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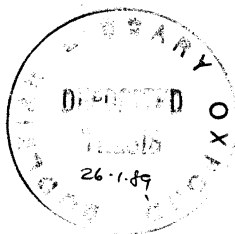
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CHRISTOPHER DRESSER (1834-1904) AND THE CULT OF JAPAN

VOLUME I

by

Widar Halén

Wadham College, Oxford,
Trinity Term, 1988 ✓

ABSTRACT

CHRISTOPHER DRESSER (1834-1904) AND THE CULT OF JAPAN:

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Christopher Dresser was one of the most advanced English designers of the nineteenth century. He was an important art theorist and his writings were well known in Europe, America and Japan. His doctrines, among the most original of the century, stressed the importance of function, simplicity and mechanical skill. He pioneered a rational and scientific attitude to design that was based on easily available and inexpensive materials, and in modern socialistic terms advocated the equality of status between the manufacturer and the designer. He was one of the first professionally trained designers for machine production in Europe, and his designs for carpets, textiles, wallpapers, furniture, cast iron, ceramics, metalware and entire interiors were far ahead of his time, looking forward to the geometric and functional character of much twentieth century design.

These innovative creations as well as his many publications on design are marked by a distinct penchant for Oriental art and for Japanese art in particular. While studying at the School of Design in London from 1847 to 1855 Dresser was a keen student of Oriental art and he first encountered Japanese art around the time of the opening of Japan to foreign commerce in 1853-54. The import of Japanese art and artefacts to the West made a tremendous impact on Dresser and on European artists in general, who soon coined the word 'Japonisme' later to become anglicised as 'Japonism' and 'Anglo-Japanese'.

The Cult of Japan as it was also called in Britain during the later half of the nineteenth century became a guiding spirit in the reform movement of the day, and Dresser was one of its foremost figures. He very early on included Japanese art in his revolutionary classification of the decorative arts launched in 1861, and was continuously inspired by Japanese art throughout his career. Travelling to Japan in 1876 he had the benefit of being the first European designer to be allowed to move freely in the country, and his observations were published in his Japan, its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures (1882). Dresser probably did more for the heralding of Japonism and the dissemination of Japanese art proper in England than any other individual. But despite this, Dresser's work has never previously been seriously assessed and given the critical appraisal it fully deserves.

ABSTRACT

CHRISTOPHER DRESSER (1834-1904) AND THE CULT OF JAPAN

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Christopher Dresser was not only one of the leading figures in the introduction of Japanese influence into European design and art theory, but was also one of the most advanced English designers of the nineteenth century. His art theories and many publications were well known in Europe, America and in Japan. His publications included The Art of Decorative Design (1862), The Development of Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition (1862), Principles of Decorative Design (1873), Studies in Design (1875-76), Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures (1882), and Modern Ornamentation (1886). His doctrines, among the most original of the century, stressed the importance of function, simplicity and mechanical skill. He pioneered a rational and scientific attitude to design, that was based on easily available and inexpensive materials combined with appropriate and restrained ornamentation. Dresser was one of the first professionally trained designers for machine production in Europe, and may arguably be the first industrial designer, or at least the first to become conscious of his role as one. His production, was far ahead of his time, and covered a wide range of materials, styles and techniques in the media of carpets, textiles, wallpapers, ceramics, porcelain, glass, furniture, metalwork, hardware and entire interior decorations. Advocating the equality of status between the designer and manufacturer, Dresser was the first European designer who before the advent of 'socialism' was allowed to imprint his signature next to the makers mark.

Dresser propagated the elevation of interior decoration to the status of art, which gave rise to such related expressions as art furniture, art pottery and art glass and thus attempted to bridge the gap which had

emerged between art and manufacture in Victorian Britain. He stressed that this was a fictitious division, and that the artistic capacity of modern manufacture was equal to that of the craftman in former times. Clearly with the advent of William Morris's arts and crafts movement, Dresser felt the need to delight in the discoveries of his own time, and this enthusiasm for the machine was in contrast with the views of Morris and John Ruskin.

Dresser launched his doctrines on decorative art and his creed for 'newness of style' fully fifteen years before Morris began lecturing and publishing on the subject, and although both preached the gospel of art for the masses, Morris could never match Dresser's tremendous output of design for mass production. Their practical efforts for an improvement of British design was fundamentally opposed, but their principles frequently coincided and it was largely due to their teachings that greater care was given to designs and interiors of ordinary houses in Britain. Dresser, however, must be credited for having first launched the new ideas. He published and advocated his doctrines long before the so called 'aesthetes', (including Algernon Swinburne, James M. Whistler, Edward W. Godwin and Oscar Wilde), and it appears that many of the doctrines of the 'Aesthetic Movement' probably emanated from Dresser. They joined in rebelling against academic art, but where Dresser adapted the cultural language of the time to new purposes more in tune with the urban and industrial society of which it was a part, the aesthetes offered art as a counterbalance to industrialism. Dresser was certainly one of the first and most ardent aesthetes, but he would have rejected this appellation with scorn and he always referred to himself as an 'art workman'. He believed that all men should enjoy the freedom to be creative. It was this desire to relate design to its social and functional context that was to have the most dominant influence on his contemporaries and on twentieth century design thinking.

The idea of a liaison between manufacturer and artist had been topical

at the School of Design where Dresser received his training from 1847 to 1855 under such well known reformers as Henry Cole, William Dyce, Octavius Hudson, John Rogers Herbert, Owen Jones, Richard Redgrave, Gottfried Semper, and Matthew Digby Wyatt. Their motto of 'wedding science with art' was adopted by Dresser, who in addition to his design education also pursued studies in botany for which he was awarded an honorary D.Phil. from the University of Jena in 1859. Dresser if anyone, was the heir to the reform-pioneers of the school and he emerged as the most talented student to have graduated during the Victorian period.

Equally important for Dresser's career as a designer and theorist was his study of Oriental art, commenced when he entered the school in 1847. Several of his tutors such as Owen Jones and Digby Wyatt, were leading figures in the Orientalism movement which had emerged during the 1830s and 1840s, and the exquisite presentation of the Orient at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 provided further impetus for their ideals.

The study of Oriental art, - Chinese and Japanese art included, - was intensified at the school, and samples were purchased for the Museum of Ornamental Art which was set up in close connection with the school in 1852. (It later became the Museum of Manufactures and subsequently the South Kensington Museum.) The museum acquired 37 objects illustrative of various branches of Japanese art from the first Japanese sale-exhibition to be held in Europe at the Old Watercolour Society in London in 1854, and Dresser then for the first time encountered Japanese art on a larger scale. He later recalled, however, that he had been familiar with the patterns that characterised the Arita porcelain from the time of his childhood. Evidently his lifelong passion for Japanese art stemmed from his enthusiasm for the Arita patterns which had given rise to the Japonaiserie fashion in Europe, and from his studies of Oriental art at the School of Design.

Japonaiserie has been defined in its relation to the later Japonism,

as a less fastidious fad or use of Japanese motifs in the Chinoiserie style which prevailed in Europe during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The lack of contemporary Western scholarship on Chinese and Japanese art had fostered this peculiar amalgam, and the problem of distinguishing clearly between Japonaiserie and Chinoiserie elements have prevailed to the present. We can ascertain however, that some of the first experiments in porcelain and lacquer making in Europe were based on Japanese models, and that the Arita porcelain imported from the early seventeenth century, provided an important stimulus.

The first part of the thesis attempts to place Dresser in context with the new design ideas in Europe and with the first artistic awareness of Japanese art in the West. This perception was expressed by Theophile Gautier in his 'Sonnet' about the Arita porcelain written in 1834, the year in which Dresser was born. There is an account of the much neglected fact that Japanese art was brought back to Europe in an early period by Dutchmen from their Japanese colony at Dejima, and by French and British travellers to the Far East, and that a wide variety of Japanese art was available in private and public collections even before the opening of the borders of Japan. The first travelogues and articles on Japan in addition provide an entire spectrum of Japanese art products, and thus the later emphasis on Japanese prints as a main source for the development of Japonism is entirely distorted.

It appears that Dresser developed a positive predisposition towards Japanese art from the available literature on the subject at the time, and from his education at the School of Design. He has credited both in his subsequent lectures and publications. Dresser was one of the first artists in the West who responded seriously to Japanese art, which was acknowledged in his lecture on 'The Art of Decorative Design' in 1861 (published in book form in 1862). This presented his revolutionary classification of the

decorative arts, which for the first time in the history of Western ideas included Oriental and Japanese samples said to be amongst 'the most exalted' forms of ornaments, - thus counteracting the preoccupations of classisist and Philistine condescension prevalent among scientists and art theorists of the day. It is significant that this controversial strategy was launched prior to the first grand presentation of Japanese art at the international exhibition in London in 1862. Even at this early stage Dresser was promoting Japanese art by presenting the hidden authentic connections and tearing down false hegemonic barriers between Western and Oriental art. This early acknowledgement of Japanese art was unique in Western art theory at the time, heralding as it did the advent of Japonism, which was to develop during the 1860s and remained a vital source of artistic inspiration until the end of the century.

This thesis aims to consider Japonism as a guiding spirit in the reform movement in art and design of the day, and to stress Dresser's importance as one of its first and foremost figures. The French term 'Japonisme' which originated with the collaboration of Henri Fantin-Latour and James M. Whistler in 1869 and was anglicised by the omittance of the terminal 'e' in 1890, has been generally defined as the study and incorporation of Japanese devices and motifs into Western art, whereas its predecessor, Japonaiserie, has been seen as a less serious fad which used Japanese elements intermingled with Chinoiserie style. Recently scholars have attempted to distinguish between varying levels of profundity in the assessment of Japanese influence in the West. Dresser's awareness of Japanese art follows the three main stages of development. 1) The lowest level of Japonaiserie and influence exerted by its sheer novelty. 2) Assimilating distinct aesthetic qualities and certain similarities with Western art. 3) Finally to become aware of the artistic criteria and quintessence of Japanese art.

Dresser already in 1863, stressed the didactic value of Japanese art,

but also expressed severe criticism of the superficial adaptation of Japanese motifs. He discarded imitative reproductions of Japanese prototypes and asked for a proper understanding of the spiritual contents of Japanese art seen in relation to religious, climatic, and social structures within its native context. Claiming that one had to 'enter into the spirit' of the Japanese, Dresser was the first Western designer and art theorist to visit Japan after its opening to foreign contacts. His encounter with Japanese artists, politicians, and connoisseurs during his stay in 1876-77 had a catalytic effect which enabled him to reach a more profound understanding of Japan, its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures, which was the title of his recollections published in 1882. Dresser thus presented the first serious attempt to explain Japanese art on its own terms, and it was only then that he became involved with its artistic quintessence.

