sōseki no shi—Mādokku sensei*', *Shinchō*, 78, May 1981, p. 115) draws attention to the fact that Murdoch's friend and former pupil, Yamagata, was under the impression that she committed suicide by drowning (Yamagata Isō, '*Nihon no shi-ka Mādokku*', *Taiyō*, November 1926). This may well have been the case. If, for example, she threw herself overboard from a steamer during the hours of darkness, then it is unlikely that the corpse would have been recovered and hence it would have been difficult to produce sufficient evidence for the death to be registered either in Queensland (if the incident had occurred in territorial waters) or in London (if it had occurred while she was travelling on a British ship outside territorial waters).

> But I reck not o' their winsome wiles. A Scottish lass for me!
> Alas! Twas a fair that made me roam across the faem-flecked brine,
> (It boots me not to make my moan, or sough or sign or pine,)
> But I curse the day, I e'er set e'en on her fause South Saxon face,
> An' turned my back on the fouk at hame o' the kindly Scottish race.[42]

Murdoch introduces the same theme in his short story, 'The Wooing of Webster' (1892). In it Webster says that

> a woman sent me to Australia. That was bad. And it was a woman that drove me from Australia, which was worse. Now the latter two episodes are not for publication—at least just at present, because they're other folks' secrets as well as mine. . . .[43]

Once again I suspect that this is Murdoch himself speaking. One also wonders to what extent the remarks of the hero in his short story 'Frank Morton's Finish' (1891) are autobiographical:

> I'm married, but of course my wife and I never live together again. I married her because she had a hard time of it, and I thought I could make her happier, and because I thought she had real grit in her. Well, I found out she simply looked upon a husband as a sort of machine for providing a woman with all the necessaries and luxuries of life and nothing more. I had an idea of doing some work in my time, but she did her best to kill that. To make a long story short, she wanted me to became a robber and a cheat to enable her to gratify her fancies and extravagant vanity, and I wouldn't. So we quit. . . .[44]

However much Murdoch prided himself on his unconventionality,[45] it seems that he embarked upon matrimony with a particularly idealised conception of womanhood. His paper on the *Ramayana* contains the following passage:

> The man that cannot appreciate what follows, is not worthy of the name—at least he deserves never to have had a mother. I question

[42] 'The Scot in Exile' in A. Miall [pseud.], *Don Juan's Grandson in Japan*, Tokyo, 1890, p. 59.

[43] *From Australia and Japan*, p. 96.

[44] *Japan Echo*, 1 January 1891, p. 20.

[45] The Mitchell Library has a manuscript, 'Pagan and Christian', written by Murdoch in his later years under the pseudonym, 'Marius Armidis'. In the preface he addresses it to "the common-sense, rational, unsophisticated, single and generous hearted reader, used to think his own thoughts about things in general, and more especially so, on religious, social and political questions. . ." (Mitchell Library, Sydney, A160).

> very much if anything finer can be found even in European literature. . . .
>
> . . . there stands Sîtâ, with her small, lithe form of faultless outline, with long lashes, dark eyes, swelling bosom, and finely rounded arms, with a sad, sweet smile, looking up lovingly and beseechingly to her lord—doing what? Praying for the boon of being allowed the privilege of sharing the privations, the dangers, and the hardships of her husband's desert exile! It is a scene worthy of being immortalised in marble by the chisel of a Phidias. The man who reads it without being moved ought to be consigned as a mummy specimen to a fossil museum for ever!

Insofar as Lucy Murdoch was only a human being, it is possible that she was never able to measure up to such a standard.

Articles that he wrote for the *Boomerang* during the course of his journey indicate that Murdoch's outward route was Thursday Island, Darwin, Samarang, Batavia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Nagasaki, Yokohama. This strongly suggests that the vessel on which he travelled as far as Hong Kong was the *S.S. Airlie*, which left Sydney on 5 April.[46]

White Australia was one of the *Boomerang*'s most persistent demands and it was at just this time that an increase in the number of the Chinese immigrants arriving in the Northern Territory had set in motion what Willard has described as the "third and last movement against Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies".[47] It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that Murdoch chose for the theme of his *Boomerang* articles, 'Overflowing China: Travelling through the Lands Invaded by the Mongol'.[48] They contain many indications of Murdoch's political philosophy.

[46] We know from his *Boomerang* articles (7 July 1888 and 1 December 1888) that Murdoch set out from Brisbane in March and that the ship's stay at Darwin was five days. The only vessel on this route in March and April to spend five days at Darwin was the *Airlie*. Murdoch would have joined her in Sydney, as her only Queensland port of call was Thursday Island. The absence of Murdoch's name from the list of first and second class passengers published in *The Northern Territory Times* suggests that he may, as the *Chronicle* obituary states, have travelled steerage. Nevertheless, I feel that the *Chronicle* is going too far in accepting as fact the ship-board incidents related in Murdoch's novelette, *Felix Holt Secundus*: there is no reference to them in the *Boomerang* articles, although they are the kind of thing that would have appealed strongly to its readers.

[47] M. Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy*, Melbourne, 1923, p. 69. For a more recent treatment of the anti-Chinese movement during 1888 see C. A. Price, *The Great White Walls Are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australasia 1836–1888*, Canberra, 1974, pp. 186–98.

[48] *Boomerang*, 12 and 19 May 1888, 9 and 30 June 1888, 7 and 14 July 1888, 4 and 11 August 1888.

As was the case with most of the *Boomerang*'s devotees, Murdoch's fervour for 'White Australia' was an amalgam of several elements. These come out very clearly in the articles.

There is what appears to be hostility arising out of cultural differences. Take for example his description of the lunch-time street scene in Darwin:

> Put iron bars in the paneless Chinese windows, and you can fancy yourself standing before the monkey house in the Zoological Gardens at feeding time. . . ; everywhere along the sidewalks you see nothing but what looks like great white-tusked tawny apes, squatting on their haunches on chairs and blocks of wood, eagerly and voraciously cramming the contents of dirty greasy little bowls down their throats with what seems like a filthy pair of knitting needles. They hold the dish quite close to their throats as if they were engaged in a gorging handicap.[49]

Similarly, he describes Chinese sleeping in a tightly packed lodginghouse as "a human heap of maggots". The croupier at a gaming table is an "old pig-tailed ape". "The Chinaman", he writes, "is by nature prone to dirt and filth"[50] and "when he does go to the trouble of performing his ablutions it is no uncommon thing for him to drink the greater portion of the water he has used in the operation, having cleansed his molars and incisors with it between whiles".[51] He is "deeply tainted with one of the gravest and most widely spread of Oriental vices. He runs riot in bribery and revels in corruption".[52] Murdoch refers to the Chinese immigrants as "Chinks", "Chows", "the two-footed rabbit pest", "the saffron curse" and "the swarming yellow agony".

The second element is hostility arising out of economic competition:

> Their fingers have closed on the windpipe of all the European handicrafts in the place, which lie dead and strangled . . . If any of our legislators have doubts about the effect of a Chinese industrial invasion of Australia let him come to Palmerston [Darwin] and have them set at rest once and forever.[53]

The third element is hostility expressed in terms of democratic aspirations:

[49] 9 June 1888.
[50] 11 June 1888.
[51] 30 June 1888.
[52] 4 August 1888.
[53] 12 May 1888.

> Australians mean Australia to be white; that is pretty clear. We don't want to run our State on either an Indian or an old time Southern slave-state model. We want to develop into a bold, sturdy, fearless Democracy, with an intelligence widely and universally diffused. Such an ideal can only be attained by our grasping and maintaining a due idea of the dignity of toil, and cheap coloured, labour is simply fatal to the conception.[54]

Naturally the interrelationship between these elements among both the leaders and the led in Australian politics at the time has been a subject of interest to historians writing about the White Australia policy. Some have tried to answer the question whether one of these elements gave rise to the others.[55] In Murdoch's case it looks as if the cultural hostility was brought into play by the other two elements. For in the same articles Murdoch describes with no indication of hostility or distaste the Japanese community in Darwin, although of course they were identical with the Chinese in terms of their skin colour, their use of chopsticks and their prominent teeth. The important difference was, I think, that while the Chinese outnumbered the Caucasians there were only a few dozen Japanese and that they were all engaged in a single industry, prostitution.[56] Murdoch identified himself with the Caucasian artisans and labourers, whose livelihood was threatened by the Chinese; he did not identify himself with the Caucasian brothel-keepers and pimps whom, no doubt, the Japanese had put out of business. I suspect that this is not atypical and that it is often some tangible threat that sets off cultural antipathy. The patterns of one's neighbour's neckties remain merely a source of puzzlement until his cat starts eating one's goldfish. Then they become infuriating as sure proof of aesthetic (and probably moral) depravity.

While discussing Chinese exclusion in these articles, Murdoch indicates that he is a republican. Until some months after he was writing, there was room for doubt whether exclusion legislation extending to Chinese who were British subjects (for example Chinese born in Hong Kong) would receive royal assent. To Murdoch the solution was for the colonies to form a federal republic; he considered that this was likely within "a score of years or so".[57]

Other aspects of Murdoch's radicalism emerge in the articles. He considered that Australians would be driven to nationalise

[54] 19 May 1888.

[55] For example, B. C. Mansfield, 'The Origins of "White Australia" ', *Australian Quarterly*, 26:4, 1954, pp. 61–68.

[56] *Boomerang*, 12 May 1888.

[57] 30 June 1888.

land and that, in the process, it was possible that blood might be shed.[58] He was opposed to aristocracy, exploitation and Empire:

> Singapore may be described as a purely Chinese town with a few aristocratic European settlers, engaged in a semi-futile attempt at blood-sucking and ostensibly 'administering' the government. Ostensibly we say advisedly, for the place is practically ruled by the yellow skins . . . Most Englishmen in Eastern Asia are pig-headed Conservatives and violently aggressive. They are nearly all aristocrats in feeling and sympathy or they ape aristocracy.[59]

First Visit to Japan (1888)

At Hong Kong Murdoch transshipped to the *General Werder*,[60] bound for Yokohama. Insofar as Japan was to become the centre of his life, one is prompted to speculate why, on this first occasion, he went on to Japan. Perhaps a sufficient answer is that the journey to Japan was already becoming popular in Australia. For example, one of the *Boomerang*'s leading supporters, Thomas Finney (a department-store proprietor who provided it with considerable advertising revenue), was in Japan when Murdoch landed there. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the outgoing premier of Queensland, arrived there just as Murdoch was leaving. More to the point, Murdoch's friend[61] and fellow contributor to the *Boomerang*, Francis Adams, had visited Japan the previous year;[62] perhaps it was from him that Murdoch got the idea to include Japan in his itinerary.

Murdoch disembarked at Yokohama on 25 May.[63] He departed

[58] 4 August 1888.

[59] 11 August 1888. Murdoch's *Don Juan's Grandson in Japan*, p. 80 provides similar observations on Hong Kong (and, incidentally, indicates his technical deficiencies as a versifier).

[60] *Boomerang*, 22 December 1888.

[61] Murdoch so describes him in a letter to Sir Thomas McIlwraith dated 14 April 1889 (McIlwraith Papers, Oxley Library, Brisbane). I am indebted to Mr Robert Sharman for drawing this letter to my attention.

[62] Two of the poems in Adams's *Songs of the Army of the Night* (Sydney, 1888), 'To Japan' and 'Dai Butsu', are the product of this visit. For details of Adams's life and publications see *Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1901, vol. 22, p. 14 and *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 3, p. 13.

[63] The possible voyages of the *General Werder* were those terminating at Yokohama on 27 April and 25 May respectively. The passenger lists were published in the *Japan Weekly Mail*. There is no Murdoch on the 27 April list and there is a 'Mc. D. Murdoch' on the 25 May list (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 26 May 1888). The difficulties of using Japanese compositors for printing in English are notorious therefore it is likely that 'Mc. D. Murdoch' was Mr J. Murdoch.

through the same port on 30 October.[64] His activities and impressions during the intervening period are the subject of ten articles in the *Boomerang* entitled 'Where McIlwraith is Going: Sketches from the Land of the Japs.'[65]

His first week in Japan was spent in the German hospital at Yokohama suffering from malaria (which he had picked up in Java).[66] While recuperating in Tokyo he signed a contract to teach for ten months at an English language school that Count Okudaira had just established at Nakatsu, the castle-town of his former fief, in Kyūshū.[67] Murdoch arrived in Nakatsu in the middle of June and taught at the Count's school in the mornings and at the Government's middle school in the afternoons. He remained there only six weeks. Late in July, at the start of the summer vacation, "having learned all that was to be learned about the social and domestic life of the inhabitants", he resigned[68] and set out to examine the scenic attractions and historic sites of Kyūshū—mainly on foot.[69] His account of the tour indicates that, despite their sharing the same 'saffron' hue and chopsticks that so offended him in the case of the Chinese, the Japanese from the outset won his admiration and affection:

> A Japanese who has not been spoiled by residence in an open port is just about as pleasant and nice and jolly a fellow as you could wish

[64] The passenger list for the *Yokohama Maru*, which departed on that date for 'Shanghai and ports', listed a Mr Murdoch as a 'Cabin' passenger (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 3 November 1888).