This development led to the creation of a new range of designs which showed further detachment from Western traditions and historicist solutions encouraging freer play with artistic forms in colour and texture. This resulted in an entirely new form of art in Britain, which was to become known as 'Anglo Japanese' or 'Modern English' and during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, earned Britain the reputation as a leading nation in design. Dresser throughout his life advocated the eclecticism preached by his tutors at the School of Design, but he encouraged a more creative sifting of inspirational sources combined with a marked bias towards the Japanese. His rational and constructive perception of forms and decorations went far beyond his contemporaries. The simplicity, angularity and grotesque touch prevalent in most of his designs stand out as entirely novel even as expressions of Japonism. Despite their originality, Dresser's name was almost entirely forgotten until recently, and examples of his work were hard to find.

Scholars such as Nikolaus Pevsner in his Pioneers of the Modern Movement (1936), Stephan Tschudi-Madsen in his Sources of Art Nouveau (1956), and Alf Boe in his From Gothic Revival to Functional Form (1957), recognized that Dresser's work required thorough research. But until now this has never been undertaken. Dresser's designs were included in the exhibition of 'Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts' at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1952, but he was only publicly rediscovered in the early 1970s when the first exhibition of his works was staged at the Fine Art Society in London in 1972. The Financial Times then launched him as an 'enemy of hideousness' and a new subject for scholars and collectors alike. In 1973, Stuart Durant submitted his M. Litt. thesis on Dresser, but this centered on his scientific and theoretical interests and for the most part neglected his design. In 1979, Michael Collins was instrumental in shaping a Dresser exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre which gave full justice to his designs. He also helped to arrange the comprehensive show of Dresser's works at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Cologne in 1981. The exhibition attracted considerable attention on the continent, and helped to ensure that Dresser remains in the mind of art historians.

Research on Dresser has been hampered, however, by the lack of his private letters and records covering his wide range of designs, except for a sketchbook in the Ipswich Museum. I have thus endeavoured to locate manuscripts and designs that were previously lost, and traced a large number of letters to and from Dresser as well as pattern books and a number of designs. These serve to document Dresser's assimilation of Japanese motifs and forms and pose some significant questions hitherto neglected by other scholars. The recent research on Japonism has concentrated on explaining the phenomenon by referring to factors that are related to the 'hows' rather than the 'whys', and this applies equally to what has been written about Dresser and his preoccupation with Japanese art. I have

attempted, however, to analyse and stress the 'whys'.

Why were 'Pioneers of the Modern Movement' such as Dresser and the influence of Japanese art on Western design neglected, until recorded by Pevsner in 1936? Why were the other great Victorians such as Pugin and Ruskin and the classicists largely hostile to Japanese art? Why did Dresser and some of his contemporaries break away from their flood of fashions and dogmas and see art and design in a way which today seem rational? Why did Dresser and other artists trained in the school of eclectic historicism consider Japanese art a more appropriate source of new inspiration than other exotic cultures brought to their attention? Why did Japanese art penetrate their ideas and designs, and why did they strive to disseminate a greater knowledge about the subject in the West? These are the fundamental questions which lay at the core of the present study.

PREFACE

During his lifetime, Dr. Christopher Dresser's (1834-1904) name was well known in Britain, the Continent, in America and in Japan, and his writings and designs were regarded as among the most advanced of the century. Much has been written about Victorian design and art theory, but until recently Dresser's name was almost totally forgotten and examples of his works were hard to locate. In the absence of his private records, except for a sketchbook in the Ipswich Museum, I have endeavoured to trace source material in Britain, France, Japan and in U.S.A. This led to the locating of two pattern books, numerous letters to and from Dresser, and a considerable amount of designs and creations that were previously unknown.

Particularly significant for my work was a period of study in Japan, and the discovery of documents relating to Dresser's tour of Japan as well as examples of his design donated to the Tokyo National Museum in 1877 and in 1880. Equally important was the locating of Dresser's designs produced by French, German and American manufacturers, and records of his travels in these countries. These testify to his extraordinary energy and versatility and notably to his all-embracing passion for Japanese art which made him a principal advocate of Japonism.

Art historians have long agreed that Japanese art made a substantial impact upon European artists in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it is only in the last twenty years that specific studies about Japonism have been undertaken. However, these works are mainly concerned with the Japanese influence on painters in the West, and on the whole only touch briefly upon Japonism in design and decorative art.

Geneviève Lacambre's work remains the only extensive scholarly investigation into the influence of Japanese art on a precisely defined part of Western decorative art - namely that of France during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Aslin has devoted a chapter to

'The Japanese Taste' in her publication on The Aesthetic Movement (1969), but a comprehensive study of the impact of Japanese art on Victorian design and decorative art has not yet been undertaken.

There is considerable scope for further investigation into more theoretical areas which until now have been superficially treated, such as art theory, the critical assessment of Japonism, and the availability and image of Japanese art in the West among artists, designers, critics, collectors and writers. The most recent research by David Bromfield, Elisa Evett, Deborah Johnson, Clay Lancaster, Toshio Watanabe, Gabriel Weisberg, Siegfried Wichmann and Chisaburo Yamada, touches on various aspects of Japonism in the decorative arts, but they are rather dismissive in their attitudes, and even Wichmann's extensive authorship fails to provide an over-view of the subject, omitting as he does a number of the more important artists and designers, notably Christopher Dresser.

Few attempts have been made at documenting individual designers' aesthetic consciousness and adaptation of Japanese art, and it is hoped that this thesis will inspire a new field of investigation for historians of art and design.

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- Christopher Dresser (1834-1904) in his conservatory
at Elm Barnes, about 1900

CHAPTER I

CHRISTOPHER DRESSER SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
FIRST PERCEPTION OF JAPANESE ART IN THE WEST

THE WESTERN IMAGE OF JAPAN

On his return from touring Japan in 1877, Dresser in a lecture on 'The Art Manufacture of Japan' given for the Royal Society of Art in January 1878, stated that Japanese art had been fundamental in the formation of his 'art character', (Dresser, 1878, 177). In his subsequent publication on Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures, Dresser expressed similar views and emphasised that he had been 'an earnest student of Oriental art for nearly thirty years' since the time when he entered the School of Design in 1847, (preface) and that patterns that characterised the Arita porcelain had been familiar to him from childhood. (1882, p.392)

Although it was not until later in his career that Dresser incorporated Japanese ideas and devices into his writings and designs, it appears that his lifelong passion for Japanese art stemmed from his childhood notion of the Arita patterns which had given rise to the Japonaiserie fashion in Europe, and from his studies of Oriental art at the School of Design.

Japonaiserie has been defined in its relation to the later Japonism, as a less fastidious fad or use of Japanese motifs in the Chinoiserie style which prevailed in Europe during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The lack of Western scholarship on Chinese and Japanese art had fostered this peculiar amalgam, and Hugh Honour (1961), Oliver Impey (1977) and Madeleine Jarry (1981) have written substantially on the characteristics of Chinoiserie. However, the problem of distinguishing clearly between Japonaiserie and Chinoiserie elements provides scope for further investigation, and we can only ascertain that some of the first experiments in porcelain and lacquer making in Europe were based on Japanese models.

Particularly popular in the West was the Arita porcelain represented by the Imari and Kakiemon styles which during the seventeenth century was imported in considerable quantities to Europe, through the Dutch colony Deshima in Japan. The Kakiemon patterns were particularly popular on the continent, whereas the bolder type of Imari decoration appealed more to the English taste. Some of the early Bow, Chelsea, Derby and Worcester patterns were based on this kind of Japanese porcelain often intermingled with Chinoiserie influences, and popularly called 'Japan patterns'. The fashion was adopted by most English manufacturers, and the palette became more definite, with deeper blue, red and green and a lavish gilding towards the zenith of its popularity in the first third of the nineteenth century, when Coalport, Davenport, Mason, Minton, New Hall, Spode, and Wedgwood produced large quantities of their 'Arita' patterns. This was a period when grandeur was fashionable, and these patterns must have suited the candle lit tables of the day, and fixed a strong impression in the young Dresser's artistic mind. (Impey 1977, pp.104-08) and Burton, 1902, pp.28-30). Western artists and critics were well aware of the popularity of Kakiemon and Imari patterns by the time of Dresser's childhood, and one of the first artistic acknowledgements in fact stems from the very year Dresser was born. It was in 1834 that the French author Theophile Gautier (1811-1872) wrote his famous 'Sonnet' about Japanese porcelain:

SONNET

Pour venir de son front la pâleur délicate,
Le Japon a donné son plus limpide azur;
La blanche porcelaine est d'un blanc bien moins pur
Que son col transparent et ses tempes d'agate.

Dans sa prunelle humide un doux rayon éclate;
Le chant du rossignol près de sa voix est dur,
Et, quand elle se lève à notre ciel obscur,
On dirait de la lune en sa robe d'ouate.

Ses yeux d'argent bruni roulent moelleusement;
 Le caprice a taillé son petit nez charmant;
 Sa bouche a des rougeurs de pêche et de framboise;

Ses mouvements sont pleins d'une grâce chinoise,
 Et près d'elle on respire autour de sa beauté
 Quelque chose de doux comme l'odeur du thé
 (Schwartz, 1927 p.18)

Gautier was deeply interested in everything Oriental, and he certainly took part in popularising Japanese art in Europe during this early period of introduction. William Schwartz stated that the famous Japan enthusiasts Jules and Edmond Goncourt owed their idea of differentiating between Chinese and Japanese art to Gautier, and that Gautier already in 1833 intimated that he was short of money due to his mania 'pour acheter des vieux pots du Japon et des magots de la Chine'. Whilst preparing an unpublished 'Chinese novel' in 1840 he noted that 'J'ai lire plusieurs volumes pour me babouiller de couleur locale, et j'ai besoin de fourrer mon nez dans beaucoup de pots de Japon et autres.' (Schwartz 1927, pp.18-22)

It appears that the French and the Dutch were instrumental in spreading information about Japanese art even during the eighteenth century. The officials of the Dutch East India Company at Deshima however, seem to have been primarily concerned with topographical and ethnographical descriptions. Engelbert Kaempfer's The History of Japan (London, 1727), Carl Peter Thunberg's Resa uti Europa, Asia, and Africa (Uppsala, 1793), Isaac Titsingh's Ceremonies usitées au Japon (Paris, 1819), Johan F. van Overmeer Fischer's Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Japansche Rijk (Amsterdam, 1833) and Baron Philip von Siebold's Nippon Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan (Leiden, 1832-1858), constituted the first authorship that pretended to scholarship on the topic.

However, it was the French Jesuits who had been to China as missionaries, who first raised the question of differentiating between Japanese and Chinese art. Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles in 1712 had passed on detailed descriptions of porcelain production, which were tried out in

France, and in 1735 resulted in the first registration of porcelain production at Chantilly 'pareille a celle qui se faisait anciennement au Japon.' (Jacquemart, 1862 p.482) Clearly Japanese porcelain was considered the most exclusive, and father Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix in his Histoire et Description Generale du Japon published in 1736, emphasised the superiority of all Japanese artefacts over those produced in China. He also commented on Japanese fine art and sculpture whose asymmetry he perceptively questioned. (pp.176-185).

The French Jesuits had ample possibilities for observing Japanese art in China, which maintained limited trading-rights with the Japanese even during their seclusion. Travellers and missionaries in China indeed remarked on the availability of Japanese art in Peking, and noted the high esteem in which it was held even by the Chinese. Two travellers of Swedish nationality, Lorenze de Lange, and Peter Osbeck respectfully, pointed out that 'Les plus beaux meubles de vernis, comme les cabinets, les chaises, les tables, les paniers et autres chose de cette nature, de même que les belles porcelaines, viennent du Japon a Pekin' (1726, p.11) and that 'Das japanische wird für das beste gehalten' (1765, p.202) Cornelius de Pauw in his famous Recherches Philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois (Paris 1773) repeated this statement, but it was Guillaume Thomas Raynal's Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Etablissements et du Commerce Européens dans les deux-Indes (Amsterdam, 1770) which first questioned the difficulty of differentiating between Chinese and Japanese porcelain. In attempting to reconcile the problem Raynal launched the term 'Japon-Chiné' (p.654) or 'Sino Japonais' as it was popularly called during the first part of the nineteenth century. Raynal's *modus vivendi*, however, hampered the apparent need to distinguish between the Chinese and Japanese porcelain that was available in Europe, and this in turn gave birth to the strange hybrids of the Chinoiserie style. The question was only reiterated at the

beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Japanese collections amassed by Dutchmen in Deshima arrived in Europe and so called 'Sino-Japonais' collections were brought back by Frenchmen serving in the Opium War.

The Dutch Royal Cabinet of Rarities, which contained William I's ethnographical specimens, was greatly enlarged in 1815 by a donation from Jean T. Royer, which included about 200 items of Japanese lacquer, porcelain and textiles, and constituted the largest collection of its kind in Europe at the time. Further donations were made by Jan Cock Blomhoff (1779-1853) in 1816, 1818, 1824, and in 1825, and his substantial collection of ethnographical specimens and art objects was purchased by the state for the Cabinet in 1827. A similar collection was acquired from Johannes F. van Overmeer Fischer (1800-1848) in 1832, and The Cabinet of Rarities which in 1820 had been installed in Prince Maurits Huis, soon housed the largest collection of Japanese art available to the public in Europe. Baron Philip Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) who had been physician to the Dutch Embassy at Deshima from 1823-1829, had amassed an equally important collection which was first exhibited in his private 'Japansch Museum' in Leiden in 1832. The von Siebold collection was acquired by the Dutch Government in 1837, and it formed the basis of the later National Museum of Ethnography in Leiden, which between 1877 and 1885 also received the objects kept in 'The Cabinet' in the Hague, and thus united all the major collections of Japanese art in Holland. (Maclean, 1975, pp.117-139) Van Gulik has stated that the von Siebold collection constituted the first comprehensive and systematic display in Europe of Japanese art, and noted that it also included illustrated books, paintings and prints, such as the ten first volumes of Hokusai's Manga twenty years prior to the apocryphal so called discovery of the Manga in Paris in 1856. A number of Hokusai's woodblock prints were copied and modified as illustrations of Siebold's Nippon, which appeared between 1832-1858, and the Dutch artists involved

in this work, Henri P. Heidemanns, L. Nader, and J. Erxleben, were indeed among the first of nineteenth century artists to be confronted closely with Japanese woodcuts. (Van Gulik, 1981, pp.279-280) Mrs William Busk compiled information from von Siebold and from Overmeer Fisscher (Amsterdam, 1837) in her Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century (1841), which constituted the first publication in the English language that aspired to scholarship on the subject. (first published in a series of articles in The Asiatic Journal 1839-1840).

The Dublin University Magazine critic praised it as 'a book in every page of it full of novelty and interest, the best, we might say and the only work we have on Japan'.¹ Mrs Busk clearly catered for the demand for information about the Far East aroused by the China Wars in the early 1840s, and she had visited the Japanese rooms in the Royal Museum in the Hague and von Siebold's museum in Leiden in order to enlighten her readers. The outcome however, was meagre, and her chapter on 'The Arts, Manufacture, Trade and Produce of Japan' stressed that:

The state of the arts is another point upon which there is some difficulty in forming an opinion, partly from a little distrust in the connoisseurship of the members of the factory at Dezima, and partly from the unanimous assurances given us that the best specimens in any department are utterly unattainable by foreigners. (pp.319-333)

The presence of so much Japanese art on display in the centre of Europe, however, cannot be overestimated, and it appears that the majority of writers on Japanese art at the time procured their information and inspiration from the collections in Holland, as well as from von Siebold's publication.

Siebold was immensely active in disseminating knowledge about Japan during the first years of his return to Europe. In 1835 he undertook a journey with the purpose of meeting other Japan enthusiasts on the continent and he is recorded as having donated Japanese prints to the

Bibliothèque National in Paris as well as specimens of Japanese porcelain to the Sèvres manufacturers. Alexandre Brogniart in his Description Méthodique du Musée Céramique de Sèvres stated that Siebold's visit and donation had brought new light on; 'Le difficulté que l'on éprouve pour distinguer les porcelains de Japon de celles de la Chine' (1845, p.283). His correspondence in the early 1840's with Edmé-François Jomard, keeper of 'Dépôt Géographique de la Bibliothèque Royal' in Paris, resulted in the formation of a programme for establishing ethnographical museums in Europe. A letter from Siebold to Jomard in 1843, confirmed that these museums were intended to inspire the arts and industries in Europe, and hinting at the importance of the Chinoiserie style, Siebold said:

Il est donc toujours très avantageux de donner à ces collections ethnographiques une extension qui puisse les élever au rang d'une exposition de l'industrie des peuples avec lesquels on entretient des relations. Elles éveillent l'attention publique sur les nouveaux articles d'importation, et sollicitent souvent nos artistes et nos fabricants à des imitations heureuses. Quelles influence les objets d'art et de commerce de la Chine, abondamment importés et favorablement accueillis en France dès les premiers temps, n'ontils pas exercée sur l'industrie des Parisiens, dont le goût exquis s'applique avec tant de succès à l'anoblissement des formes chinoises primitives. (1843, p.17)

The 'nouveaux articles d'importation', were clearly intended to provide a stimulus for 'imitations heureuses', and Siebold thus anticipated a fashion for Japanese art which would subsequently overrule Chinoiserie, and give way to Japonism proper.

The French artists and writers were certainly the most receptive to this idea at the time and Edward Said in his study on Orientalism has emphasised that already in 1829 the influential Victor Hugo, expressed the change of interests that had taken place in Europe during the time of Romanticism: 'Au siècle de Louis XIV on était helléniste, maintenant on est orientaliste' (1978, p.51). The increasing interest in the Orient during the first part of the nineteenth century had resulted in the foundation of Asiatic Societies in Paris in 1822, in London in 1823, in

America in 1842, and in Berlin in 1845. In 1832 the French philosopher and writer Edgar Quinet (1803-1870) announced 'La Renaissance Orientale' in his influential publication Le Génie des Religions (p.126). He thus placed the Orient in a functional relationship with the West, and during the 1830s Orientalism in Europe reached its zenith and boldly challenged the classical conception of European hegemony.

Theophile Gautier was the heir to these early Orientalists in France, and during the 1840s he continued to show particular interest in Japanese art, which he had praised as early as in 1833-34. The expansion of Orientalism had developed a new and more liberal system of classifying alien cultures, as evident from the sympathetic attitude to Japanese art expressed by Brogniart, Jomard and Gautier during the 1840s. In 1840 the Parisians witnessed the opening of a 'Musée Chinois et Japonais' which contained about 5,000 objects collected by a French merchant Paul Ginier. A copy of the catalogue kept in the Musée Guimet, lists 2,116 entries, of which half are attributed to Japan, comprising lacquer, porcelain, religious statues, bronzes, textiles, papers, prints and paintings. (Ginier, 1840)

The presence of so much Chinese and Japanese art in Paris greatly inspired the Oriental enthusiasts, and it provided further impetus for the desire to distinguish between Chinese and Japanese art. The so-called Opium Wars with China at the time encouraged a fascination with everything Far Eastern, and Jomard referred to the museum as 'Sino-Japonais': 'Jomard a signalé ensuite la collection Sino-Japonais de M. Paul Ginier, de Marseille, qui a fait plusieurs voyages à la Chine et dans la mer des Indes'.² Theophile Gautier reviewed the exhibition under the heading of 'Chine et pui' in 1842, and he paid particular attention to the Japanese Arita ware which already had inspired him and several manufacturers in Europe:

Le Japon et ses grands plats tatoués d'azur, d'or et de pourpre;
ses céladons craquelés et gaufrés, les groupes de bisquit, ces

statuettes du 18. siècle, tout un monde fragile ravissant de formes, éblouissant de couleurs et de dorures, inépuisable de fantaisie et de caprice, frêle création de grandes sculpteurs et de grands coloristes inconnus. Ces délicates merveilles, par les soins des amateurs nous sont parvenues intactes, sans une fêlure, sans une écaille, sans une fleur flétrie, sans une anse cassée! Le moka n'est-il pas meilleur dans une tasse ainsi choisie? (1842, p.6)

It was precisely at this time that Dresser recalled having become acquainted with the Arita patterns and clearly Gautier had preoccupations that coincided with those of later Japonism artists and enthusiasts. In 1846 he had the opportunity of studying another collection brought to Paris by the French Mission to China who, in 1844 had secured a commercial treaty. Gautier devoted ten pages in Le Cabinet de l'Amateur et de L'Antiquaire to describing this exhibition, and he concluded that

Déjà diverse collections chinoises ont été livrées a la curiosité public; le Musée de la Haye possède une riche galerie de ce genre; le Musée Chinoise de Londres, a Hyde-Park-Corner, est encore plus complète, et fait en quelque sorte assister à la vie des habitants du Célèste-Empire; Paris même a vu une collection d'objets Chinois et Japonais qui laissait peu à désirer. (1846, 483-492)

It is worth noting that Gautier remembered these museums to have contained Japanese as well as Chinese artefacts, notably the Chinese Museum in London which had opened in 1842 to celebrate the annexation of Hong Kong to the British Empire. (Langdon, 1842)

Jomard's review of the 'Sino-Japonais' exhibition in Paris in 1846, further encouraged the popularity of Japanese artefacts, claiming that these were superior to Chinese products, and he noted that the Japanese influence upon the French textile manufacturer was already on its way:

L'expo Sino-Japonaise qu'on a fait à Paris, il y a trois ans, et même l'expo actuelle des objets rapportés par les délégués du commerce français attachés a l'ambassade en Chine ont constaté la supériorité des ouvrages de l'industrie japonaise. Nos fabricants admirent certains tissus de soie, brochés ou brodés avec un art et un gout parfaits. (1846, p.48)

Brogniart, Gautier, Jomard and von Siebold clearly stimulated the growing interest for Japanese art in Europe, which had been encouraged by the

arrival of the substantial 'Sino-Japonais' collections as well as by the interest in the China wars. Ironically, this marked the death of the Chinoiserie style in Europe. The spell and mystery of China which so many embassies had failed to invade, finally yielded its secrets to its enemy when the treaty of Nanking brought an end to the wars in 1842, and European curiosity now shifted to the closed and mysterious Japan. Only then did Europeans fully realise the necessity of studying Japanese art in order to arrive at a proper classification of Japanese as well as of Chinese art, and this in turn provided the death blow to the exotisme mixture of Japonaiserie and Chinoiserie motifs.