[65] *Boomerang*, 1, 15 and 22 December 1888, 5 and 12 January 1889, 2 and 9 February 1889. An additional article entitled 'In a Japanese Gaol' appeared on 10 May 1889.

[66] *Boomerang*, 1 and 15 December 1888.

[67] The original contract (now in the possession of Kodama Nobuyoshi of Kitakyūshū-shi) is reproduced in Sugiyama Tamaki, 'James Murdoch (I): *Shoshiteki kenkyū*', *Okayama Shōdai Ronsō*, 18:33, 1983, p. 38. A copy was made in *romaji*, which suggests that Murdoch was already trying conclusions with the language. According to Honda Masujiro ('*Prof Murdoch to gōshū no Nihon kenkyū*', *Eigo Seinen*, 40:9, 1919, cited by Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', p. 75), Murdoch was selected for the job by Odata Tokujirō of Keiō-juku. As Keiō's Fukuzawa Yukichi himself was from Nakatsu, this seems quite likely.

[68] *Boomerang*, 2 and 7 February 1889. According to *Denki Yamada Shōtarō sensei* (Tokyo, 1940, cited by Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', p. 43) the school struggled on, with diminishing enrolments, under Murdoch's successor, Revd C. G. Gardner (of the SPG Mission, Tokyo) and finally closed in July 1889.

[69] *Boomerang*, 1 and 8 December 1888; 5, 12 and 19 January 1889; 18 May 1889.

> for as a chum or a companion . . . In the point of pluck they are about as dare-devil a lot as are to be found in any corner of the globe whatsoever; in regard for the feelings of others they are simply unique . . . The sum and substance of the whole matter is that by instinct and training the Nippon-jin is a real good radical. He is not at all self-contained or selfish in his joys and his enjoyment of life. He insists on sending his good things around.[70]

Although ugliness among the Chinese at Darwin aroused Murdoch's hostility and contempt, ugliness among the Japanese evokes his compassion. Take for example his description of women labourers at Shimonoseki: ". . . open staring mouths that with their hideously blackened teeth and gums yawn abysmally like so many murky caverns of Erebus, are the diametrical reverse of picturesque and charming. And yet these poor creatures are polite and kindly in the extreme".[71] Part of the explanation may be that, while Murdoch knew the Chinese only as a stereotype, he knew the Japanese as individuals. He arrived in Japan with relatively few preconceptions and went straight to the back-blocks where, away from other Europeans, he encountered Japanese in their own environment. He knew them as the rickshaw-man, the schoolmaster, the chambermaid, the school boy—each with his own personality and hopes, and not as an undifferentiated yellow mass.

During the last weeks of his stay in Japan a fierce controversy between the *Nipponjin*[72] and the *Chōya Shimbun*[73] regarding the former journal's allegations of inhuman exploitation and cruelty on the part of the labour contractors at the Mitsubishi colliery on Takashima (an island about fifteen kilometres from Nagasaki) provided the occasion for Murdoch to contribute some articles to the *Japan Gazette* (thereby beginning an association with the local English-language press that was to last for thirty years).

From the outset, the redoubtable Captain Brinkley had placed his *Japan Mail* squarely behind the Mitsubishi company and the contractors.[74] This in itself was probably sufficient to determine the *Mail*'s arch-rival, the *Gazette*, to champion the *Nipponjin*'s

[70] *Boomerang*, 15 December 1888.

[71] *Boomerang*, 29 December 1888

[72] The *Nipponjin* articles (June and July 1888) are reproduced in Yoshino Sakuzō, *Meiji Bunka Zenshū*, Tokyo, 1929, vol. 21, pp. 1–30.

[73] A summary of the *Chōya Shimbun*'s article, appearing in the *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shimbun* on 9, 12, and 13 September 1888, is reproduced in Nakayama Yasumasa (ed.), *Shimbun shūsei Meiji hennenshi*, Tokyo, 1935, vol. 7, pp. 136–40.

[74] *Japan Weekly Mail*, 21 July 1888, 25 August 1888.

cause. To the *Gazette* the availability of the free-lance from the *Boomerang* must have appeared providential. Murdoch's views on capital and labour were such that he would have regarded the *Nipponjin*'s revelations as fairly typical of what most capitalists would do if given half a chance.

Unfortunately, a complete file of the *Gazette* does not survive and we have therefore to make do with the quotations from Murdoch's articles that appear in the *Mail*. In these one can have no difficulty in recognising Murdoch at his most purple.

The *Mail* writes:

> Going back to a period of the mine's history prior to 1881—when it came into the hands of its present owners—a period with which recent discussion and investigation had no manner of concern, our infuriate contemporary has worked himself into a phrensy against the "Mammon-Moloch of Plutocracy". "Takashima", he cries, "will go down to posterity as the Tartarus where some hundreds of Japanese have been immolated to satisfy the rapacity of a heartless, blood-sucking Plutocracy" as the "last stronghold of serfdom and slavery"; as a "worse than Siberian or old Spanish Main *jigoku*". Its story "enables one fully to realize how such a creation as Sanyarine in Zola's *Germinal* may come to actually exist in the flesh". It is "a lively sample of Hades upon earth". While "hecatombs of coolies are going on" "Money-Bags gently rubs his hands, sips his champagne and returns thanks to a gracious Providence". The place is a "stifling Inferno". "Only the terrific language of Dante could do it justice. It is as foul and foetid as the last ward of Malebolge itself".[75]

The claim of the *Chronicle* obituarist that the reforms effected at Takashima were the results of Murdoch's "revelations" is, surely, an exaggeration. The indications are that the *Nipponjin* articles were published before Murdoch had so much as heard of the mine and that Murdoch's articles appeared after the Home Ministry had announced the results of its investigation and issued specific warnings to the Company.

It was during these five months in Japan that Murdoch secured the appointment of Lecturer in European History at the First

[75] *Japan Weekly Mail*, 13 October 1888. The *Mail* was vigorous in its condemnation of Murdoch's articles: "Probably in the whole history of journalism there have never been published grosser or more groundless slanders than those of our crazy contemporary". *The Rising Sun and Nagasaki Express* took a similar view suggesting Murdoch's articles "not only prove the writer's ignorance of the subject he is writing on, but display a palpable amount of deep-rooted malice against everyone and everything connected with the Takashima colliery" (cited in *Japan Weekly Mail*, 18 November 1888).

Higher School in Tokyo and decided to settle permanently in Japan. Established on the model of the German *gymnasium*, the Higher Schools were the link between the secondary schools and the imperial universities. Students entered them at about the age of eighteen. As the feeder to Tokyo Imperial University, First Higher School was the most distinguished school in Japan.

Under his contract, Murdoch's duties were to commence in September 1889. This left him time to return to Brisbane to wind up his affairs. He embarked at Yokohama on 30 October 1888.[76] With characteristic enterprise he appears to have found means to defray some of his travel costs. The *Boomerang* on 11 May 1889 contained an advertisement for the sale by auction of "[a] magnificent collection of Japanese Curios, Japanese Silk Goods, etc., specially selected by James Murdoch M.A. during his recent tramp of 3,000 [*sic*] miles through the previously unknown parts of Japan". He had commissions from Japanese exporters to "report on the lines of Japanese produce most likely to suit Australian tastes"[77] and from the newly emerging Japanese woollen industry to examine the possibility of direct shipments of merino wool.[78] Furthermore, the archives of the Japanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs indicate that he was also reporting to them on current trends in Australian politics. As regards imperial relations, he cited recent events to argue that within twenty years Australia would become an independent federal republic. On the question of White Australia he strongly advised against making indentured Japanese labour available to the sugar industry to fill the gap which the prohibition of kanakas would create: the introduction of cheap Japanese labour would be harmful to Japan's international prestige and would alienate a large element of public opinion in Australia.[79]

His tasks in Brisbane completed, Murdoch returned to Japan. This time he was accompanied by his son (now eight years old). They arrived at Yokohama on 19 July 1889.[80]

[76] The passenger list of the NYK steamer *Yokohama Maru* departing Yokohama for "Shanghai and ports" on 30 October includes a "Mr Mudoch" among the cabin passengers (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 3 November 1888).

[77] *Queenslander*, 18 May 1889.

[78] R. Wallace, *The Rural Economy and Agriculture of Australia and New Zealand*, London, 1891, p. 387. I am indebted to L. F. Fitzhardinge for drawing this reference to Murdoch to my attention.

[79] Gaimushō, *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho*, vol. 22 (1889), Tokyo, 1951, pp. 550–53. Internal evidence suggests this memorandum may have been written in 1890.

[80] Aboard the *General Werder*, from Hong Kong (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 27 July 1889).

First Higher School, Tokyo, 1889–1893

Murdoch commenced his duties at First Higher School on 11 September. As a foreigner his salary was 200 yen per month,[81] ten times that of his Japanese colleagues.[82] He was to continue there for four years. As at Aberdeen, he appears to have made a strong and favourable impression on those with whom he came in contact. One of his pupils, Natsume Kinnosuke, became the famous novelist Natsume Sōseki. Twenty years later he produced this vivid picture of Murdoch:

> Since every word he uttered—lectures, exegesis and conversation—was in a pure Scots as yet uninfluenced by his residence in Japan, the whole class was completely bewildered. Thus we came to realise that the preordained lot of the student is to be enveloped in fog. This did not appear to worry him. He probably thought that with such a silly syllabus it didn't matter whether or not the students understood it. But because he was very outgoing and conscientious and because he combined the qualities of a thorough gentleman in the British style with a marked Bohemianism, we admired and respected him. There were never any complaints about his teaching.
>
> We rarely saw him in a white shirt. Usually he made do with one of grey flannel. His necktie looked like a strip torn off a carrying-cloth. It often came out of his waistcoat and fluttered in the breeze. It was at about that time that teachers at the Higher Schools began to wear black gowns. His was made of satin or something like it. He wore it over his flannel shirt-like a coat. Around the bottoms of the sleeves was gold braid. Originally it was either ornamental or to gather in the cuffs; but with Murdoch both these functions were completely forgotten. When he became enthusiastic about some theme that interested him, he was no longer conscious of gown or shirt or even that we were in a classroom. He would stride down from the rostrum bringing his bearded face close to us. Then, if there was a vacant desk, he would sit on it, pull out about a foot of the braid from his cuffs and strum the top of the desk with it. . . His house was like his shirt, his hat (he sometimes wore a rumpled Trilby round which

[81] I am indebted to Professor Etô Shinkichi for obtaining access for me to the staff registers, *Shokuin Shintaibo* and *Shintairoku*, for the periods 1888–1891 and 1891–1904 respectively. These are held by the Administration at the *Kyōyō gakubu* of Tokyo University. According to the handbook (*Binran*) of the school for 1892 and Murdoch's letter of resignation (1893), European history is the only subject that he was teaching. But initially he may have taught English as well. Acoording to Natsume (see following footnote) he was teaching both in the period 1889–1890.

[82] Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 116.

> he had tied a weird hatband) and all his clothes. His way of life seemed simple. . . .[83]

During his time at First Higher School Murdoch can have had little leisure. It June 1890 he published *Don Juan's Grandson in Japan*. Although, as is apparent from the passages quoted above this was an innocuous hotch-potch, one of the English-language dailies (probably the *Mail*) nevertheless described it as "so far exceeding the limits of propriety as to be to be a disgrace at once to its author and publisher".[84] Murdoch's own appraisal of it seems closer to the mark:

> It is 'doggerel' and in the main a very poor sample at that. Its composition consumed the not too many unoccupied moments of just seven weeks . . . The whole thing was a silly *tour de force*, the workmanship being essentially inartistic, slipshod, and sloppy. . . .[85]

In November a fortnightly magazine, the *Japan Echo*, appeared with Murdoch as editor. Its aim, as set forth in its prospectus, was "to give a full, fair, and impartial view of every topic of interest handled by the foreign and vernacular press. . .".[86] It received a magnanimous welcome from the *Mail*:

> . . . a decidedly pleased sensation is produced by the novelty of a fresh and by no means shallow thinker discussing Japanese subjects with straightforward vigour and without any shadow of malice. Indeed the good humour of the editor of the *Echo* is conspicuous. . . .[87]

There was magnanimity on both sides: the *Echo* in its first issue

[83] '*Hakushi mondai to Mādokku sensei to yo*', *Sōseki zenshū*, Tokyo, 1949, vol. 18, pp. 279–81. I am indebted to Dr Matsui Sakuko of Sydney University for drawing this to my attention. Murdoch seems to have continued throughout life to make a vivid and favourable impression on young people. Captain T. E. Nave, the distinguished Japanese linguist and cryptanalyst of the inter-war and World War II period writes:

> I met Professor Murdoch for the first time on presenting myself for examination [in a foreign language for promotion to sub-lieutenant in 1920]. I was stunned to see a Japanese newspaper on the desk. He explained that if you recognise no characters you will lose no marks, but will gain extra marks for every one identified and given a meaning. "I want to find out how much you know; not how much you don't know". One question confirmed his approach: "Write in *kana* script what you do on any day". I was impressed with his practical attitude as an examiner. He gave me 90%. . . (Captain T. E. Nave to author 18 June 1982).

[84] *Japan Echo*, 15 November 1890.

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] *Japan Weekly Mail*, 1 November 1890, p. 428.