The increased availability of the Arita wares in Europe had provided a stimulus for the production of similar porcelain in the West during the first part of the nineteenth century, and the arrival of Japanese textiles had been equally influential to French textile manufacturers. Dresser was well aware of these trends when he anonymously published his first articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' in The Builder 2, 23 May and 13 June 1863. He seriously criticised however, the indiscriminant adaptation of Japanese patterns:

In many cases the French artists who have engaged themselves with recasting Japanese designs have failed to discover the purport or significance of the forms they have borrowed. They have taken the form, but have not perceived the sentiment of which the shape is but the shroud; or have copied forms and groupings without seizing the spirit of the work. (p.308)

Dresser's articles are the first to appear on the topic in Europe and will be thoroughly analysed in subsequent chapters. Suffice it to state that he was aware of this early phase of Japonism and that his articles also acknowledged sources of information on Japanese art published in England prior to this date:

The source of knowledge of the art which the French are now earnestly utilizing in a commercial point of view has been open to us as well as to them, hence our knowledge of this branch of art should not be less than theirs. Indeed, we had greater facilities for procuring information upon these works than those

who were less familiar with the English language than ourselves.
So our knowledge should be greater. (p.308)

WESTERN SOURCE-BOOKS ON JAPAN

Dresser must have been familiar with such well known text-books as Engelbert Kaempfer's History of Japan (1727), Isac Titsingh's Illustrations of Japan (1822), Mrs William Busk's Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century (1841), Charles Macfarlane's Japan, Geographical and Historical (1852), James W. Spalding's Japan (1856), Francis Hawks' Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan (1856), Andrew Steinmetz's Japan and her People (1858), Sherard Osborn's A Cruise in Japanese Waters (1859), Lawrence Oliphant's Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan (1859), Walter Dickson's Japan (1860), Charles P. Hodgson's Residence in Nagasaki and Hakodate (1861), Thomas C. Westfield's The Japanese, their manners and customs, with stereoscopic photoes (1862), Robert Fortune's Yedo and Peking (1863), and Rutherford Alcock's The Capital of the Tycoon (1863). All these contained separate chapters on the arts and manufactures of Japan and facsimile illustrations copied from Japanese woodcut-prints. Most of the Japanese print-makers represented in the books published after Commodore Perry's opening of the country to foreigners in 1853-54, have been identified, and they provide important evidence for the kind of ukiyo-e that were brought to the West.

Art manufactures, however, were scarcely discernible in the prints included in these publications, and it was only Macfarlane and Steinmetz who provided proper information and illustrations of the art-objects that could be obtained from Japan. Macfarlane recorded that the Scots were particularly ardent collectors of Japanese lacquer:

They were rather more numerous in Scotch than in English houses, and this from the very obvious reason that, mainly in grace of patronage of the hearty Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, so many Scotchmen sought and found fortune in the East. Many of these

articles were most admirable specimens of the arts of the cabinet-maker, japanner, and gold-embosser. It is said however, that the finest specimens never were allowed to be exported out of Japan. The finest collections in Europe are those of von Siebold and his Majesty the King of Netherlands, at the Hague. (1852, p.310)

Bearing in mind that Dresser was born and brought up in Glasgow, it seems likely that he was confronted as a child with some of the Arita ware collected and imitated by the British. Macfarlane's book is significant in aspiring to scholarship before the time of the Perry expedition, and from the point of view of its three illustrations of Japanese artefacts depicting seven 'Ornamental candlesticks', ten 'Ornamental vases' (bronze) and fourteen 'Flower-baskets and Vases' (Bronzes and basket-work). These are the first of their kind to appear in the British press, and I have recently been able to state that they were based on objects in the von Siebold collection which now are housed in the Rijksmuseum Vor Voolkekunde in Leiden.

Other illustrations from the von Siebold collection are not known to have been released in Europe at the time, and Macfarlane certainly provided the lithographs from his own pen. Clearly the Dutch Japan collections provided the core of his information on Japanese art, but he also mentioned that he studied in the Library of Commissary-General James Drummond Hay; 'where I could find every work that had up to that period, been published about the country.' (1852, p.309) Steinmetz compiled most of his information and illustrations from Macfarlane, but adds little to the latter's scholarship. Publications about Japan in the English language were abundant in a Western context, and these sources were certainly in Dresser's mind when he stated in 1863 that they 'had greater facilities for procuring information upon these works than those who were less familiar with the English language than ourselves.'

BRITISH COLLECTIONS OF JAPANESE ART

Information about Japanese art and actual samples were less

inaccessible at the time than most scholars have maintained. We know that famous collections such as those amassed by William Beckford, Horace Walpole, Sir Joseph Banks and Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles contained substantial amounts of Japanese art. This was made available to the public at the sales of Beckford's and Walpole's collections in 1823 and 1842 respectively, and also at the British Museum which received the Banks collection upon his death in 1820 and also acquired Japanese objects from the Raffles collection in 1859. (C. Wainwright, 1971 pp.254-64 and F. Watson, 1963 pp.101-127)

Raffles had been the first European diplomat in the East to engage seriously in the task of opening Japanese borders to foreign trade. According to Lady Sophia Raffles, he commanded two English expeditions to Japan in 1813 and in 1814, and, writing to Lord Minto in 1814 he proclaimed that 'Japan can furnish in return every article that is now obtained from China, of better quality, and of lower price' and that the commercial objects of these expeditions were accomplished in spite of the fact that the Dutch at Deshima as well as the Japanese themselves refused to surrender:

The continuance of the trade to Japan was provided for, and arrangements were entered into for putting matters in train to secure the introduction of the English, and the prejudice against them were in great measure done away with. (1830, pp.230-231)

We know very little about the trade between the English East India Comp. at Bengal and Japan during this period, but the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, Sir Ths. S. Raffles was certainly the only foreigner, with the exception of the Dutch, since the exclusion of foreigners from Japan, to attract a positive response from the Emperor of Japan: 'The Emperor was considered to have bestowed a very unusual mark of favour, in condescending to accept the whole of the presents for his own use', Raffles reported to the East India Company in 1815, and pointed out that the Emperor had also responded by offering some presents in return, of which 'thirty Japanese dressing

gowns' were forwarded to the King of England as a personal gift from Sir. Ths. S. Raffles: 'They are part of a quantity sent to me as a present from the Emperor of Japan - and as they are not common articles in England, I have conceived they might be acceptable.' (1815, p.209)

Raffles' attempts at establishing trading rights with Japan were promoted in an appendix to his History of Java (London 1817) and in arranging the first known exhibition of Japanese art in the West on his return to England. This according to Lady Sophia took place at the museum of the India House in London in 1825 (1830, p.633), and it was reviewed under the heading of 'Japanese Antiquities' in The Gentleman's Magazine, which credited Raffles as having 'furnished ample materials for a wider knowledge about Japan'.³ The objects exhibited are not described, but they certainly included samples said to have been given to Raffles by the Emperor of Japan, and the exhibition provided the British public with their first known view of Japanese art. A noh mask and other objects were acquired by the British Museum from Raffles' nephew W.C. Raffles Flint in 1859 and these were exhibited in their Ethnographical room in the same year.⁴

The Banks bequest to the British Museum contained a box of 'Japanese mineralia' given to Banks by his friend Isaac Titsingh on a visit to England in 1797 and a copy of Kitagawa Utamaro's Ehon Mushi Erabi a beautiful picturebook of Japanese insects.⁵ In connection with this it is worth mentioning that the British Museum is in the possession of a copy of Kitao Masanobu's Yoshiwara Keisei Shin Bijin Awase Jihitso Kagami which may well have originated from Titsingh's collection sold at auction in Paris in 1818. The publisher of Titsingh's posthumous recollections, A. Nepveu stated that he had acquired the bulk of his collection, (preface) and this in turn provided the information and illustrations in J.B.J. Breton de la Martinière's Le Japon ou Moeurs, usages et costumes des habitants de cet Empire published by Nepveu in Paris in the same year. Significantly

this book included accurate facsimile colour lithographs from Kitao Masanobu's sumptuously colourprinted album, described as never having been seen in Europe before.

The interest in Japanese and Oriental art in general was certainly just as prevalent in Britain as in France and the Netherlands during the first half of the nineteenth century, but it appears that the Dutch collectors and scientists provided the main impetus for this fascination. They were also instrumental in contributing Japanese art-manufactures to the industrial and international exhibitions in England during the 1850s, whereas the collection exhibited at the Chinese Museum at Hyde Park Corner from 1842 until 1846 and again at the Great International Exhibition in 1851, had been amassed by an American collector Nathan Dunn, who had lived in China for several years. This grand display, which celebrated the annexation of Hong Kong to the Empire, was opened by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1842, and it dramatically introduced the British public to the magnificence and mystery of the Far East. The Exhibition attracted throngs of people and the catalogue, describing some 1,341 exhibits, was reprinted in several editions. It was housed in a Chinese-style building, specially erected for its contents, measuring 50 feet point 225 feet long, and which was gaily painted in red, green and gold. The Chinese interiors and exhibits were enthusiastically described by the author of the catalogue, William Langdon; as a 'China in Miniature'. (preface) When the museum was about to close in 1846 The Times urged those 'who have not hitherto had an opportunity of examining the almost innumerable specimens of Chinese and Oriental productions, with which it abounds, to make as early a visit as they can.'⁶

This underlined Theophile Gautier's simultaneous notion of the museum to have contained Chinese as well as Japanese art, and Joseph Marryat in his Collections towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain published in

London in 1850 asserted that: 'Most collections of Oriental procelain contain a great number of Japanese specimens which are seldom separately classified, except in the Japanese Palace in Dresden, where that ware is placed in distinct rooms.' (1850, p.126)

THE FIRST BRITISH LITERATURE ON JAPANESE ART

Clearly the question of differentiation remained a problem down the ages but Marryat's book, which was considered the first textbook on the topic in the English language, attempted to distinguish between the two and included illustrations of Japanese porcelain from the author's collection. He based most of his information on studies undertaken in Holland, and on extracts from Alexander Brogniart's Traité des Arts Céramiques (Paris, 1844), and Alphonse Salvetat's Histoire et fabrication de la Porcelaine Chinoise et Japonaise (Paris, 1856) for his enlarged edition of 1857. Marryat's conclusions were not always correct but he conveys the first serious attempt in Britain at a scholarly attitude to Japanese art, and part of his collection was subsequently acquired by the South Kensington Museum in 1866.⁷

Marryat's publications were available in the museum library, where Dresser undertook his studies at the time, and so were two other textbooks for designers and decorators, George Phillips' Rudiments of Curvilinear Design (London 1839) and John Leighton's Suggestions in Design (London 1853) published under the pseudonym of Luke Limner. These authors recommended Chinese and Japanese ornamentation illustrated in their books, and Leighton in particular suggested the adaptation of Japanese crest patterns and Japanese ladies with kidney-shaped fans. These motifs became extremely popular during the zenith of Japonism in Europe, and Leighton must be credited for the first introduction. He and Marryat were indeed amongst the first individuals who responded to the presentation of Japanese art in Europe, and their publications became highly popular and were

certainly read by Dresser and other students at the School of Design. (Fig. 1.) Dresser and Leighton knew of each other and may well have been friends. Following Dresser's patenting of a new system of nature printing in 1855 and his lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on the topic in 1857, Leighton commented on the invention in a letter to the society. (Dresser, 1857, p.291) Both were amongst the first artists to respond to Sir Rutherford Alcock's (1809-97) Japan stand at the 1862 International Exhibition and Leighton lectured On Japanese Art for the Royal Society of Arts 1 May 1863, which was privately printed in the same year. Dresser simultaneously released his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' in The Builder 2 May, 23 May and 13 June 1863 and lectured on 'The Prevailing Ornament of China and Japan' for The Architectural Association 18 May 1863. We shall return to these lectures and publications later in our study and concentrate on which other publications and sources of information on Japanese art Dresser may have been thinking of in May 1863.

Yokoyama Toshio in his recent D.Phil. dissertation on 'Japan in the Victorian Mind, 1850-1880. A study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation' (Oxford 1983) has chronicled the great variety of literature available on Japan during the period under consideration, and stated that The Times, The Illustrated London News, and popular periodicals such as Blackwood's Magazine, The Dublin Review, The Dublin University Magazine, The Edinburgh Review, Fraser's Magazine, Household Words, Lawson's Merchant Magazine, New Monthly Magazine, and others contained numerous articles on Japan from about 1851 and throughout the subsequent decade. Yokoyama, however, has pointed to the lack of scholarship on the topic and the indiscriminate use of source material, which encouraged the view that Japan was a strange and unique country. Clearly the view of Japan and Japanese art at the time was distorted by limited access to detailed information, but this as we have seen did not discourage journalists and writers from publishing on the

subject. The opening of Japan by Commodore Perry in 1853 and the subsequent European expeditions created a tremendous demand from British readers to satisfy their curiosity about the country. The Dublin Review writer Charles William Russell had anticipated this tendency already in 1852 saying that: 'In the interest which the prospect of a glimpse into Japan has excited, the public have almost begun to forget the kindred wonders of Chinese Tartary and Tibet'.⁸ Following Commodore Perry's successful opening of Japan to foreign communication, Britain, France and other Western countries hastened to secure their interests and commercial treatise. The Earl of Elgin's mission to China and Japan 1856-1858 was followed with keen interest by the public press, and equally in France that of Baron Gros' in 1858. Finally the chief secretaries of these expeditions provided first-hand information about the country and its art-products, and spread a new and much longed for picture of Japan.

It appears that substantial amounts of Japanese art products were brought back to Europe, and that the Japanese themselves, being aware of this new commercial potential had organized bazaars where art-objects could be procured. The Marquis de Mages in his publication on Baron Gros' mission described what in fact must have been the first exhibition of national industry arranged in Japan. This took place in Shimoda, where the Earl of Elgin had also arrived some months before:

Warned beforehand of the arrival of ships of war belonging to the four nations, (America, France, Great Britain, and Russia) the Japanese authorities had accordingly collected in an immense tent, all the products of the country which were likely to interest foreigners. There were displayed Japanese lacquer, in every way, long row of inkstands, boxes, and tables, of all colours and sizes. (1860, p.306)

Equally, Oliphant's publication on the Earl of Elgin's mission of the same year, reported that the delegates had ordered 'gigantic cases with mountains of lacquer and pyramids of china', and that

Silk, camphor, vegetable oil, and vegetable wax are among the

principal products which are likely to be exported to this country, the tea and tobacco are both of a very superior quality, while, among manufactured articles, lacquer and china in small quantities will always find a market in the West. (1859, pp.234-256)

Similar descriptions can be found in Francis Hawks' recollections of the Perry expedition, (1856, pp.460-463) as well as in Le Baron de Chassiron's Notes sur le Japon, la Chine, et l'Inde, 1858-1860 (Paris, 1861) and in Captain Sherard Osborne's A Cruise in Japanese Waters. Examples of Japanese prints brought back by these travellers figured in adulterated form as illustrations in their books, and provided the general public with an introduction to the ukyo-e school. An accurate colour facsimile of Hiroshige's 'Crossing the Oi River' appeared in Hawks' Narrative and was reproduced in The Illustrated London News in the same year as well as in The Leisure Hour Magazine in 1859 (p.120). Clearly this circumstantial evidence contradicts the alleged discovery of Japanese prints in the West by the French artist Felix Braquemond in 1856, and prints by Hokusai, Hiroshige I and II, and Toyokuni II in fact appeared in these early publications. Hokusai's Manga was the most widely used source for illustrations, and the landscape prints of both Hokusai and Hiroshige were next in popularity. The Japanese artists and the sources however, were never acknowledged, and it seems that the Western visitors were more eager to obtain samples of applied arts, which already had attained some fame in the West and were readily marketable goods.

All types of Japanese art products were indeed brought back to the West by these early travellers, and account must be taken of the fact that a wide variety of Japanese art was available. The emphasis on Japanese prints as a main source for the development of Japonism in Europe, is entirely distorted. Records of the contents of private collections and public exhibitions reveal that this was not the case, and early collectors of Japanese art-manufactures such as George Audsley and Lord James Bowes

remembered having acquired some of their first objects in 1858, the year of the return of the Earl of Elgin's mission. (Bowes, 1890, VIII)

The first travelogues provided an entire spectrum of Japanese art products, which previously had been little known to the general public, and British merchants were quick in acknowledging the commercial potentiality of these goods. At least 15 British subjects were established in Nagasaki by June 1859 with a view to pursuing trade with the Japanese and in Yokohama a new settlement for foreign merchants developed in the same year, William Keswick of Jardine, Matheson and Co being the leading British representative. (Fox, 1969, pp.58-63) Yokohama became an important trade centre particularly for silk, and in 1859 as many as 3,555 bales of raw silk were exported from Japan to London. (Lehmann 1982, p.44) Alcock, who had become British Minister Plenipotentiary in Japan in 1859 reported that trade during this year surpassed £1,000,000 and by 1861 'gave employment to about one hundred vessels in the year.' (1863, I, 376 & II, 384)

Clearly this stimulated the need for information about the country, and Blackwood's stock of Oliphant's and Osborne's books, according to Yokoyama, were cleared within a few months, and respectively reprinted and sold before the end of 1863. (1983, p.56) Osborne in 1860 indeed felt that the public demand was such that he published a series of articles in Once a Week Magazine entitled 'Japanese Fragments'. Amongst these were two chapters on Japanese art and about 18 facsimile reproductions of ukiyo-e from Hokusai's Manga and Hiroshige's Tokaido. (Osborn, 1860)

The information about Japanese art in these early articles and books, however, was fragmented and the generally enthusiastic descriptions were frequently interrupted by words such as anomalous, bizarre, diabolical, mysterious and singular. Condescending attitudes run parallel to the fascination, and sheer fiction in the literature on Japan released during the 1850s. Sir Rutherford Alcock eventually called for a more realistic

representation of Japan in his article on 'Japan and the Japanese' which appeared in The Edinburgh Review in 1861: 'True impressions of photographic accuracy are becoming more than ever needful in the plethora of new compilations, and the dearth of new authentic matter to fill them with.' (CXII, p.45)

During the early 1860s Alcock was considered to be the leading British authority on Japan, and his diplomatic correspondence and reports were received with considerable attention by the reading public when they appeared in The Times, The Edinburgh Review and in The Royal Geographical Journal between 1860 and 1861. The latter in 1861 conveyed the message that 'already the trade with Japan holds out good promise' (p.198), and in the same year Alcock published Elements of Japanese Grammar which was intended to remedy the limited linguistic communication between the English and the Japanese.

The notion of photographic accuracy is significant, for the invention of the photographic process in 1835 had induced a more scholarly interest in remote and foreign cultures, and opened up a new world of universal concern to the Victorians. Alcock was the first to satisfy the demand for photographs of Japan, when in 1861, he sent some 'Views of Japan' taken by his secretary Abel A. J. Gower, to the photographic firm Negretti and Zambra of Regent Street in London. These were released in conjunction with some views of Java by this company in 1861, and they were enthusiastically welcomed by The Art Journal in the same year⁹ and some were later included in Thomas Westfield's The Japanese, their Manners and Customs published in London in 1862. (fig.2.) These kind of illustrations had the advantage that they finally provided accurate images of the Japanese and their art-products, and travellers who visited with Alcock in Japan at the time, also aspired to give a more vivid picture of Japanese art in their publications. It appears that Alcock in fact arranged a bazaar at the premises of the

British Legation in Yeddo, where British visitors could buy all kinds of Japanese art. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque in his Nippon and Pe-Che-Li (1862) gave Alcock great credit for this enterprise, and included facsimile reproductions of ukiyo-e prints in his publication which probably were acquired at the above mentioned bazaar. (p.37)

The publications of other visitors such as Consul P. Hodgson's Residence etc. (1863) and Robert Fortune's Yeddo and Peking (1863) probably also profited from Alcock's enterprise, for they gave British readers a fair amount of information on Japanese art manufactures. Fortune's book in addition was richly illustrated with facsimile lithographs of ukiyo-e by Hokusai and Hiroshige.