[87] *Ibid.*, 22 November 1890, p. 506.

commended the management of the Takashima mine on the absence of a single case of cholera while an epidemic was raging in the surrounding prefecture.[88]

The *Echo*'s life was short. It closed down after six issues. Very likely, as the *Mail* argued from the outset, the market was too small.[89] But there may have been more to it than that. Perhaps Murdoch took insufficient heed of the critic who referred to the *Echo*'s "olla podrida of languages which in [one] number alone comprises Greek, Latin, French, Japanese, Scotch, Irish, United States and Yiddish"[90]. Furthermore, to the *Echo*'s predominantly north American and European readership, the constant references to Queensland and to Murdoch's past avocation there must very soon have begun to pall. In its six issues it featured no less than three short stories set in the small town of 'Thylungra' somewhere on the Queensland coast (Maryborough?) in which the "thirsty swearing sinners" despite exploitation and disapproval by "the Pharisaical money-grubbing upper ten" demonstrate the virtues of mateship, grit and good cheer.[91] For although Murdoch had turned his back on Australia ("pupils all right, but 'grown-ups' too materialistic to please me"[92]), the stories show that it had become a large part of him. His whole being was soaked with local associations and local imagery. This is equally apparent in his *From Australia and Japan* (a volume consisting of a novelette, 'Felix Holt Secundus', and six short stories), published in London in 1892.[93] In these the narrator is for the most part a journalist employed by one of the Yokohama English-language dailies, whose previous job was in Australia. One indication is the similes he uses—for example, a face "as lifeless and lustreless as a lump of

[88] *Japan Echo*, 1 November 1890.

[89] *Japan Weekly Mail*, 22 November 1890, p. 506.

[90] *Kōbe Herald* as quoted in *Japan Echo*, 1 December 1890.

[91] 'Fred Wilson's Fate' (15 November 1890), 'She Stuck to Him to the Last' (15 December 1890), 'Frank Morton's Finish' (1 January 1891).

[92] Letter from Murdoch dated 20 September 1911 quoted in Mackenzie, 'My Friend James Murdoch', p. 232.

[93] *From Australia and Japan*, London, 1892. During the same year the publishers also split it into three slim paper-back volumes for the one-shilling book-stall market: *Felix Holt Secundus* (including 'A Tosa Monogatari of Modern Times'), *The Wooing of Webster* (including 'Faustus Junior, Ph.D.' and 'The Bear-Hunt on Fuji-san') and *A Yoshiwara Episode* (including 'Fred Wilson's Fate'). These are reviewed in the September 1892 number of the *Review of Reviews* (6:33, p. 299). The paper-backs were also published overseas—all three in India, the first two in Australia.

stale damper'', a love ''as dead as a ring-barked gum-tree''.[94] It comes through in his affection for Adam Lindsay Gordon's 'The Sick Stockrider' (''I have often heard strong, bearded men chanting it with the tears running down their faces'').[95] Another example is the idealised description of the Australian-born that he gives in 'Felix Holt Secundus':

> Hawkston was a Queensland native, born on the slopes of the ranges just where they sweep up and spread out into the plains. It is a hot-blooded, impetuous brood mostly that is reared in those quarters—a generation not over much given to unbonneting to shoddy dignities or kowtowing to the conventional lay-figures of respectability and vested interests. Every child there born of woman is brought up to ride and to shoot and to stand sauce from no-one; most of the males add to these rudiments of a liberal education the further accomplishment of hitting straight out with the left and getting in with the right when a chance offers.

In 1892, in addition to his short stories, Murdoch also wrote a novel, *Ayame-san*.[96]

There are naturally many occasions in the stories where the narrator expresses views on political and social issues that we know from Murdoch's non-fiction writing were his own. For example, in 'Felix Holt Secundus' he applies the same epithets to the Chinese as he did in the *Boomerang* articles. Clergymen of the Church of England fare no better in *Ayame-san* than they did in 'Pagan and Christian' and in *Don Juan's Grandson*. Like Murdoch himself, the heroes of his stories are socialists. They quote Lassalle. But the stories tell us more about Murdoch than this. An author's imagination as expressed in his writing tells us much about the man—his ideals, his values and his dreams. There is a Walter Mitty within each of us and in the case of an author he is there for all to see.

Murdoch's stories are all, avowedly, romances; and they were written quickly to entertain the popular market and supplement a salary. It is not surprising therefore that the characters are larger than life. The heroes are much more versatile and successful than the average person. Like those of another Scotsman classicist of humble origins, John Buchan (whose first work was commissioned by Murdoch's publisher the following year), they tend to be well

[94] *From Australia and Japan*, pp. 109, 115 ('The Wooing of Webster').

[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 212–18 ('A Tosa Monogatari of Modern Times').

[96] *Ayame-san: A Japanese Romance of the 23rd Year of Meiji (1890)*, Yokohama, 1892; London, 1893).

endowed with past competitive achievement in a number of fields including the academic and the sporting. Hawkston in 'Felix Holt Secundus' has an unusual background for a Queensland trade union leader. He is an Oxford double-first who rowed for his college and only missed getting an All Souls fellowship because he invited Bradlaugh to dinner in hall. Though his job at the cattle station where he is employed is storeman, he can ride "like a Centaur or a Paladin". He is an excellent swordsman ("Now I had passed the long vac. of '83, I think it was, in Naples with San Martelli, and knew pretty well how to take care of myself when it came to sabres"). Francis Webster and Morrison (the vanished 'Australian Lassalle' whom Webster in 'A Tosa Monogatari of Modern Times' discovers turned Buddhist monk in the mountain fastnesses of Kōchi prefecture) are also of this mould. Webster played intercolonial cricket and "spread-eagled seven Victorian wickets for 46". Morrison had played against the Australian eleven and had maintained his passion for Sanskrit throughout his political career.

Murdoch's heroes administer ready justice in a manner that Buchan's Richard Hannay would have recognised and approved. For example, when the corrupt, lecherous politician called to pay his suit to Ayame, Gifford, "sprang upon him and seized him by the nape of the neck as he would a cat and lifted him over the fence". Similarly, when an irate farmer threatens the social editress of the *Thylungra Chronicle*, Wilson "tore the whip from the bully, hurled him down the steps, and then pummelled him like an infuriated human steam-hammer". One student of this genre has made the comment that the place where rough justice is administered by chaps famous for their all-round success and sporting prowess is the prefects' room and that authors who produce heroes of this type are acting out the prefects' room ethic.[97] This, however, is a good deal closer to the ethic of the Conservative MPs with whom Buchan in real life cast his lot, than to Lassalle and socialism. In one respect the code to which Murdoch's heroes adhere is closer to Sapper and Dornford Yates than to Buchan. To them forbearance and the handshake between honourable adversaries are not absolute values. Webster's advice is: "If you're hit, give the smiter room for repentance, and the biggest thrashing you can administer to help furnish the chamber." Perhaps as wage-earners they are always conscious that they operate on narrow

[97] R. Usborne *Clubland Heroes*, London, 1974, pp. 4-9.

margins. In 'A Yoshiwara Episode', it is by cheating that Whitmore wins the wagers that enable him to free the beautiful, pure, and well-born O-haru (whom he then puts on the next boat to England to be educated "like a Newnham girl").

This leads us to the question, how did Murdoch's characters regard women? They did not place them on a pedestal. Indeed if someone from the prefects' room had heard how Gifford first encountered Ayame, he would probably have pitched him over the fence after his rival. For Gifford first espied her from the other side of the bay when, in the supposed privacy of her own back-garden, she emerged naked from the bath. He thereupon reached for his binoculars and after gazing intently through them for "a full three minutes" remarked: "What a bust! What lines, and what a poise!"

To Murdoch's characters, some women could be a pleasure to the senses, but by and large women were a bad lot. They were faithless. In the words of Fred Wilson: "There isn't a good one among the whole tribe. I'll take on hand to marry all the virtuous women in Thylungra single-handed, and yet die a bachelor." They were mercenary. When Webster was an impecunious student at Aberdeen, Marian Murray ridiculed and spurned him; when his Balliol scholarship transformed his earning potential, she welcomed him. They were cruel. When Webster suffered humiliation, Marian "tried to rub it in after the fashion of her sex". It was a woman that destroyed Lassalle and Morrison. Accordingly they were not sacrosanct. Take for example the manner of Webster's parting with Marian: "But now to me she was flesh, flesh, flesh, which God Almighty meant only to be kissed. And I had come sworn to kiss it, and then go my way. And I did". But there are exceptions; for otherwise it would not have been romances that Murdoch wrote. There is Ayame. In addition to having the best figure in Japan she came from samurai stock and takes to Homer (in Butcher and Lang's translation) "as a duckling to water". Futhermore, despite her "unalloyed sweetness and simplicity" she "talks teleology like a Hypatia". There is Lisa, the *narodnik* whom Hawkston meets in London—"a regular Perovskaia and Vera Sassulitch thrown into one" who, when not raising funds for the cause or shooting Tsars, sings "wonderful" Russian folk-songs. When she speaks, "a glow of spirituality lights up each one of her features, and she shines out more resplendent than a Vittoria Colonna". Unfortunately, her attempt on the Tsar's life fails—she is captured and executed. For the novelist, however, this is conve-

nient: it leaves Hawkston free for a heroine *par excellence*—the young widow of an English viscount, who pursues and eventually wins him. She has "grace in each and all of her supple curves" and "the hall-mark of blood and breeding in every line of her features". She is well versed in Turgenev, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol and Goncharov and sings the same esoteric Russian folk-songs as Lisa—in the original, to her own accompaniment. Nearer to home, she has George Eliot at her fingertips. Among such competition it is, perhaps, not surprising that Lucy Murdoch did not stay the course.

It is not only in his heroines that Murdoch shows a high regard for "blood and breeding" and other aristocratic attributes. Hawkston owes his job in Japan to the nobility: his employer ("a thoroughly good sort") is a Japanese peer who was at Oxford with him. Here again, the parallel with Buchan is obvious. But in Buchan, traditionalist by nature and eager to become part of the existing system, a penchant towards aristocracy is not surprising. In Murdoch, who prided himself on his unconventionality and sought to replace the existing system, it suggests some internal stresses. Theoretically one could espouse socialism in order to bring a grouse-moor to every backyard and Aeschylus into every State school. (Hawkston's colleague remarks: "They read queer trash in those State schools"). There was some of this in the labour politician of Murdoch's generation who saw the government's college for cadet midshipmen as the Eton of Australia. One can see a similar attitude in one of Hawkston's exclamations:

> She is a clipper though! The lines of the Venus de Milo and the head and the poise of the flashing-eyed goddess Athena. These aristocrats are really fine in their way. And why should they not be? They have had the show for generations. When *we* get *our* innings we will turn out products like her, not by the score, but by the nation.

At the same time, in Murdoch class-antagonism was strong—"Society is mainly divided into plunderers and plundered, exploiters and exploited".[98] The House of Peers was to him "the shop that misgoverns a free people by hereditary right".[99] Elsewhere he preached a strident egalitarianism and independence. It seems surprising that he did not espouse a new proletarian culture and consign aristocratic and other old world attributes into limbo, where Hawkston's colleague placed Tennyson's Clara Vere de Vere's tricks:

[98] *From Australia and Japan*, p. 15.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

> They're all very well in a raw sodden nook-shotten England, but under the fiery sun of the plains and the ranges they simply will not do. A man there stands upon his manhood, and upon that alone, and to keep that condition of things we social democrats mean to fight as long as soul and body hang together.

These works of fiction appear by and large to have been well received by the audience to which they were addressed.[100] In its review of *Ayame-san*, the *Japan Mail* spoke of "the general excellence of the book" and commended the author's "vigour of style, raciness of dialogue, happiness of simile, and marked power of portraying character". It also remarked on "an impalpable Japanese atmosphere about the story that speaks much for the writer's artistic fidelity".[101]

In 1892 and 1893 Murdoch also edited for publication the autobiography and diary written in his own imperfect English by that remarkable participant in the earliest years of Japanese-American relations, known to Japanese as Hamada Hikozō and to Americans as Joseph Heco.[102] During these two years he also wrote the descriptive text for several small pictorial works produced by the photographer, Ogawa Kazumasa.[103]

So much for Murdoch's teaching and literary activities. The only other material that we have about him at this time is a letter

[100] Although the *Review of Reviews* (6:33, 1892, p. 299) dismissed *From Australia and Japan* as "utterly hopeless from every point of view", it sold sufficiently well for Walter Scott & Co to reissue it in 1899 (under the title, *The Wooing of Webster and Other Stories*).

[101] *Japan Weekly Mail*,. 14 May 1892.

[102] J. Heco, *The Narrative of a Japanese*, edited by J. Murdoch, 2 vols, San Francisco, 1894? In 1850 when Heco (aged fourteen) was travelling from Edo to Hyōgo, the boat was blown out to sea. After drifting for fifty days the passengers and crew were rescued by an American vessel. In America Heco received an education and was naturalised. He returned to Japan in 1859 as interpreter at the U.S. consulate in Kanagawa, in which capacity he was aboard the *U.S.S. Wyoming* during its punitive bombardment of Shimonoseki. He set up his own trading house and for a time prodced a Japanese-language newspaper, the *Kaigai Shimbun*. For Murdoch's alterations of Heco's MS see P. H. T. Dowding, 'Hamada Hikozō—Tenri Library Materials', *Okayama Shōdai Ronsō*, 18:2, 1982, pp. 219–50 and *idem*, ' "The Narrative of a Japanese" by Joseph Heco or James Murdoch', *ibid.*, 18:3, 1982, pp. 115–55, esp. pp. 122–49. Dowding's argument that vol. 1 was first published in 1893 (not 1892 as claimed in *Maruzen Hyakunenshi*) is confirmed by the review in the *Japan Weekly Mail* (10 June 1893) which states that it "has just appeared".

[103] *Sights and Scenes of the Tōkaidō*, Tokyo, 1892; *The Hakone District*, Tokyo, 1892; *Scenes form the Chushingura and the Story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin*, Tokyo, 1892; *The Nikkō District*, Tokyo, 1893; *Scenes from Open Air Life in Japan*, Yokohama, 1893.

that he wrote to the Goverment Resident in the Northern Territory (J. Langdon Parsons) on 26 January 1892—apparently at the request of the Nippon Yūsen Kaisha (Japan Mail Steamship Co).[104] This indicates an attitude to coloured immigration rather different from the one he espoused in 1889. Then he had urged the Foreign Ministry to resist any attempts to send labourers to Australia. In 1892, he drew Parsons's attention to the fact that the Japanese Government is prepared to countenance the recruitment of contract labourers—subject to certain conditions such as the provision of an adequate number of Japanese overseers, doctors and interpreters, and the requirement that the ships used be Japanese. To Parsons he pointed out that "for sugar and rice cultivation it would be impossible to find better hands than Japanese" and argued that the objections that can be levelled against the introduction of Chinese labour do not apply:

> There is not the slightest danger of Japanese ever proving the menace to the colonies the Chinese have undubitably [*sic*] proved. The comparative insignificance of Japan's surplus population and the stay-at-home proclivities of the great bulk of the people effectually bar such prospect.

History has demonstrated that these demographic generalisations may be true—but only in the long term. Unfortunately, Murdoch failed to realise that the population base was sufficiently large and the level of economic activity sufficiently variable for there to be no guarantee against surges of emigration at particular points of time large enough to produce considerable social unrest in the recipient communities. This occurred, for example, in the United States (where the Japanese population was heavily concentrated in a few districts on the west coast) when 17,000 arrived during a single year, 1906.[105] Nearer to home there was the example of Thursday Island, where in 1898 there were more Japanese than Caucasians.[106]

In his letter to Parsons, Murdoch calculated that the overall cost per labourer to the Australian employer would be "a trifle over 30" per annum. In 1889 he had urged upon the Japanese Foreign Ministry that the recruiting of Japanese labour would be so prejudicial to Australian-Japanese relations that it should be

[104] South Australian Archives, Government Resident, Northern Territory, In-Letters, 1374/4777.

[105] Strauss to Root, 21 December 1906, cited in R.A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, Seattle, 1966, p. 146.

[106] *Report of the Government Resident, Thursday Island for 1898*, p. 2.

prevented and that, if prevention was not possible, steps should at least be taken to ensure that, if Japanese labourers did go to Australia, "they should be on an equal footing with the white labourer as regards pay, hours of work, and general treatment". Then, according to his calculations, the prevailing rate for Caucasian field labourers was between £39 and £52 p.a. Now, he was offering Japanese labourers at £30!

Paraguay and London (1893–1894)

In 1891 William Lane (a prominent member of the Queensland trade union movement and one of Murdoch's colleagues at the *Boomerang*) launched the New Australia Cooperative Settlement Association.[107] Its object was to establish a socialist community in which land and the means of production were held in common and all worked for the common good and received an equal wage. In January 1893, 230,000 acres of land offered by the Paraguayan Government was chosen as the site for the settlement. Murdoch was one the earlier ones to answer the call. In May it was announced in the Australian press that he had become a member and would be the community's "chief educationalist".[108]

Murdoch must have set out from Japan as soon as the school term ended, at the end of June,[109] for he passed through London in late August.[110] Form there, according to the Association's journal,

[107] For the history of this venture see G. Souter, *A Peculiar People: The Australians in Paraguay*, Sydney, 1968.

[108] *Brisbane Courier*, 25 May 1893. The report in *Table Talk*, 19 May 1893 that he was in Sydney awaiting embarkation with the first party of settlers would appear to be mistaken. Similarly the statement, 'Why I have joined New Australia' attributed to Murdoch by G. Reeve in *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 9 April 1926 and by L. Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labour Movement*, Sydney, 1937, pp. 185–86, seems to belong to someone else—the proprietor of a provincial newspaper who had been forty years in Australia (*New Australia*, 28 January 1893).

[109] As Murdoch's letter of resignation at First Higher School (reproduced in Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', pp. 47–48) is dated 10 August, one must presume that he left it to be tendered at the appropriate time by someone acting on his behalf.

[110] *British Australian*, 31 August 1893. This gives as its source the *Daily Chronicle* and adds that: "An account of the new Colony may be expected shortly from him". There may also be articles by Murdoch in the South American English-language press. There are, for example, some suggestions of his style and misogynistic cast of mind in the article by its "occasional correspondent at Asuncion" in the *Review of the River Plate*, 13 January 1894 (quoted in H. V. Livermore, 'New Australia', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, August 1950, pp. 296, 301. The article was reproduced in *New Australia*, 15 May 1894).

his plan was "to go on to the United States to pick up his brother Kenneth, through to San Francisco, from San Francisco to Valparaiso, and overland across the Southern Continent to the site of the settlement, which he expected to reach about the same time as the pioneers".[111] Since this report contains one manifest error—Kenneth, now aged twelve, was Murdoch's son, not his brother—we should examine its other improbabilities carefully. It is just conceivable that Kenneth was at that time living on the east coast of the United States. The task of bringing him up may have proved too much for Murdoch. Perhaps Kenneth's mother (if still alive) or one of her family had gone to the United States. Even so, the route from Tokyo to New York does not pass through London. This itinerary makes sense only if it were necessary for Murdoch to visit both London and the Pacific coast. One possible explanation could be that Murdoch had to tidy up loose ends in the United Kingdom in connection with either his broken marriage or his father's death, and Kenneth was living not on the east coast but on the west coast of the States. The above is the principal objection to the itinerary. Travelling overland from Valparaiso to Buenos Aires, though uncomfortable—particularly when accompanied by a child—was by no means impossible at that time of the year. The gap between the Chilean and Argentinian railway systems was then only 100 miles.[112] The following year two of the settlers crossed it by mule in two days hard riding.[113]

The first group of settlers, 214 strong, embarked at Sydney on 16 July (1893) and reached the land allotted to them on 4 October. Almost immediately they began to fall out among themselves. On 5 December twenty-four of them wrote to the Paraguayan authorities asking for individual land grants outside the settlement. On 15 December, Lane expelled three of the community for intemperance and contumacy. In the course of the following eight days another eighty-one (31 men, 17 wives and 34 children) seceded.[114] It was in this situation that Murdoch and Kenneth arrived (possibly between 15 and 23 December). To the surprise of

[111] *New Australia*, 18 November 1893. According to this report, in London "he lectured, receiving prominent notices in the press". I am indebted to Gavin Souter for drawing my attention both to this item and to McLeod's account of Murdoch's arrival at New Australia.

[112] F. A. Talbot, *The Railway Conquest of the World*, London, 1911, p. 271.

[113] Souter, *A Peculiar People*, p. 130.

[114] H. V. Livermore, 'New Australia', pp. 303-304.

the settlers they had traversed the thirty miles from the railway on foot.[115]

Unfortunately, we have been able to discover only one account by a fellow colonist of Murdoch's brief sojourn in the settlement. It is highly partisan and was written thirty-three years after the event. The author, a carpenter named Allan McLeod, was one of the staunchest of the fifty-seven 'loyalists' who followed Lane to the new colony, Cosmé, when he was deposed in May. He was hostile to Murdoch for deserting the cause and its leader in their hour of need and eventually marrying a coloured woman (racial purity was one of the basic tenets of New Australia):

> [Murdoch] was cornered off on nearing the village by the orators of the aggrieved party before he could reach official headquarters. Will Lane was in Asuncion on good business so it devolved on the timorous deputy to welcome our great brother, and pass him over to the genial secretary and social entertainer, John Sibbald. Murdock spent most of his time, which was limited, listening to the 'rebels'. With all his gift of tongues he was 'uncacamy' [*sic*] with the English language and not appearing anxious to be told things by the governing staff. He had apparently made up his mind and closed his book without taking the views of the loyalists into his calculations . . . In about a fortnight Lane returned from Asuncion. On being queried he allowed that he had left Murdock [*sic*] in his element, writing up a history of the Paraguayan war (1865–70), the archives of the country being placed at his disposition. The private conference on diverse views, by the two old friends, has not, I believe, been offered for public consumption. Lane only supplied us with the result, thus 'we agreed to differ, that's all'. . . .[116]

[115] A. McLeod, *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 13 May 1927. McLeod's account suggests fairly strongly that Murdoch arrived before the eighty-one moved out, that is before 22 or 23 December. Against this *New Australia*, no 17 (published in Sydney on 21 April 1894 after the arrival there of Lane's emissary, Whealan, who had set out from the commune on 23 December 1893) states that "James Murdoch, the Scotch professor, has not yet taken up his abode in the Settlement".

[116] *Ibid.* A community of two hundred members is, of course, too large for eveyone to know fully the details of all that is going on and quite large enough for the gaps to be filled by a multitude of circumstantial rumours. McLeod's claim that Murdoch made his decision without hearing the loyalists' case seems inconsistent with his statement that Murdoch proceeded to Asuncion and conferred with Lane. If Murdoch was in fact the writer of the article in the *Review of the River Plate* (see n. 45 above) then he was, as one might expect, quite unenamoured of some of the rebels' ringleaders. But to McLeod and his fellows, in that highly charged atmosphere, no doubt it was a case of 'he that is not with me is against me'.

The time spent by Murdoch in New Australia varies in the different sources that are available from less than a day to a fortnight.[117] By common agreement it was very short. There seems little doubt that Murdoch saw no point in becoming part of a community that was patently in the throes of disintegration. The *Chronicle* obituary records that in later years he recounted how he had witnessed "the serving out of meat to a community almost starving, with envy and jealousy so strong that the butcher weighed the meat with one hand while he kept a revolver in the other" and that he also remarked that "when the leader professed to be ordering his movements and policy by the instructions of a supernatural being,[118] New Australia was no longer any place for James Murdoch". According to McLeod, Murdoch remained in South America for five or six weeks after leaving the settlement. It was presumably during that period he had the bad encounter with sunstroke which, according to the *Chronicle* obituary, left him permanently weakened.

After five months in London—spent principally in the Reading Room of the British Museum[119]—Murdoch returned to Japan

[117] According to McLeod, Murdoch arrived in the morning and left at about 3.50 pm the same day. According to the report in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* (19 January 1895) of an interview with Gilbert Casey (who arrived at the settlement on about 7 March 1894 and arrived back in Australia on duty on 17 September), Murdoch remained for two days. (Unfortunately it is not clear whether this is what Casey said or whether it is a parenthetical interpolation by the interviewer.) According to Murdoch's fellow professor at Sydney University, Mungo MacCallum, Murdoch said that "in a fortnight" he saw that "the scheme had no bottom in it" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1921). I reject the first as unlikely and as too precise a recollection thirty-three years after the event to be credible. According to the report of the *Daily Telegraph* (25 May 1894) of its interview with Lane's wife on her visit to Sydney, Murdoch was at New Australia long enough for the wives of some of the dissident faction to boycott Murdoch's classes as part of the protest movement against Lane's administration:

> "Nothing under ordinary circumstances" Mrs Lane truly observes "would induce Mr Murdoch to spend his time in imparting elementary education to juveniles. His services simply could not be bought for the purpose. But here he was prepared to give the little school a start; and because there were no jams and pickles in the store the mothers refused to send their children to him".

[118] For an example of this see Lane to Head, 15 February 1894, cited in Souter, *A Peculiar People*, p. 100.

[119] Murdoch to W. L. Mackenzie, 20 September 1911. While in London Murdoch also appears to have been of assistance to the settlement (from which Lane and the staunchest 'loyalists' had by then seceded) in securing the services of Alfred Rogers to act as its agent in the United Kingdom (*Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 1895).

(where he was to remain until 1917). He had left Kenneth (not yet thirteen) behind him in South America. He was still there at the time of Murdoch's death in 1921.[120]

Kanazawa and Tokyo (1892–1900)

Murdoch arrived in time to take up duties in August 1894 as a lecturer in English at Fourth Higher School at Kanazawa on the Japan Sea coast.