These writers certainly aspired to satisfy Alcock's demand for more factual and accurate information about Japan, and his own publication The Capital of the Tycoon released in two volumes in London early in the year 1863 was intended to provide a model for potential authors. It was well received as a standard work on Japan, but offered contemporary readers little in the way of concrete references to Japanese art, except for the many facsimile reproductions of Hokusai and Hiroshige prints. It becomes evident that Alcock's knowledge about the topic had been collected with the help of Japanese as well as British specialists, amongst whom John Leighton was quoted at length. Alcock's importance for the dissemination of Japanese art in Europe was certainly considerable, but it was rather that of an intermediary than that of a scholar since he was neither factually nor historically inclined in his descriptions of Japanese art. This was later admitted by Alcock himself in 1875, when he was asked to supply a series of articles on Japanese Art for The Art Journal. (1875, p.101)

DRESSER'S FIRST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JAPANESE ART

It was in fact Dresser who in the art-field at least most emphatically strove to fulfil Alcock's requirement for 'true impressions of photographic

accuracy'. He certainly knew about the Japan and Java views released by Negretti & Zambra in 1861, for he referred to the Java views in his book on The Art of Decorative Design published in London in 1862, and praised the company for 'Procuring photographs of scenes and lands of the deepest interest' (p.147) It is probably no coincidence that Dresser's first acknowledgement of Japanese art would appear in the lectures which presented the core of his publication. They were delivered in the autumn of 1861 under the same title for the Royal Society of Arts, (5 and 12 December 1861) and in the Crystal Palace Lecture Theatre, as well as for the Royal Manchester Institution in February 1862.¹⁰

Dresser, in Alcock's spirit, allowed for rational and scientific comparisons, and for the first time in the history of Western ideas included Japanese ornaments and other so called primitive samples in the classification of ornaments launched in his lectures:

We are now enabled to classify ornaments by affinities resulting from equality in respect to the embodiment of mental power. Thus we have examples of the first, or most exalted grade of ornament the Greek, the Moorish, the Early English, much of the Indian, many features of the Japanese, and some parts of Egyptian and Renaissance. In the second class, following a descending series, we may instance much of the Egyptian and Chinese and a few features in the Greek and the Japanese. In the third a great portion of the middle-age work, especially in the later Gothic, and many features of the Chinese or Indian, and in the fourth or last class, much of the Pompeian and our modern floral patterns. (1862, p.40)

This quotation will be more thoroughly analysed later in our study, suffice it to note that Dresser classified Japanese ornaments as examples of 'the most exalted grade of ornament' and thus counteracted the Philistine condescension prevalent among scientists and art-theorists of the day.

The problem of classification of the arts had been topical since the late eighteenth century, and the German historians and philosophers Johann J. Winckelmann, Johan Gottfried von Herder, and above all Georg W.F. Hegel had attempted to show that works of art were tangible expressions of

national characteristics. Their system however, was based on classical Western supremacy, and they failed to recognise beauty in Oriental and other styles. The English architect-designers and theorists Augustus W.N. Pugin (1812-1852) and John Ruskin (1819-1900) advocated a revival of the arts based on the Christian heritage, and Ruskin in particular condemned all other cultures including the Greek and the Oriental as hedonistic and therefore not worthy of consideration. These views were dominant in puritanical milieus in Britain at the time Dresser launched his taxonomic classification, but we shall see that the authorities of the School of Design indeed promoted ideas that were similarly controversial. Dresser's lectures and their publication in fact provides the first all-embracing presentation of the School's policy, and it becomes evident that the new comparative methods of botanists, zoologists and linguistics of the day had contributed to the liberation of Dresser and other people at the School from the preoccupations of the classicists.

Dresser thus arrived at universal laws for a correct abstract definition of beauty in ornament and in the applied arts generally, which helped him to develop a classification that included all historical styles, both classical and non-classical alike.

It is significant that this controversial strategy was launched prior to the grand presentation of Japanese art, organised by Alcock at the International Exhibition in London in the Summer of 1862, and that it accordingly was intended as a guide to 'The manufacturers and art workmen in view of the coming contest'. Dresser's classification is unique in a contemporary context, and remarkable for including no less than three samples of Japanese ornaments as examples of 'the most exalted grade of ornament'.

Clearly Japanese ornaments even at this early stage figured favourably in Dresser's mind, for the plate which represented eight so called

'anthemion forms' included Japanese samples in predominance:- nos. 5,7,8 were Japanese, no. 1 Egyptian and Moorish, no. 2 Greek, no. 3 Early English (Medieval), no. 4 Renaissance and no. 6 Chinese. These flower or foliage ornaments, incorrectly called anthemion forms, (eg greek anthos, flower), were intended to illustrate Dresser's notion that 'The purely ideal ornament is that which is most exalted, it being wholly a creation of the soul, it is utterly an embodiment of mind in form, or an offspring of the inner man, and its origin and nature give to it its elevated character' (1862, p.40)

Dresser's classification represents the first attempt to document a connection between Western anthemion patterns and early Eastern floral designs, which was later to be repeated by many writers on the topic. Clearly these ornaments were well known to Dresser, from his study of the Arita patterns where they predominate, and the illustrations in his book and articles, are not dissimilar to the flower-ornaments of a large Arita jar which was acquired by the Museum of Ornamental Art in 1854. (fig. 3A & B) This had been purchased together with thirty-seven other samples of Japanese art-objects from a sales-exhibition of Japanese Art at the Old Water-Colour Society in London in 1854, and this substantial enlargement of the museum's collections was certainly known to Dresser and other students at the School of Design.¹¹ Dresser's tutor Octavius Hudson's report of the same year indeed confirmed that analysis of Chinese and Japanese styles in ornament with a particular regard to 'The adaptation of natural forms in Japanese art', was incorporated in the training at the school.¹²

Dresser through the available literature on Japanese art published during the 1850s and early 1860s and in his education at The School of Design had evidently developed a positive predisposition towards Japanese ornamentation by the time he launched his classification in 1861. He clearly desired to popularise Japanese art by presenting hidden threads of

authentic connections, and to minimize hegemonic and superficial barriers between Western and Oriental art. This early acknowledgement of Japanese art in Western art-theory is entirely unique and virtually unparalleled in the context of Japonism. We shall see that this circumstance originated from a predisposed affinity developed during Dresser's childhood and his time at the School of Design, and that the authorities of the school as well as other institutions in Britain contributed to the preparation of a receptive climate for evaluating Japanese art, even before the official representation of Japan at the International Exhibition in London in 1862.

NOTES

1. Dublin University Magazine, XVIII, no.CII, (1841)3.
2. Bulletin de la Soci  t   de G  ographie, 2.eme serie, Vol.XV (1841), p.197 (Paris).
3. The Gentleman's Magazine, vol.95, (1825), p.259.
4. Brit. Mus. Index to Minutes, Vol. V. 12 November 1859.
5. Brit. Mus. Index to Minutes, Vol. III, 8 July 1820 and 30 June 1827.
6. The Times, 26 October 1846, 7c.
7. Christie's Auction Catalogue, 9 February 1866.
8. The Dublin Review, XXXIII, (1852), p.270.
9. The Art Journal, (1861), p.351.
10. The Building News, (1861), p.997, The Builder, (1861) p.734, The Planet, (1862) pp.123-135, and Manchester Public Library, MSS. M6-1-49-7, Royal Manchester Institution Letter-book, 31 January 1862.
11. P.R.O. Department of Science and Art Minutes, 20 April 1854, E.D. 28/2-105.
12. Science and Art Department, Second Report, (London 1855) p.153.

CHAPTER II

DRESSER AT THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND HIS FIRSTDOCUMENTED CONFRONTATION WITH JAPANESE ART**ORIENTALISM AND THE SCHOOL AROUND THE TIME OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION
OF ALL NATIONS IN 1851**

When lecturing on 'Ornamentation Considered as High Art' for the Royal Society of Arts in 1871, Dresser recalled having been an artistically inquisitive child:

As a child I spent a large portion of my time in drawing and painting, and as I was never happy without a paint box, I once got into trouble for exchanging a box which my father had given me to lock my little treasures in, for one of the old-fashioned two-penny paint boxes. That I was intended by nature as an artist, I doubt not. (1871, p.352)

His father Christopher Dresser senior (1807-1869), an Excise Officer, had been anxious to encourage his ambitions, and in 1847 placed him in the School of Design at Somerset House in London. Dresser's first years at the school have remained rather obscure due to the lack of reports chronicling the series of upheavals and changes that the school underwent, but we do know with his own words that he had 'been an earnest student of Oriental Art' and that he was familiar with the Arita patterns.

It was Sir Henry Cole (1808-1882) and his associates, the so called 'Cole Group' who finally brought an end to the controversy concerning the issue of whether the institution should be a mere drawing school or a training place for practising designers. Following the apparent failure of the School and of British manufacturers at the Great Exhibition in 1851, Cole introduced a reformation of their policy in favour of practical training courses.

Cole took over as General Superintendent of the School of Design in 1852 and was instrumental in moving it to Marlborough House where it was rehoused with a Museum of Manufactures, soon to be called the Museum of Ornamental Art, and subsequently the South Kensington Museum. Examples of

Japanese art manufactures were purchased in the opening year of the museum from the dealer William Hewitt & Co. These included six lacquer objects and a porcelain cup, all of which are extant,¹ and a joint letter from Henry Cole and Richard Redgrave (1804-1888) to the Board of Trade dated 31 March 1852 stated that:

An educated designer for ceramic manufacture, should at least have an adequate knowledge of what Japan, Meissen, Sèvres, and Chelsea, have already done.²

The members of the Cole Group who formed Dresser's education at the time, were great admirers of Oriental art and encouraged accelerated studies of its characteristics. It appears that the presentation of Oriental art at the Great Exhibition had provided their impetus, and Dresser when looking back in 1875 remembered that he paid particular attention to the Indian department exhibited in 1851:

Prior to 1852 there was a very poor class of art applied to industry, but at the time he remembered that Mr. (John) Herbert, whose pupil he was calling attention to the Indian objects in the exhibition, and remarking that he could not find amongst them all a single instance of inharmonious combinations of colours. This observation was afterwards publicly repeated by Richard Redgrave and Mr. Owen Jones, and he believed it was to a great extent the cause of the advance which had lately been made in art industries. English manufacturers had made a great deal of money by copying the striped fabrics of Algeria, China, and Japan, again some of Minton's (porcelain) best production in a decorative point of view, were little more³ than recasts of fine works from China and some Eastern country.

This was said during the discussion of the future of the India Museum in 1875, when Dresser ensured that the importance of Oriental art remained vivid in the minds of the public.

John Rogers Herbert (1810-90) was painter and lecturer at the school, who had been introduced by William Dyce in 1841, and in 1847 became one of the three Head Masters appointed. He made frescoes for the House of Commons Peers' Robing Room, and he remained at the School as a tutor under the new regime until 1853. Herbert's enthusiasm for the Oriental department evidently corresponded to that expressed by other members of the

Cole Group, and we shall see that this emphatic event had a marked influence on their artistic and academic ideas, as well as on those of the young Dresser.