An important source of information for the years Murdoch spent in Japan is his *deshi*, Yamagata Isō (1869–1959), who in later life became well known as a translator, as an expositor of English literature, and as an editor of local English-language newspapers and magazines.[121] Yamagata was a student of Murdoch's at First Higher School and his part-time research assistant while he wrote the first volume of his *History of Japan*. They remained close friends throughout Murdoch's life.[122]

From Yamagata we learn that Murdoch's five months at the British Museum were spent reading and translating from Latin, Spanish, French and Dutch the writings of the European *religieux* and traders who were in Japan during the century that preceded the expulsion decree of 1638.[123] From this we may infer that when he returned to Japan it was with the intention of embarking on

[120] McLeod writes:

> After five or six weeks the wanderer from Japan set off on his return journey alone to acquire a Japanese wife later on. His boy, Kenneth, was left by his dad to make his own way in the world. The boy began as a stockman. When he grew up and got married he turned his hand to butchering for Hardie and Coy, Las Palmas. At present [1927] he works for the Liebig Coy, at Santa Helena on the Parana in charge of livestock and windmills.

Murdoch in his last will and testament (dated 20 September 1920) left the copyright of his *History of Japan* and £500 "to my son Kenneth Macdonald Murdoch of Santa Elena, Entre Rios, Argentina".

[121] Kawai Suimei, *Nihon Kosho Tūshin*, 15 May 1959, pp. 2–3; Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, pp. 119–20, 136.

[122] It was an unusual friendship in that, in terms of their political philosophies, the two men were poles apart. In the *Seoul Press* Yamagata championed autocracy against democracy (see, for example, his editorial 'A World Unsafe for Democracy' reprinted in K. Kawakami (ed.), *What Japan Thinks*, New York, 1921, pp. 11–20. No doubt it was partly because of his right-wing views that Yamagata was, as Murdoch tells us, "very much trusted by Count Terauchi" (Murdoch to E. L. Piesse, 14 March 1919, Australian National Library [hereafter ANL] MS 882, f. 5/10).

[123] Yamagata Isō, '*Madokku-shi no Nihon rekishi*', *Shomotsu Raisan*, 2, 1925, p. 5. The fourteen pages devoted to 'Jesuits-Letters from Missions' in the British Library *General Catalogue of Printed Books* list a number of sixteenth and seventeenth century editions of letters from Japan. An example of where Murdoch

serious historical studies. In the past, school-teaching, as we have seen, had never completely absorbed his energies. Henceforth its role appears to have become, increasingly, to provide him with subsistence to enable him to write *A History of Japan*.

Little is known about Murdoch's three years at Kanazawa. Since his former colleague at the First Higher School, Hanawa Torajirō (1857–1911), was Professor of English there, Sugiyama draws the reasonable inference that it was he that arranged the appointment.[124]

In September 1898 Murdoch returned to Tokyo to teach English and commercial history at the Higher Commercial College (today's Hitotsubashi University).[125] Hanawa joined him on the staff there the following year. It was he that introduced him to Okada Takeko, whom Murdoch married on 23 November 1899.

One of the stories about Murdoch that Yamagata enjoyed telling in later years dates from this time. The Murdochs lived at Takanawa in the Shinagawa district of Tokyo. Though generous to people in need,[126] Murdoch was careful with his money. (On the

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made use of these is in *A History of Japan: The Century of Foreign Intercourse*, Kobe, 1903), p. 52, n. 5, where he cites "Letter vii of Bk IV in the collections of Tursellinus". This, no doubt, is *F. Xaverii Epistolarum libri quatuor ab H. Tursellino. . . in Latinum conversi ex Hispano*, Moguntiae, 1600. C. R. Boxer (*The Christian Century in Japan 1549–1650*, Berkeley, 1951, p vii) sugggests that at the British Museum Murdoch confined his research to *printed* books and did not use original material in the Marsden MSS housed there. It seems clear, however, from Murdoch (*op. cit.*, p. 486, n. 19) that among the Marsden MSS he consulted at least Carvalho's 1617 *Apologia*. It is surprising that Murdoch did not take advantage of these months in Europe to consult the original confidential reports of the Jesuit missionaries that are preserved in the Ajuda library at Lisbon. Where he refers to these, it is to extracts quoted in L. J. Cros, *Saint François de Xavier: Sa Vie et Ses Lettres*, Toulouse, 1900, a fact which he readily acknowledges. I am indebted to Dr Michael Cooper for bringing this to my attention.

[124] Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', pp. 59–61.

[125] *Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō Ichiran* as cited by Nomi Chiyako and Matsumoto Mihoko, '*J. Mādokku*', *Kindai Bungaku Kenkyū Sōsho*, 20, 1963, p. 89.

[126] According to Yamagata, Murdoch helped him financially on a number of occasions when he was a student ('*Nihon no shika Mādokku*', *Taiyō*, November 1926, cited by Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 120) and, although sparing with his tips at expensive inns, would shower largesse on poor peasants who gave him refreshments on his rambles in the country (Matsumoto Mihoko, '*Mādokku to "Nihon rekishi"*', *Gakuen*, August 1941, as cited by Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 164). Apparently, Murdoch's frugal habits were not disturbed by his elevation to the Sydney chair. The army linguists who travelled with him to Tokyo in 1920 were surprised to find that when his spectacles needed replacing, he bought a pair over the counter at Woolworths (T. E. Nave to author, 18 June 1982). In the same year, he had his will drawn up, not by a solicitor, but by a conveyancer.

train he always travelled third class.) He was also as keen a walker as ever, and normally covered the five miles from his home to Hitotsubashi on foot. This caused the shopkeepers of Takanawa (who regarded foreigners as an extravagant breed who went everywhere by rickshaw) to refer to him as "the European pauper". When this became known to him, he bowed to local pressure. Thereafter he used to hire an old rickshawman on whom the task of pulling a loaded rickshaw was beginning to take its toll, but always walked beside him in front of the empty vehicle![127]

In May 1900 Murdoch published an article 'Japan and Russia in the Far East' in the influential journal, *North American Review*. In this he discussed the accelerating rivalry between these two powers in the Korean peninsula and Japan's capacity to make war. He laid stress on the extent to which Japan's economic development was restricted by lack of capital and managerial skills and reached the conclusion that Japan had sufficient resources for a single campaign, but not for the longer war that the Russians could wage. It is a thoughtful and balanced article.[128] It was, presumably, at about this time that the London *Times* offered Murdoch employment as its Japan correspondent.[129] According to Yamagata, Murdoch declined because he wanted to concentrate on writing the *History*.

Kagoshima (1901–1917)

In 1901 the Murdochs took advantage of the opening of the Seventh Higher School at Kagoshima to move to Kyūshū. According to Hirakawa, this was because Murdoch's health was still poor and they wished to take advantage of the milder winters there.[130] According to Yamagata, it was at Kagoshima that the actual

[127] Matsumoto, in Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 164.

[128] *North American Review*, 70:52, 1900, pp. 609–33. If, as seems possible, Murdoch was the author of the *Athenaeum*'s review (7 November 1903) of Brinkley's *Japan and China*, then he became more committed to this thesis. The *Athenaeum* review (published three months before the outbreak of hostilities) argues that "in a contest with Russia, the achievement of any permanent military success on the continent is an absolute impossibility to Japan".

[129] Yamagata, *Mādokku-shi*', p. 5. Although Yamagata is our sole source for the *Times* offer, the diary of its Peking correspondent, G. E. Morrison, who discussed Japanese defence and foreign policy with him on 4 and 7 March 1900, shows that Morrison formed a favourable impression of him—"a well informed man. . . an accurate mind" (G. E. Morrison Diary, Mitchell Library, Sydney, MS 312).

[130] Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 127.

writing of the *History* was begun.[131] The first volume to appear, *The Century of Foreign Intercourse,* was published (by the *Chronicle*) in November 1903.

His employment at Seventh Higher School continued until 1908 when, he later told a Scottish friend that "the Japanese Government found it had no further need of me, and paid me off with four months' screw".[132] As the personnel records of the school were destroyed in a subsequent fire,[133] the precise circumstances of his leaving cannot be ascertained. According to one writer, it was the result of a quarrel with the principal over some quite trifling matter.[134] In his remaining years in Japan he described himself as "in the condition of the proverbial church mouse" but able to cover living expenses by "scribbling for a local paper about five days every month".[135] To supplement this income Murdoch took up fruit-growing. He lived about three kilometres from the school, at Yoshino on the high ground overlooking Sakurajima. ("Pure air and the scenery! As good as the Bay of Naples.") There he planted a citron orchard.[136]

Although this exchange of the bustle of the classroom for the contemplative calm and austerity of the hills caused Natsume in one of his *Asahi Shimbun* articles to describe Murdoch as "the British hermit in Japan",[137] the Murdochs' life at Yoshino was by no means lonely. With them lived one of Takeko's younger brothers, Rokuo (1897–1967).[138] Yukiteru, the son of Ozaki Yukio (the famous

[131] Yamagata, *Mādokku-shi*', p. 5.

[132] Murdoch to W. L. Mackenzie, 20 September 1911.

[133] Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', p. 61.

[134] Nomi and Matsumoto, '*J. Mādokku*', p. 90.

[135] Murdoch to W. L. Mackenzie, 5 August 1911. The local paper was the *Japan Chronicle*. The task of identifying these articles is difficult. The *Chronicle* obituary provides some clues. It indicates that two of the subjects on which Murdoch wrote for it were "incidents affecting the Dutch colony at Deshima" and the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Harold Williams has noted a series of four articles on the former topic appearing in October and November 1908. (H. S. Williams Collection, ANL MS 6681, Box 8, file: 'Kobe Chronicle/Japan Chronicle', p. 21).

[136] Murdoch to W. L. Mackenzie, 20 September 1911. The address of the property was Kagoshima-shi, Yoshino-mura, 1145. (It was there that Murdoch's widow died in 1946.) According to Sugiyama's calculations, this is today's Yoshino-chō, Iso 1143, owned by the Kawashima Gakuen (Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', p. 64).

[137] *Asahi Shimbun*, 7 March 1911, quoted in Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 132.

[138] For information about Okada Rokuo, I am indebted to Kono Itsuko of Higashi Matsuyama-shi, who interviewed Okada's widow in 1976.

Japanese parliamentarian) boarded with them for a year in 1908–1909.[139] Though his health continued to be poor ("Carcass rotten and eyes permanently on strike"), Murdoch at this time described himself as "generally as cheery as the proverbial grig".[140] This seems to be confirmed by Ozaki's clear and happy recollections fifty years later. The house appears to have been rather primitive (Murdoch himself described it as "a sort of stable—a clean one"). Ozaki remembered the numerous knot-holes in the walls, through which the local children peered at them until Murdoch eventually papered over them. Like Natsume he remembered Murdoch's indifference to his physical appearance—his frayed cuffs and his patched suits. Most of all he remembered the things Murdoch enjoyed: a smoke, a glass of beer, and a walk. He remembered his great admiration for Saigō Takamori and how Murdoch would say to them: "Once Saigō walked where you are walking now."[141] He remembered his preoccupation with his *History*: "I'm reading fifty pages a day but I can't maintain my target of writing five a day".[142]

It was while they were at Yoshino that in May 1910 the volume dealing with the earlier period, *From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542* was published. This time his publisher was the Asiatic Society of Japan.[143]

It was from Yoshino too the following year that Murdoch wrote to congratulate Natsume for declining the title, Doctor of Letters, which the Japanese Government proposed to confer on him and four other eminent scholars. He commended his former pupil for his moral backbone in deciding to remain in the company of such men as Gladstone, Carlyle and Spenser, who had declined similar honours:

[139] Sugiyama, 'James Murdoch (I)', pp. 62–63.

[140] Murdoch to W. L. Mackenzie, 20 September 1911.

[141] Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 165, based on Nomi Chiyako's notes of an interview with Ozaki (early 1960s?). As Hirakawa points out, Murdoch's admiration for Saigō was of long standing. Soon after his first arrival in Japan, a visit to Saigō's grave moved him to make one of few attempts at serious poetry. This is printed in *Don Juan's Grandson* (pp. 62–67). In one of the footnotes, Murdoch describes Saigō as "one of the finest and grandest figures that adorn the glowing pages of Japanese history".

[142] Ozaki Yukiteru's contribution to *Shichikō omoide-shū*, Kagoshima, 1963, vol. 2, pp. 40–42, quoted in Sugiyama: 'James Murdoch (I)', p. 63.

[143] *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, first series, 38, (1910–12)—Report to the Annual Meeting, 1911.

> As human beings it is natural for us to strive to excel the world at large. Our distinction, however, must lie solely in our meritorious contributions to society. The ultimate right to distinction must at all times be determined by what we are and by our deeds.[144]

According to Yamagata, Murdoch himself at one time declined an honour from the Japanese Government.[145]

Apparently Murdoch's orchard was not a financial success. In April 1915 he had to return to school-teaching—at Shibushi Junior High school. His salary there—a mere 60 per cent of what he had been able to command at Kanazawa[146]—was not easily won. As Shibushi is situated on the eastern side of the Ōsumi Peninsula, well beyond daily commuting distance from Yoshino, his employment there must have involved him in considerable travel and separation from his home.

He was teaching at Shibushi when in August 1916 he received the offer of a university post in Australia. He accepted and on 27 February embarked for Australia on the *Aki Maru*.

Murdoch's History of Japan

As the manuscript for its third and final volume, *The Tokugawa Epoch, 1652-1868*, was completed before he left Japan, this is a suitable opportunity for us to consider his *History of Japan*.

Thanks to Yamagata,[147] we know more about how *The Century of Foreign Intercourse* (published in 1903) was written than we do about the other two volumes. The sources in European languages—Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and German—Murdoch translated himself. All but the first of these languages he must, at some stage of his life, have taught himself; for at Aberdeen modern languages were included in neither the school nor the university curriculum. In addition to the sources that he had copied at the British Museum, he was able to borrow rare European books from two of Britain's most distinguished orientalists, Sir Ernest Satow and B. H. Chamberlain. (To house these volumes he excavated a fire-proof study at the rear of his home.) It was not until after the completion of this volume that Murdoch

[144] Murdoch's letter to Natsume as quoted by him (in Japanese translation) in *Asahi Shimbun*, 8/3/11.

[145] Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 135 quoting *Taiyō*, November 1926.

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[147] Yamagata Isō, '*Madokku-shi no Nihon rekishi*', *Shōmotsu Raisan*, 2, 1925, pp. 4–8.

was able to read Japanese. Until then, the Japanese sources were selected for him by a young history graduate from Tokyo University, Murakawa Kenko (1875–1946),[148] and then translated into English by Yamagata. Yamagata has painted a vivid picture of Murdoch and himself at work:

> He spent all his time on the task. Writing, or studying his sources, or deep in thought, he looked like one obsessed: his face was pale and his eyes bloodshot. I was translating the Japanese source material and he was always blaming me because this was not produced fast enough. I found this very painful. If I had been working as his employee or for wages, I should probably have resigned very early in the piece! But as I had undertaken the task in order to discharge some of the obligation towards him that I had felt from my student days, this was not possible. Feeling harassed each day, I kept translating with whatever strength I could muster. Just the material that I produced amounted to several thousand pages of handwriting.

As Yamagata was a busy journalist at the time, one can understand his feelings.

The Century of Foreign Intercourse was generally well received by Murdoch's forerunners in the Japan field. In the *American Historical Review* Griffis, although unhappy about its literary form, described it as "[a] great work. . . every page reveals his power of analysis and his acquaintance with the elements of the theme".[149] Chamberlain, although he, too, was worried by "certain disorders of style", spoke highly of Murdoch's "vivid picture of the most important century of Japanese history".[150] Lafcadio Hearn greeted it with similar enthusiasm:

> This important work contains much documentary material never before printed, and throws new light upon the religious history of the period. . . Perhaps the most interesting chapters are those dealing with the Machiavellian policy of Hideyoshi in his attitude to the

[148] Murakawa's association with Murdoch appears to have been mutually advantageous. No doubt the acquaintance with original European sources that enabled Murakawa to publish in 1900 *Letters Written by the English Residents in Japan 1611–1623* and in 1902 an annotated edition of Hildreth's *Japan as It Was and Is* stemmed partly from his collaboration with Murdoch as well as from the instruction he had received from Ludwig Riess at Tokyo Imperial University. For biographical detail see Yamanaka Kenji, '*Murakawa Kenko sensei*', *Rekishi Kenkyū*, 13:8, 1965, pp. 75–76.

[149] Review by W. E. Griffis in *American Historical Review*, 9:4, July 1904, pp. 802–804.

[150] B. H. Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, London, 1905, p. 67.

> foreign religion and its preachers; but there are few dull pages in the book . . . Not the least merit of the work is its absolute freedom from religious bias of any sort.[151]

As regards this "freedom from religious bias", perhaps Geoffrey Hudson comes closer to the mark in his comments on Murdoch's *History* as a whole: "His judgments were also strongly influenced by his intense dislike for both Buddhism and Confucianism—emotions only surpassed by his still greater dislike of Christianity."[152] On the question of the expulsion of the missionaries and the proscription of Christianity Murdoch like most of his Anglo-Saxon predecessors[153] (including Hearn and Chamberlain) comes down firmly on the side of Hideyoshi and the bakufu:

> The Tokugawas aimed at nothing more than the justifiable deportation of foreigners whose continued presence they had reason to believe was prejudicial to the peace of Japan; and it was only when the foreigners *would* persist in returning to a land where they were not wanted that the Japanese Government had recourse to very regrettable, but very necessary, methods of dealing with aliens that made a merit of flouting its decrees . . . It is surely only the essence of common-sense and of justice to maintain that people have not only a right, but a duty, to protect themselves against unjustifiable aggression of all sorts—that of zealot alien propagandist included.[154]

Where the doughty free-thinker of the Maryborough class-room and author of *Don Juan's Grandson* differs from his fellow-writers on this issue is merely in the frequency of his asides against the persecutions conducted in the name of Christianity in Europe and the New World and by some of the Christian daimyo.[155] In the *English Historical Review* F. V. Dickins (the translator of the *Chūshingura*) attacked Murdoch's approach as partisan: "The severities of the Japanese authorities are uniformly made the subject of more or less ingenious apology—the very ingenuity is a proof of their inadequacy."[156] Dickins also noted Murdoch's lack

[151] L. Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, London, 1904, p. 536.

[152] G. F. Hudson, 'British Historical Writing on Japan', in E. G. Pulleyblank and W. G. Beasley (eds), *Historians of China and Japan*, London, 1961, p. 324.

[153] For example, W. G. Dickson, *Japan*, Edinburgh, 1869, p. 158; W. E. Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire*, New York, 1876, chapter 25; F. Brinkley, *Japan, Its History, Arts, and Literature*, Boston, 1902, vol. 3, pp. 108–30.

[154] *The Century of Foreign Intercourse*, p. 497.

[155] For some of Murdoch's broadsides against Christian superstition, intolerance and persecutions, see *ibid.*, pp. 63, 242, 378, 460–61, 495–96, 553.

[156] F. V. Dickins, *English Historical Review*, 20, 1905, p. 569.

of professional rigour in citing and identifying his Japanese secondary sources. (Murdoch's very haphazard documentation continued to worry reviewers of the two succeeding volumes and in 1911 caused Asakawa in his review of *From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 A.D.* to refer to two places where Murdoch had copied from the recent work of Japanese authors without acknowledgement.)[157]

As one would expect from the creator of characters like Hawkston and Morrison, Murdoch gave full attention to the characters and particular skills of the principal actors. Whereas to Dickins the era was one of "petty civil wars, and still pettier intrigues", Murdoch, as Griffis points out, was able to show how in this period "men of real ability ruled the country".[158] Griffis continues:

> He holds the threads clearly in narrating the story of the three great men of Japan, and many of his pages are brilliant and fascinating. . . . In showing how Nobunaga rose and fell, and how Hideyoshi entered into his predecessor's labors, but with profounder genius, keener insight, vaster ken, and even greater energy, the author depends on no unscrutinized tradition or unchallenged legend . . . Though other scholars have been fascinated by the same theme. . . there is no picture of [Hideyoshi's] personality, actions, and measures like that here presented.

The characters are certainly 'writ large'. Take for example the picture of Hideyoshi among the friars:

> In mere erudition Hideyoshi was inferior to the average bucolic in the ruck of the novices in the Franciscan or in any other Order; in practical statesmanship and politics, and in all their arts and devices, Dominic or Loyola or Machiavelli would have come badly off in any encounter with him. The deluded Franciscans had to learn by dour experience that it was but ill work for pigmies to set their powers against those of a giant in the art of deception—as well as of statescraft generally. But, in common with most Caucasians, they no doubt believed, rashly enough, that great men were (and are) only to be found in Caucasian, if not Christian, lands.[159]

In 1903 with this volume behind him Murdoch, now almost fifty

[157] K. Asakawa, *American Historical Review*, April 1911, pp. 630–33; anonymous reviewer of *The Tokugawa Epoch (1652–1868)* in *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 June 1926, p. 405.

[158] *Nation*, 24 March 1904, pp. 237–38.

[159] *During the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse. . .* , p. 286. For similar purple passages see *ibid.*, p. 573 and vol. 1, pp. 366–72 where he accords Hideyoshi and Ieyasu and Yoritomo and Yoritsune their place among the great commanders.

years of age, began to study the written language. To those who told him that he was too old for such an enterprise he would reply that Cato was eighty when he started Greek.[160] According to Yamagata, Murdoch was able to read classical texts like the *Kojiki* and the *Manyōshū* within two or three years. Thereafter he appears to have made less use of Japanese assistants—he mentions none in the two volumes that followed. In his reviews of these, Asakawa Kanichi, from Yale, provides us with an expert's evaluation of Murdoch's contribution as an historian.

Writing in 1911 Asakawa noted three periods in the writing of histories of Japan by Westerners since the Meiji Restoration. The products of the first were puerile. In the second, a few Europeans acquired sufficient knowledge of the language and of Japanese culture to make an intelligent use of native assistants. In the third, "a few foreign authors seem now to have come to a point where they get firsthand glimpses of the vast literature of Japanese history and apply to it, in some measure, not scientific criticism, but what might be termed the criticism of common-sense". Asakawa found Murdoch's *From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese. . .* by far the best product of this third period. He praised his lucidity and skilful handling of political events and drew attention to "the great abundance throughout the volume of suggestive and acute comments on subjects of importance in Japanese history". Asakawa, however, indicated that even in this third period foreign scholars, and Murdoch among them, were still inadequately acquainted with the vernacular sources and the latest work of Japanese historians.[161] Murdoch's contact with contemporary Japanese historians must, indeed, have been limited: he was never to achieve an easy fluency with the spoken language;[162] and at Kagoshima he was far from the centres of academic debate. This is a hard gap to cross. A generation later Asakawa must have applauded the determined efforts of a younger generation of foreign scholars like Herbert Norman to narrow it. But they, too, owed a large debt to their Murakawas.

Asakawa's review of *The Tokugawa Era, 1652–1858* in 1927 was similar in its apportionment of praise and criticism. He considered it "the fullest and most competent account of the period that has appeared in any European language". He referred to Murdoch's

160 Yamagata, '*Maddoku-shi*', *loc. cit.*
161 Asakawa, *American Historical Review, loc. cit.*
162 Hirakawa, *Sōseki no shi*, p. 169.

"penetration", his "masterly control of detail", his "skilful treatment of the political history" (whose changing scenes, Asakawa noted, were "presented in intimate terms of personal relations") and his confident, vigorous and perceptive handling of the economic aspects:

> Murdoch is a splendid popularizer, not an original contributor. His strength lies in the keen historic sense which he possessed and which seems to have grown with his years. His general weakness, aside from his failure in special fields, is due to his unfamiliarity, as his bibliography proves, with most of the enormous mass of the sources of this period, Had he used more of them, some of his acute reasonings would have been revised; for, as said Fustel de Coulanges, history is not ratiocination.[163]

The two special fields where Asakawa found Murdoch inadequate were cultural history (to which Murdoch gave little attention) and institutional history (where it seems to me he performed vastly better than his European predecessors but in a piecemeal fashion rather than in the systematic or scientific manner that Asakawa favoured). Among other things he criticised Murdoch for not being completely *au fait* with current research on the history of Japanese feudalism.

Asakawa's criticisms are just and constructive. It should, however, be noted that Japanese was his native tongue and that the feudal institutions of medieval Japan were to absorb the greater part of his academic life to the exclusion of any attempt to write a general history.

Writing in 1950 Maki Kenji (Professor of Legal History at Kyoto University) considered Murdoch in terms of his contribution to the understanding of Japanese history *by Westerners*. Maki accorded him high praise for his ability to transcend the cultural limitations of his predecessors and for his perceptiveness in discerning similar processes giving rise to similar phenomena in both societies. Murdoch, for example, saw feudalism developing in Japan at about the same time as it did in Europe and for similar reasons. This was no news to Japanese historians, but it was an important point that had eluded Chamberlain and Hearn.[164]

Murdoch, as we have observed, was by temperament the scep-

[163] K. Asakawa, *American Historical Review*, October 1927, pp. 139–40.

[164] Maki Kenji, *Kindai ni okeru seiyōjin no Nihon rekishi kan*, Tokyo, 1969, pp. 148–56. I am indebted to Professor Watanabe Akio for bringing this book to my attention.

tic—doubting externals and doubting conventional wisdom. His need to assault the complacency of his fellow Europeans led him to make some interesting comparisons. Take for exmple:

> The present open-mouthed surprise of the West at the unexpected development in the North-East Pacific is mainly due to misconceptions of the import of the word civilisation. Many very worthy people seem to fancy that anything that is not strictly synonymous with European, or so-called Christian culture, cannot be regarded as civilisation. At the end of the sixteenth century. . . it is abundantly clear. . . that the Island Empire was fully abreast, it not positively in advance, of contemporary Europe in all the essentials of cultured and civilised life.[165]

In his introductory chapter to the *History* as a whole, he argues that the matrix that made possible the remarkable rate of sustained progress that followed the Meiji Restoration was already in place when the appearance of Commodore Perry's squadron brought the era of seclusion to a close. He considered the essential constituents of this matrix to be: (i) a large homogeneous population; (ii) an underlying social organisation that was sound and stable; (iii) a sense of honour and of conduct; (iv) a vigorously active national intellect; (v) a talent for organisation. Thus at a time when many of Murdoch's contemporaries were arguing that Japan's modernisation was no more than a flimsy veneer, he portrayed it as something which sprang from roots in her past and which would, accordingly, continue. Not surprisingly, this was an interpretation that Japanese found satisfactory. "It was through Murdoch", wrote Maki (to whom Japan's traditions and achievements meant much) "that foreigners first encountered a history of Japan that was accurate, impartial and balanced".