The fascination with Japan which as we have observed began at the time of the annexation of Hong Kong to the British Empire, was reiterated at the time of the Great Exhibition, when the Edinburgh Review critic Alexander Knox uttered the wish that 'Japan would enter within the next Crystal Palace'.⁴ The encompassing view of the Orient evidently raised the question of Japan's presence. However, Knox and subsequent writers on The Great Exhibition have overlooked the circumstance that Japanese art although not officially included, indeed occurred amongst the wide range of Oriental art exhibited. The Official Catalogue of the Exhibition mentioned that the Chinese stand in fact included 'a few from Japan' and listed bronzes, porcelain and lacquer works.⁵ Again the presentation of Japan coincided with that of China, and clearly the need to differentiate between art from the two countries was not felt at the time. It was the British Consul in Shanghai, Rutherford Alcock, who had been responsible for fulfilling the demands made for Chinese exhibits in 1851, the Chinese themselves being entirely indifferent to the venture. (Michie, 1900, p.200) Alcock, who served most of his diplomatic life in China (1842-1859) and in Japan (1859-1871) contributed more than any other contemporary Western diplomat to the enlightenment of China and Japan in Europe, and it is interesting to observe that his enthusiasm for Japanese artefacts was already established in 1851. This, however is not surprising, when bearing in mind the recollections of travellers to China, and Alcock evidently felt the need to exhibit the Japanese art manufactures that were held in such esteem in China.

Dresser in retrospect lecturing 'On the Prevailing Ornament of China and Japan' in 1863, gave Alcock the honour of having first made Japanese

products known to the English public, (1863, p.387) and knowing that he paid particular attention to Oriental Art at the Great Exhibition in 1851 Dresser may well have been thinking of this early date.

The Journal of the Great Exhibition accordingly, gave particular praise to the Oriental artefacts exhibited, and Dresser and other artists who visited it may well have noticed the presentation of a Japanese picture-book with 57 accurate facsimile of Utagawa Toyokuni prints in the Imperial Viennese printing office's stand, which was described in the journal:

Upon the walls is also exhibited a work in the Japanese language, printed for the first time with moveable type, and accompanied by a German translation by Dr. Pfizmaier. Though but little known in this country, this edition has been translated in America, and is already in the press. The appearance of this Japanese novel caused a great sensation in foreign countries, the perfection with which the printing had been executed, actually created the doubt in the minds of the members of the German Society for the Promotion of Oriental Languages, whether the Japanese part and the illustrations of this work had not been executed at Japan, and the German part only at Vienna.⁶

Dr. August Pfizmaier's translation of Riutei Tanefiko's novel (1821) entitled Sechs Wandschirme in Gestallten der Vergänglichen Welt, published in Vienna in 1847, indeed attracted much attention at the time. It was also exhibited at the Paris Expo Universelle in 1855, and it presented European exhibition visitors with one of their first views of Japanese woodblock-printing.⁷

The official catalogue of the Great Exhibition also mentioned exhibits of Charles Mason & Co's ironstone decorated with a 'Anglo-Japanese' and 'Japanese design', and we hear of British textiles with 'Japanese spots and honeycombs'.⁸ Evidently, both Japan-inspired artefacts as well as Japanese art proper enmeshed with other products at the exhibition, and helped present the most comprehensive view of the Orient that had ever been seen in Europe. The negligent denial of the presence of Japanese art must accordingly be dismissed as erroneous, and it is quite likely that Dresser's broader recognition of Oriental art would have embraced the

Japanese samples exhibited. As sharp an eye as his, would certainly have observed that the Arita patterns of his childhood were still in vogue at Charles Mason & Co.

According to Richard Altick's The Shows of London, 1851 was the year of the largest numbers of exhibitions that London had ever seen, and several Chinese and other Oriental exhibits contributed to complete the public impression of the East. The Chinese Museum at Hyde Park Corner, which had closed its doors in 1846 was reopened in new premises to the west of Albert-gate, Knightsbridge, in 1851, and 'Soirées musicales et dansantes' were arranged on board the Chinese Junk, which was floating on the Thames and had been fitted up with large saloons cluttered with Chinese curiosities. Chinese exhibits at the Surrey Entertainment Gardens as well as Albert Smith's panorama performance 'From Mont Blanc to China' contributed to elaborate the overwhelming picture of China presented in London during the exhibition summer. Altick has pointed to a double tendency which explains the tremendous popularity of these events:

The satisfaction and sanguine expectation generated by the opening of China to western trade were accompanied by a regretful, almost elegiac sense that things would never be the same, now that the white man had forced open the gates of another culture. (1978, p.294)

This notion probably also helped to promote interest in Japan, now that the European public had finally satisfied its curiosity about China.

Nathan Dunn's collection which constituted the Chinese Museum was offered for sale at Christie, Mason & Woods, Auctioneers, at the close of the Great Exhibition in 1851, and the dealer William Hewitt is recorded to have been an eager buyer.⁹ Some months later he supplied the first Chinese and Japanese artefacts acquired by the newly founded Museum of Manufactures at Marlborough House, and we may conclude that these probably originated from the Dunn collection. A Japanese black lacquer writing box inlaid with mother-of-pearl described in the Museum Catalogue of 1853, (fig.4A)

corresponds to entry number 388 in the Christie sale catalogue. Christie's, however, sold the whole lot as Chinese, but knowing that the Chinese Museum contained 'Chinese and Oriental productions' we may deduce that the Japanese artefacts hypothetically could have originated from Hewitt's acquisitions.

Oriental art formed a substantial part of the first purchases made by the museum's acquisition committee, and Japanese lacquer in particular was highly praised by the curator John C. Robinson in his catalogue of 1855:

The island of Japan may be regarded as the world's workshop in this branch of art, its semi-civilised artists still defying all rivalry, although the Chinese are only a degree less skilful. (p.69)

Many critics frowned at this predilection for Oriental artefacts, but Cole in the preface to the museum catalogue dismissed this criticism saying that,

Each specimen has been selected for its merits in exemplifying some right principle of contribution of ornament, or some feature of workmanship to which it appears desirable that the attention of our students and manufacturers should be directed.

The most laudable acknowledgement of the Oriental departments at the Great Exhibition originated from the organizers themselves, who were struck by the alarming presentation of British design which compared to the beauty of Oriental products appeared inferior and unartistic. This was poignantly expressed by the architect Matthew Digby Wyatt, (1820-1877) lecturer at the School and later the first Slade Professor at Cambridge, in his contribution to The Lectures on the Result of the Great Exhibition, published in London in 1852:

The debilitating effects of nearly a century's incessant copying without discrimination, appropriating without compunction and falsifying without blushing, still bind our powers in a vicious circle, from which we have hardly yet strength to burst the spell. Some extraordinary stimulant could alone awaken all our energies, and that stimulus came - it may not, perhaps be impious to esteem providentially - in the form of the great and glorious Exhibition. It was natural that we should be startled when we found that in consistency of design in Industrial art, those we had been too apt to regard as almost savages, were infinitely our superiors.' (p.250)

Henry Cole (1808-82) in his lecture on the Great Exhibition boldly announced that:

It was from the East that the most impressive lesson was to be learnt. Here was revealed a fresh well of art, the general principles of which were the same as those in the best period of art of all nations. (p.112)

Owen Jones (1809-1874) another member of the Cole group who during the first half of the nineteenth century had been a central figure amongst Orientalists in Britain, echoed the sentiment that The School of Design had fallen short of its intentions. His contribution to the same lecture series stressed that the mistake lay in the fact that the school had been conducted as if it were a painting school:

I may remind you that the Eastern nations, who appear to excel all others in their works of ornamentation, are forbidden by their creed to make any representation of the human figure, and it is probably to this cause that we may attribute their excellence in ornament. (p.106)

Jones' Doctrines of the Department of Practical Art (1852) enthusiastically recommended Oriental art, and his words certainly stimulated the young Dresser who attended his lectures at the time:

The temporary exhibition of Indian and other Eastern Collections in the Great Exhibition was a boon to all those European artists who had the opportunity of studying them, and let us trust that the foresight of the Government, which has secured to us a portion of those collections, as permanent objects of study, will lead to still higher results. (p.232)

Evidently these 'Eastern collections' had a profound impact which can be detected in Jones' 34 'Propositions' included in his publication. Six of these doctrines first appeared in a series of articles published in the Journal of Design in 1851, under the heading of 'Gleanings from the Great Exhibition, - on the distribution of form and colour developed in the articles exhibited in the Indian, Egyptian, Turkish and Tunisian Departments.' Jones emphasised that the designer in these products would find:

No superfluous and useless ornament which an accident may remove....He will be impressed with a sensation of most

voluptuous repose; here there is no struggle after an effect, everything arises quietly and naturally from the want which has to be supplied. It is seen from the embroidered garment tissues to the humblest earthen vase: each follows the same law, the most brilliant colours are here harmonised as by natural instinct, it is impossible to find a discord. Every piece of ornament shows that the artist thought instead of copied while he worked. (p.91)

28 April 1852 Jones lectured on the same topic for The Royal Society of Arts, and he added nineteen new propositions to the six released in 1851,¹⁰ and finally completed the set of 34 Propositions when he lectured at the School of Design in June 1852. These were published as Doctrines of the Department of Practical Art in the same year and undoubtedly formed the basis of Dresser's education. Jones exerted a marked influence on the young Dresser, who continued to pay tribute to his master throughout his life, and in turn composed his own propositions derived from those of Jones. His first thirteen doctrines dealt specifically with form, proportion, fitness, beauty and ornamentation of the decorative arts, and the latter part presented his ideas on colour harmonies, shades and contrasts. The basic notion was that the decorative arts arise from architecture, and that these should possess 'fitness, proportion, harmony, the result of which is repose', and that 'all ornament should be based upon a geometrical construction' or on 'conventional representations founded upon natural objects'. The last set of doctrines considered 'The means of increasing the harmonious effects of juxtaposed colours. Observations derived from a consideration of Oriental practice.'

Micheal Darby has pointed out that prior to the Great Exhibition Jones' perception of the Orient was related to the Near East and Moorish Spain, and that his ideas on polychromatic colouring originated from his travels in Egypt, Greece and Spain in the years 1832-34. (1974, p.13) This eventually led to a revolt against the white stucco of Neo-Classicism and the desire to create a 'new style' which was most emphatically demonstrated in Jones and Jules Goury's joint publication Plans, Details, Elevations and

Sections of The Alhambra released in 1842-45. This tremendously influential book gave further impetus to the contemporary tendency towards Orientalism, and inspired the rise of the so called 'Islamic' or 'Alhambresque' style favoured by architects, designers and other artists during the 1840's.