Murdoch's *History* remained the standard work for more than a generation. Eventually he yielded pride of place to Sansom (whose first volume appeared in 1958 and third volume in 1966). Undergraduates, however, continue to be referred to him—probably because of the detail with which he treats some events.[166]

[165] *From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese*. . . , pp. 2–3. See also his comparison of administration under the Hōjō with that under their European contemporaries (*ibid.*, p. 455).

[166] Murdoch's three volumes were reprinted by Kegan Paul in 1933, 1949 and 1952 and, after the lapse of the original copyright, by Frederick Ungar Ltd in 1964.

Duntroon and Sydney University[167]

When Murdoch returned to Australia in 1917 it was to take up an unusual appointment—a lectureship in Japanese at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, to be held concurrently with a part-time lectureship in Japanese at Sydney University, two hundred miles away. The decision in 1916 (in the middle of the Great War, in which Australia and Japan were allies) that the Australian Army should embark on the serious study of the Japanese language provides evidence pointing to a serious apprehension on the part of the Minister for Defence (Senator George Pearce) and some of his cabinet colleagues that Japan would make war with Australia within the period subject to present defence planning.[168] It appears that the initiative in establishing the lectureship came from the minister, himself, and that the details were worked out by the Chief of the General Staff, Brigader General H. J. Foster. There were four candidates for the lectureship. Two, J. H. Longford (destined some years later to be the editor of the third, posthumous volume of Murdoch's *History of Japan*) and J. W. Robertson-Scott (then in charge of Britain's wartime propaganda in Tokyo), were suggested by the Foreign Office; two, Murdoch and a British Army linguist, Captain A. M. Cardew, R. E., by the embassy in Tokyo. Seldom can an academic appointment have been made by a stranger process or on the basis of greater ignorance concerning the candidates. Murdoch was Foster's third choice. His first was Longford, whom the Foreign Office described as a former consular officer aged fifty-five. As he was already in receipt of a pension, it was thought that he would be available for £100 per annum less than the embassy's nominees. Longford was interviewed for the job by the Australian prime minister, W. M. Hughes, during the latter's visit to London, and made a favourable impression. When it was discovered that Longford's age was, in fact, sixty-seven, Cardew was selected. The Indian government, however, refused to release him. And so they settled upon the man whom the cable from the embassy described as "Murdoch of Kagoshima Japan with excellent knowledge of Japanese.

[167] Except where otherwise indicated, the information in this section is derived from Australian Archives (hereafter AA), A3688, files 488/R1/55 and /56.

[168] See, for example, my 'Attitudes to Japan and Defence 1890–1923', unpublished University of Melbourne M.A. thesis, 1956, chapter 3.

He is journalist about 60 who has been teacher in Japanese schools and written on Japanese history." No one involved in the selection process knew that Murdoch had teaching experience at tertiary level. They did not even know the titles of his books. They were unaware that he had ever lived in Australia—let alone that he had been an associate of such radicals as William Lane and the prime minister's foe, T. J. Ryan, the Labour premier of Queensland.[169]

At Duntroon it was decided that, in each annual intake, eight of those cadets who had demonstrated linguistic proficiency at the entrance examination should study Japanese as their foreign language throughout their four years at the college. Murdoch took up his duties with the first year class on 20 March 1917. During the year an additional *ad hoc* class was also formed from members of the college staff who were eager to learn the language.[170] On Mondays and Tuesdays he was to teach at the university, where he would be assisted by a native 'Reader' who would do "the bulk of the language instruction",[171] which Murdoch would "coordinate and supplement with lectures on history, economy, sociology, etc.". His teaching at the university was what a later generation would have called 'University Extension lectures'; for the bye-laws of the university precluded an arts student from enrolling for a modern language that he had not studied at matriculation. This was a provision that Murdoch supported.[172] (The first matriculation examination in Japanese took place a few weeks after Murdoch's death in 1921).

[169] About Longford they were equally ignorant. They were unaware that he had just retired from the chair of Japanese at King's College, London, where he had been since 1903.

[170] It was upon three members of the latter class that the teaching of Japanese at Duntroon was to devolve throughout the period 1922–1930—Professor J. F. M. Heydon (1922–1924), Captain J. R. Broadbent (1924–1926) and Captain G. H. Capes (1928–1930) (Royal Military College of Australia, *Annual Reports*, 1916/1917 to 1930, *passim*)

[171] This rather disparaging attitude towards language teaching on the part of those engaged to conduct it appears to have been rather widespread. Longford, in the course of his negotiations with the Australian authorities had written:

> . . . apart from the teaching of the elements of Japanese, which any missionary hack might accomplish, I believe I could have rendered good service, in itself worth all the money paid for it, by promoting some knowledge of real Japan, which could only be done by a man of the world with long expert experience of his subject. . . .

[172] Obituary by Professor M. W. MacCallum, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1921.

The 1917/1918 long vacation Murdoch spent in Japan purchasing books for the university library and selecting two native speakers—one, the 'Reader' for the university; the other, to teach at two Sydney high schools.

The year 1918 was exacting. Besides his duties at Duntroon and at the university, he had additional work in Sydney supervising the teaching of the language at the high schools. He was living in two places—at Sydney from Sunday to Wednesday and at Duntroon for the remainder of the week. It was the year of the 'Spanish 'flu' pandemic and he suffered two bouts within four months. This left its mark on him (he was sixty-two). In April 1919 he wrote: "I have for some time noticed odd lapses of memory on my part; and an extraordinary tendency to get headaches and to lose mental grip after a little exertion. . . ".[173] The year, however, also brought recognition and advancement. In the middle of 1918 Murdoch received an attractive offer of employment in Japan.[174] To this the university responded by proposing to the Defence Department that, if the latter would contribute the equivalent of Murdoch's Duntroon salary (£600 per annum.), it would appoint him Professor of Oriental Studies for a period of seven years at £1,000 per annum. and "at the same time leave his services available for doing all that the Commonwealth Government requires of him". The Defence Department made two further stipulations: (i) Murdoch was to be given "an opportunity to visit Japan annually during the long vacation and such part of the first term as may be necessary"; (ii) his services were to be made available to assist the governments of other states to introduce the study of the language. The appointment to the chair took effect on 1 October 1918. Under the new arrangement Murdoch's function at Duntroon was "to continue the conduct and supervision of Japanese studies". This he was to discharge by periodic visits, the actual teaching there being conducted by his brother-in law, Okada Rokuo.

Murdoch and the D.M.I.[175]

It seems probable that the principal purpose of the annual visits to

[173] Murdoch to E. L. Piesse, 3 April 1919 (ANL MS 882, f. 5/11).

[174] This, presumably, is the offer from Waseda University referred to by Nomi and Matsumoto, ('*J. Mādokku*', p. 91).

[175] For a more detailed treatment of this topic see pp. 73–106 of my 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese—James Murdoch', ANL MS 3092).

Japan was the down-to earth one of ensuring regular supervision for the succession of trainee interpreters whom, it was envisaged, the Army would be sending to Japan. There is, however, evidence that the defence authorities considered as one of their more important intelligence sources the observations and predictions regarding Japanese politics and public opinion that Murdoch would bring back.

He embarked on the first of these journeys on 27 September 1918 and arrived back in Sydney on 14 March. The result of this visit may be seen in a series of twenty-four personal letters from Murdoch to E. L. Piesse, the Director of Military Intelligence, covering the period 6 December 1918 to 26 August 1919[176]—a period during which Japan's policies were frequently the subject of much anxiety (it covered Japan's Siberian expedition, the confrontation between Australia and Japan at the Paris Peace Conference, and Japan's victory over President Wilson on the Shantung question).

Piesse was an unusual person to be D.M.I. he was not a regular soldier, but a solicitor. He was one of the members of the Citizen Military Forces ('Saturday-afternoon soldiers') mobilised at the outbreak of war for full-time home service. In May 1918 he had embarked on a comprehensive examination of all papers relating to Japan in the archives of the principal federal departments. This took him four months and led him to somewhat unorthodox conclusions:

> If the papers that have been shown to me represent all the knowledge the Government had, I should say that our policy of defence against Japan is inadequately supported by evidence. I am not concerned to say this policy was not justified, although the view I hold of Japan's foreign relations leads me to think that hitherto her eyes have not been turned to us, but merely to point out that a policy involving a vast expenditure appears to have been decided without a sufficient foundation of knowledge. . . .[177]

By temperament, however, Piesse was judicious and open-minded. That a threat had not existed did not mean that one could not develop. Movements in Japanese politics and in the international relations of the Pacific region should be subjected to continuous observation and analysis. Since he regarded British Foreign Office

[176] E. L. Piesse papers, ANL MS 882, ff. 5/5-5/40.

[177] Unofficial letter from Piesse to Senator G. Pearce (Minister for Defence), 13 November 1918 (ANL MS 882).

sources on such matters to be inadequate and slanted, he believed that Australia must undertake such analysis for herself.[178] At the time Murdoch embarked for Japan the friction between the Japanese and the United States governments over the extent of Japan's military intervention in Siberia was causing Piesse some anxiety. He considered that it was in Australia's interest that Japanese expansion should take place on the north Asian mainland rather than in the Pacific. If the United States countered Japan's continental activities, Piesse feared that this would produce frustration and resentment throughout the entire Japanese community and provide a favourable environment for the southern school of Japanese imperialists (hitherto a small minority), who urged that Japan's true destiny lay in the south.[179]

Murdoch arrived in Japan on 23 October. The leters indicate that he had access to an extensive range of information and opinion. At the British embassy the Japanese Secretary (E. M. Hobart-Hampden) and Robertson-Scott were men he had known for thirty years. At the American embassy he had two-hour sessions with the ambassador, Roland Morris (who had recently returned from a month in Siberia). He was granted an interview with Shidehara, the head of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.[180] What he saw and heard inclined him to believe that the future trend of Japanese politics would be salutary. To quote from his letter of 25 January:

> I've had rather a strenuous time of it in Tokyo, where I put my digestion if not my immortal soul in deadly peril. I had several spreads with my journalistic friends with whom I swapped wisdom with fairly satisfactory results.[181] The collapse of Germany has at last had its effect;—German militarism is now being held up as a terrible exam-

[178] Memorandum by E. L. Piesse, 'The Far Eastern Question: Recent Developments and their Significance for Australia', 22 October 1918 (AA, A2219, vol. 1, item D.M.I. S180/13).

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] Although Nomi and Matsumoto ('*J. Mādokku*', p. 86) claim that Shidehara was one of Murdoch's students at Eirst Higher School, it seems clear that he was an alumnus not of First Higher School but of Third Higher School, Kyoto (*Shidehara Kijūrō*, Tokyo, 1955, pp. 18–20).

[181] That Murdoch used these meetings with Japanese journalists to good effect to argue Australia's case is attested by an editorial in *Herald of Asia* on 4 January which noted new and encouraging elements in Australian-Japanese relations (including the establishment of the Sydney chair) and explained the White Australia policy as necessary to foster the industrial progress of a slowly growing community.

> ple; and able editors are everywhere preaching to their public the advisability of turning over a new leaf. Japanese policy in China is now altering greatly for the better; and on the whole, the country has become reasonable, very reasonable. In short, things are now much more hopeful than they have been since 1914.

It was during the last weeks of Murdoch's visit that the racial equality issue emerged. The first of a series of public demonstrations took place in Tokyo on 28 January and it was on 13 February (three days before Murdoch left Japan on his homeward journey) that the Japanese delegate at the Paris Peace Conference proposed the insertion into the Covenant of the League of Nations of the following clause:

> The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Powers agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction either in law or in fact on account of their race or nationality.

This was a matter of obvious concern for Australia; for Australian immigration and industrial legislation discriminated against the Asian and other coloured races. On 4 March Piesse sent a letter to await Murdoch on his arrival in Sydney in which he asked Murdoch to come to Melbourne and discuss this matter with him. In his reply (from Sydney on 14 March while the ship was in quarantine) Murdoch wrote:

> This racial discrimination agitation extends all over Japan; & it has been engineered by the military party. It may very well become dangerous if not met properly. I talked to the Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs [Shidehara] about the matter, & I had several dinners with my journalistic friends where I orated on the matter. . .
>
> P.S. I get at several Japanese papers over the racial discrimination pother; we *cd* do quite a lot to counter the agitation and make it harmless, I think.

The discussions between Piesse and Murdoch in Melbourne extended over several days and gave rise to two memoranda from Piesse to the Chief of the General Staff on the subject.[182] In them Piesse accepted Murdoch's analysis that the movement was organised by militarist and other right-wing elements who saw in it a means whereby they could: (i) divert the attention of the populace from internal social and industrial issues; (ii) counter popular sym-

[182] AA, A2219, vol. 6, 'Racial Discrimination', item D.M.I. S180/26; ANL MS 882, ff. 2/118 ff.

pathy for the League of Nations, which, if established, would lead to disarmament and a reduction in their own power and prestige; (iii) disarm Chinese hostility, which was a barrier to Japan's continental expansion. Accordingly, Piesse argued, the appropriate policy for the English-speaking countries to adopt at Paris was to discuss sympathetically the Japanese proposal, to demonstrate that many of the restrictions imposed on Japanese overseas were economic and not racial in origin, and to show a readiness to administer any inevitable restrictions in as agreeable manner as possible. In this connection Piesse suggested that Australia give favourable consideration to long-standing Japanese proposals (repeated as recently as 1916) for a formal treaty in which Australia guaranteed to the Japanese most favoured nation treatment regarding entry, accompanied by a 'Gentlemen's Agreement' in which Japan undertook to issue passports only to merchants, tourists, students, etc. This latter suggestion sprang from Piesse's conclusion that status and not freer immigration was what the Japanese sought in the racial equality clause. A letter from Murdoch dated 24 April, no doubt, confirmed him in this conclusion. In it Murdoch drew Piesse's attention to the fact that the quest for status was the underlying theme of Kikuchi Dairoku's article on Japan in the 1910/1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*. With the conviction of one who had lived in Japan during the prolonged negotiations that resulted in the termination of extra-territoriality, Murdoch added: "the Japanese are in real earnest over that."

The attitude of the Australian prime minister, W. M. Hughes, to the racial equality clause was very different. The Melbourne *Age* on 21 March had told how Hughes had sought an interview with the Paris correspondent of the *New York Sun* and proclaimed to the world that Australia would not agree to the inclusion of racial equality in the Covenant in any form. Piesse considered that Hughes had thereby gratuitously placed Australia in a position where she could not win. If Hughes succeeded in bringing America into line, then this might cause the Chinese and other Eastern races to regard Western domination as the fundamental issue in world politics and to accept Japanese leadership. In which case, Piesse argued, "we are in sight of the next world war". If on the other hand America, now or at some time in the future, accepted the Japanese position, then Australia would be isolated and at Japan's mercy.

The statements by Hughes that Piesse so deprecated continued at almost daily intervals. In Paris on 6 April the Japanese delegate,

Baron Makino, approached the representative of a leading Australian newspaper and through him appealed to the Australian public. Makino's message was that the Japanese people were convinced that only Australian opposition stood in the way of their proposal and that they would hold Australia accountable if it failed. Murdoch regarded this very seriously. On 10 April he wrote to Piesse:

> From what Makino is reported to have said to the Sun's representative, the fat is in the fire and things are getting even more serious than I expected them to be. Are we prepared to fight at any time within five years from now? . . . We can maintain the White Australia policy intact, I believe, if we go about it in the right way; and that too without any fighting and with very little unpleasantness. If we continue to play the game of the Japanese military clique, it is quite possible that there will be something a good deal worse than unpleasantness. . . .

The fate of the racial equality proposal is well known.[183] It was put to the vote at the final session of the Peace Conference's League of Nations Commission on 11 April. Although eleven out of a total of seventeen votes were cast in its favour, President Wilson as chairman of the meeting ruled that unanimity was necessary and that the proposal was therefore defeated.

Later in the month the manner in which the Peace Conference disposed of the Shantung question caused Murdoch and Piesse similar concern.

The Chinese government by accepting Japan's notorious 'Twenty-One Demands' in 1915 had agreed to recognise any arrangement which the Japanese and German governments might subsequently make regarding German rights in this province. Two years later Japan in a series of secret agreements had received from Great Britain, France and Russia formal assurances of their sup-

[183] It is, perhaps, of interest that Tōjō in his evidence at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East argued that the immigration legislation in English-speaking countries (he specifically mentioned the Australian legislation of 1901) and the rejection of the racial equality provision at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 were among the factors influencing his government to formulate its Greater East Asia Policy (IMTFE, *Proceedings*, 30 November 1947, pp. 36430-34). Whether this was his own belief or whether it was an idea fed to him by his team of defending officers (Japanese and American), we cannot tell. Be this as it may, it certainly appears to have been one of the arguments that influenced the Indian member of the Tribunal to cast his vote for an acquittal. (See *International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Dissentient Judgment of Justice R. B. Pal*, Calcutta, 1953), pp. 317-20.

port for such claims, in return for greater Japanese assistance in the war against Germany. When at the Peace Conference Japan sought the implementation of these agreements, China (which in August 1917 had declared war on Germany) claimed that her acceptance of the twenty-one demands had been secured under duress and demanded that German rights and interests in Shantung should be ceded to her and not to Japan. President Wilson's sympathies were with the Chinese, but, lacking the support of the other allies (who were committed by their 1917 undertakings), he gave way. Accordingly, on 30 April the clauses of the peace treaty embodying the Japanese claim were accepted by the Council of Four.

It was with surprise as well as dismay that Murdoch and Piesse watched the course of the events moving towards this conclusion. They, like the rest of the world, were completely unaware of the 1917 secret agreements. On 24 April 1919, the day on which these were published in the daily press, Murdoch wrote to Piesse:

> If Japan can work her own sweet will in China to the uttermost, she will deem herself strong enough to challenge America even . . .We drive Japan to seek alliances; and by 1935 or so we have Germany, Russia and Japan acting together—Japan with control over the inexhaustible resources of China. With these resources at her command, she will be able to build ships as fast as America. And the next war will be a war of the air far more than last one been.

An official memorandum by Piesse dated 6 May echoes these views.[184]

Murdoch's letters to Piesse are also interesting in demonstrating that his attitude to race had become somewhat more liberal and sophisticated over the years. In his letters of 3 and 24 April 1919 he endorses the basic thesis expounded by Revd S. L. Gulick in his *Evolution of the Japanese—Social and Psychic*.[185] Gulick argued that "the main differences between the great races of mankind to-day are not due to biological, but to social conditions; they are not physico-psychological differences, but only socio-psychological differences". Gulick was critical of the Western publicists who "pride themselves on their high education and liberal sentiments" but at the same time misapply scientific theories in order to justify

[184] AA, A2219/5, 'China-Japan &', item D.M.I. S180/27.

[185] Published in New York by F. H. Revell & Co. For a brief but informative account of the life and work of this remarkable missionary, scholar and propagandist see the article by R. S. Schwantes in *Dictionary of American Biography*, supplement number 3, 1941–1945, New York, 1973.

"the arrogance and domineering spirit of Western nations".[186] To Murdoch, the attribution of innate qualities to particular races was "pestifirous explosive poppy-cock". It was explosive because "if we really want war, all we've got to do is to keep on harping upon our pseudo-scientific racial 'biology' ".

Much water had indeed passed under the bridge since Murdoch attempted to fan the fires of race hatred among his *Boomerang* readers by the use of such phrases as "white-tusked tawny apes". It is not, however, surprising that with thirty years of experience similar to Gulick's Murdoch should be driven to similar conclusions. The typical foreign resident worked, lived and relaxed among other members of the foreign community. This limited his opportunities for sustained observation of the individuals who made up the wider community beyond. It also made it likely that any observations that he did make would be of the 'they' and 'us' variety. Murdoch and Gulick, however, were atypical. By the nature of callings and circumstances they spent most of their time with individual Japanese—in Gulick's case with parishioners and native clergy, in Murdoch's case with pupils and members of his own household. Their experience being of this nature, it is not surprising that they reached the conclusion that there was as wide a diversity of talent and personality in Japan as elsewhere and that cultural patterns were not innate, but acquired.

Murdoch, as has been observed when dealing with his *History of Japan*, identified and laid considerable stress on certain Japanese national characteristics such as a sense of honour, a vigorously active national intellect, and a talent for organisation. But he did not suggest that these characteristics were innate.

1920–1921

After "nearly three years of incessant locomotion" Murdoch was, at his own request, excused from visiting Japan in the 1919/1920 long vacation. The 1920/1921 visit was of short duration. He left Sydney on 24 September and was back early in January. After seeing that the two most promising of his army students, Captain J. R. Broadbent and Captain G. H. Capes, were properly launched on their two years stay as language students, he seems during the visit to have exercised his customary watching brief over the Japanese political scene. This time his prognosis was a little more sanguine: "Australia has nothing to be anxious about from Japan

[186] Gulik, *Evolution of the Japanese*, p. 19.

just now, but ten years hence it may be very different."[187] On his return he journeyed to Melbourne to convey his impressions to the minister in person. Murdoch also saw the prime minister (Hughes) at least once (and possibly twice) at about this time to discuss the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, one of the principal agenda items for the forthcoming Imperial Conference. Murdoch warned Hughes that one of the aims of the militarists was to drive a wedge between Britain and America and that the arrogant attitude of some Americans played right into their hands. He felt that there was "a good deal more than a mere off-chance of America drifting into war with Japan within the next ten years".[188] At the Imperial Conference Hughes argued in terms of an immediate threat. Japan, he said, was spending more than half her budget on armaments. This tremendous drain on her resources could not continue for any length of time. Her ambitious projects must be realised in the near future.[189]

Murdoch died at Sydney on 30 October 1921 of cancer of the liver, the symptoms of which had begun to appear about five months previously. Volume iii of his *History of Japan*, covering the Tokugawa period (1652–1868), was still unpublished, although he had completed the manuscript in Kagoshima. Allen & Unwin had approached him in 1914 but nothing had come of this—possibly because of the wartime paper shortage. At the time of his arrival in Australia he had been trying to arrange publication at his own expense and had organised about two hundred subscribers in Japan and the United Kingdom.[190] It was not to appear until 1926 (under the Kegan Paul imprint and with the assistance of Longford as editor). We can gain an inkling of their difficulties from the description of Murdoch's writing technique given by Mungo MacCallum in Murdoch's obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

[187] Murdoch to Secretary, Defence Department, 11 January 1921 (AA, MP431, file 871/12/105).

[188] Murdoch to the Prime Minister, 3 March 1921 (ANL W. M. Hughes Papers, MS 1538, f. 16/2677).

[189] Stenographic record of 9th meeting (29 June 1921) of the Conference, p. 15 (ANL MS 1538, f. 25/440). Yamagata in suggesting in his November 1926 *Taiyō* article that Murdoch was the principal influence determining Hughes's policy on the alliance is, I feel, overstating his case. Hughes and his ministers were publicly supporting renewal of the alliance well before they had the benefit of Murdoch's advice (See for example the *Argus* [Melbourne] 11 August 1920 and 4 September 1920).

[190] Murdoch to Brigader General H. J. Foster, 15 June 1917 (AA, A3688, file 488/R1/55).

> In a way the last volume [that is the projected vol. iv covering the period 1868-1912] was finished, and in a way it was never begun. This is no paradox: his method of working explains its absolute truth. He had a memory, like Macaulay's, extraordinarily retentive and ready, so that he seemed able to recall at will anything he ever knew, e.g. the number of a page in which some passage occurred, though he had not read the book for years. This gift, so useful to a historian, determined his procedure. He hunted out all the authorities, assessed them, assimilated their information, pondered it in his mind—all this without taking a single note—and when the heterogeneous material was reduced to a coherent and organic whole took his pen and gave it its final shape in words. A few weeks before his death he said: 'My fourth volume is now ready: I have only to write it, which will take a month or two'. Now that fourth volume, though ready, will never be read. In this as in much else his death was premature, though he lived till 65.[191]

The structure that Murdoch had played so large a part in building began to crumble within a few weeks of his death.

Okada left Duntroon at the end of the 1921 academic year and no successor was appointed (presumably he was one of the early victims of the severe retrenchments in the military establishment that attended the postwar depression). Although Japanese remained in the curriculum at Duntroon until December 1938, no full-time teacher was ever again appointed and the subject never regained the prestige of the Murdoch-Okada years. Apart from Broadbent and Capes, who returned to Australia in 1922, no other Duntroon graduates were sent to Japan for further language training. Nor did the study of the language prosper among the civil community. A survey by the Directorate of Military Operations in 1935 revealed that there were then only seven people in Australia familiar with the Japanese language—Murdoch's successor at Sydney University (Professor A. L. Sadler) and six persons "able to read and write imperfectly".[192]

In short, the seed that Murdoch sowed did not yield fruit that multiplied. It is possible that, had he survived to cultivate it, the result might have been different: those who knew him seem agreed that even in his last years he was a man of great energy.[193] But

[191] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1921.

[192] AA, MP431, file 929/16/69.

[193] His energy is attested by his ability to sell his ideas to the N.S.W. Department of Education and, within eighteen months of his arrival in Australia, to have native teachers installed in two metropolitan high schools (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 October 1921).

possibly it was stony ground in which, no matter how devoted the cultivator, the initially promising growth was bound to wither away once the sun was up.[194] Unfortunately, Murdoch cannot be credited with establishing the tradition from which to-day's annual harvest of young linguists stems. His lasting achievement lies elsewhere—in producing what remained for a generation, to use Asakawa's phrase, "by far the best" history of Japan written by a foreigner.

[194] The influence of the Washington treaties should not be underestimated. On 13 April 1922 Piesse wrote to his departmental head:

> The Washington Conference has now brought about a great change in our position relative to Japan. Whatever the ultimate outcome of the treaties made at the Conference, there can, I think, be no doubt that the detailed study of Japanese affairs which we contemplated in 1920 is, for the next few years at least, quite unnecessary. . . .

No doubt the treaties had a similar impact on public opinion generally.

END OF REPRINT

James Murdoch (1856–1921): Historian, teacher and much else besides

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