Many years later, in 1871 George Wallis (1811-1891) master of the School of Designs in Manchester (1844-45) and Birmingham (1846-60) and finally Art Director of the South Kensington Museum, connected Dresser with the advent of this particular style:

A feeling arose in the favour of a style of which Dr. Dresser was a very profound and learned disciple, about the time of Owen Jones' work on the Alhambra, and it was discovered that there was something in geometry as applied to ornament, and that the true proportion of various parts was an essential element in its nature.

This was uttered in a discussion following Dresser's lecture on 'Ornamentation Considered as High Art', and Dresser confirmed that he indeed knew Wallis at the time, and 'attended his lectures when quite a boy'. (1871, p.221-224) This must have been around the time of the publication of The Alhambra and probably during Dresser's first days at the School of Design, from which he dated his studies of Oriental art. It becomes evident that Dresser's life-long fascination with this subject was due to an early awareness of Orientalism.

This evidently applies to the entire Cole Group in general, and their knowledge about Japanese art in general was certainly stimulated when the famous porcelain expert Joseph Marryat in 1853 was appointed advisor to the museum.¹¹ Marryat's publication of 1850 highly recommended the quality of Japanese porcelain:

Though the porcelain of Japan bears a great resemblance to that of China, it can easily be distinguished by a practised eye, it is more brilliant white, and the clay is of a better quality, the designs are more simple, and the decorations not overloaded, the dragons are not monstrous, and the flowers are designed more in

accordance with nature. The glazing also is more tinged with blue and more delicate. (1850, p.124)

John C. Robinson who was appointed curator of the Museum of Ornamental Art in 1853 propagated various branches of Japanese art in the museum catalogue in 1855, and echoed Maryatt's words on Japanese porcelain:

It is often impossible to decide with certainty to which of these countries specimens should be referred. As a general rule, the Japan porcelain is perhaps distinguished by a purer taste in design, the shapes of the pieces are simpler and more elegant than the Chinese, whilst in the painted decoration, grotesque or fantastic subjects are less affected, simple renderings of natural flowers and foliage, and elegant conventionalised floral ornaments, being very frequent. In colour generally speaking, Japan porcelain is fuller and richer in effect than the Chinese. (p.50)

Robinson was here referring to the Arita wares known to Dresser, and his description of Japanese lacquer in the museum was equally positive;

Japanese art, otherwise so intimately allied to that of China, is distinguished from the latter by a more refined perception of the innate grace and beauty of natural objects, especially of the floral kingdom, which are often reproduced as decorative motives with wonderful spirit and truth to nature. (pp.71-74) (fig.4B)

DRESSER'S EDUCATION AT THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

This appraisal must have stimulated the young Dresser, who at the time thoroughly educated himself in botanical sciences and lectured on 'Artistic Botany' at The School of Design.¹² The studies of repetitious forms in 'conventionalised floral ornaments' indeed formed the basis of Dresser's lectures and subsequent publication on The Art of Decorative Design (1861 and 1862), and the predominance of Japanese samples illustrated suggests that these had been studied at The School of Design.

The main impetus indeed seems to have originated from his tutor, Octavius Hudson, who is recorded as having lectured on 'The Analysis of Styles' and 'The Analogy of Ornament' at The School of Design in 1854. Hudson regretted that 'The study of ornament has at present made very little progress, and amongst the many works that are annually published in London, or at the continent, no systematic classification of these styles

of ornamental art has yet appeared', and he carefully considered precisely those styles which Dresser incorporated in his classification in 1861:

- a) Egyptian, b) Assyrian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, c) Mahomedan, Arabian, d) Indian, e) Chinese and Japanese, f) Christian Ornamental art of the 12th Century, g) Gothic and Early English, h) Decorated Gothic, i) Perpendicular Gothic, j) The Revival of Classic Art.¹³

Clearly Dresser's subsequent consideration of these styles, owed much to Hudson's lectures, and it is significant that discussions on the subject already in 1854 included Japanese ornamentation.

Equally influential on the ideas of the young Dresser was the German architect designer Gottfried Semper (1803-1873) who had arrived in exile in England in 1850, and who in 1852 was engaged by Henry Cole as Professor of 'Ornamental Art and Architecture' at the School of Design. He held this position until he left for Zürich in 1855, and he also worked as a designer for Jackson & Graham and with Owen Jones in preparing the interiors of the Crystal Palace in 1851.

We have noted that the problem of classification of the arts had been particularly topical in Germany, where Johann J. Winckelmann, Johan Gottfried von Herder and George W. Hegel had launched their respective systems in the early nineteenth century, but had failed to include so called primitive and Oriental styles. This was redressed by Semper in 1852 when he published Wissenschaft, Industrie, und Kunst, Betrachtungen bei dem Schluss de Londoner Industrie-ausstellung (London 1852). Semper, for the first time in the history of Western ideas, included so-called primitive cultures seen in relation to classical ideas, and he was certainly the father of the classification of ornamental art subsequently presented by Hudson, Dresser and by Owen Jones in his Grammar of Ornament (London, 1856). Semper had studied the ethnographical collections of Gustav Friedrich Klemm in his home town of Dresden, and later the French Biologist George Cuvier's (1769-1832) 'Jardin des Plants' in Paris. Cuvier's

systematic arrangement was based on the conviction that a classification of the species should be governed by the function performed and not by the description of an organism. This revolutionary notion was to become influential for scientists of the day, and especially to the new ideas of the linguists, as well as to Charles Darwin and to Semper himself, who frequently spoke of the necessity of adapting Cuvier's system to their methods at the School of Design.¹⁴

This was most emphatically presented in Semper's publication on the 1851 exhibition, in which he stated that 'the half barbarian people were the victorious competitors' and thus the most important lesson could be learnt from 'people of non-European origin, whose melodious colours and instinctive simplicity, presented the prototypes of human crafts, which in the media of richer materials and methods becomes even more difficult to grasp.' (p.25) The Chinese, Indian and Persian products according to Semper were particularly worthy of study and he introduced a comparative morphology of the arts, based on certain functions and root processes, which were part of a universal human experience. He used a primitive West Indian hut and its contents as his point of departure and, asserted that 'The History of Architecture starts with the History of the Applied Arts'. Semper explained that the centre of the hut was formed around the clay fireplace, where ceramics and metal objects were produced, the walls were erected from woven textiles and plaiting, and the terrace and the roof by carpentry and joinery. (p.3-16) He thus challenged Winckelmann's hierarchic classification of the arts after Greek and Roman preference, and established a functional coherence between architecture and the decorative arts as well as between classical European and so called primitive cultures. This system became tremendously important to artistic milieus in Europe, and Semper has rightly been placed with the greatest theorists of his time, the French Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) and the British John Ruskin

(1819-1900). His influence on the people connected with the School of Design, however has not yet been properly investigated.

Dresser evidently received much stimulus from Semper's teachings, and his The Art of Decorative Design was in fact published simultaneously with Semper's Der Stil in den Technischen und Tectonischen Künsten (Braunschweig, 1860-63), which elaborated on the views presented in his book on the Great Exhibition. Dresser's The Development of the Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition of 1862 (London 1862) was clearly also modelled on Semper's review of the 1851 exhibition. He quoted Semper at length in his publications and particularly the consideration of function in Greek and Egyptian water-vessels which was first presented by Semper in his lecture on 'Practical Art in Metal and Hard Materials, its Technology, History, and Style' at The School of Design in 1853. (Dresser, 1862, p.129-32) Clearly both Semper and Hudson based their ideas on laws observed in Oriental and other remote cultures, and Hudson at least also included Japanese art. Amongst their students at The School of Design Dresser most successfully managed to adopt their doctrines, but he recalled that the practical demonstration performed by his tutors did not always match their ideas.

Lecturing for the Royal Society of Arts in 1871, Dresser emphasised that the theory preached in lectures and the art-knowledge presented in practical working classes did not always coincide:

Three special classes were organised, one to train young men to design for calico printers, wall-paper, and the decoration of all kinds of surfaces, another for the decoration of porcelain and ceramic art, and another one for metal chasing. These classes were presided over by three gentlemen of great renown in every way, the professor of the first class in which he was placed, being Mr. Hudson. That which was devoted to the decoration of earthenware was entrusted to Mr. Simpson, from Minton's, and the metal chasing under the direction of Professor Semper. With the exception of Simpson's class, he thoroughly understanding the technicalities of applying colour to porcelain, the other two men knew nothing whatever about the practical operation of their duties though they were all men of marvellous skill. (p.224)

The principle of practical instruction had been discussed at the School since its foundation in 1838, and it had caused considerable argument as to whether the institution should be a mere drawing school or a practical training school of designers. Dresser's first years at the institution indeed were marked by these conflicting debates and upheavals, and it was only when Cole took command of the School that proper training classes were established. Semper was in charge of the 'Technical Courses and Practical Construction' and he successfully managed to introduce the system under which he had worked for many years in Germany, but the courses were discontinued after he left in 1855, and the school again became nothing but a training institution for future art teachers. Semper's system would probably have proved exemplary in the long run, but it clearly lacked the thorough expertise required by Dresser.

This circumstance facilitated Dresser and two other talented students, who had passed their exams in the spring term of 1855, being asked to replace the positions held by Semper and by Professor Ralph Wornum (1812-1877) when they left the school in 1855:

Mr. Hagreen to be teacher of Architectural Drawing, Mr. Slocombe to be teacher of Practice of Ornamental Design, and Mr. Dresser to be teacher and class lecturer of Botany and to find his own examples and to be engaged two days a week for three hours each day. One day to be devoted to the Students of the Female School.¹⁵

The appointment of students from the first group of professionally trained designers at the School, was clearly intended to make up for the deficiency pointed out by Dresser. His classes on 'Artistic Botany' indeed were recorded to have been 'extremely interesting and of the utmost importance in the study of ornamental art.'¹⁶ Dresser shared the general belief of the day, advocated by John Ruskin, that nature was the basis of art, but he pushed the concept of ornamentation from naturalism toward flatness and ever greater abstraction, or as he put it to 'the most exalted grade of ornament'. The idea of formalised and abstracted ornamentation had been

advocated by the School of Design since the days of its foundation, and immediately aroused Ruskin's criticism of the School's authorities.

The Drawing Book of The Government School of Design written by the first head master William Dyce (1806-1864) in 1842, indeed released one of the first programmes for abstraction in art

The beauties of form or of colour abstracted from nature by the ornamentist, from the very circumstances that they are abstractions, assume, in relation to the whole progress of art the character of principles or facts that tend by accumulation to bring it to perfection. (p.1)

Dyce who resigned as master of the School in 1843, due to disagreements with the management, returned as Master of the Class of Design in 1847, and before retiring in 1849 he was given ample opportunity to express his views. His lectures on 'Ornamental Design' were published in Henry Cole's Journal of Design, and these certainly provided the most pronounced influence on Dresser during his first years at the School. Dyce boldly announced:

Ornamental design is in fact, a kind of practical science, which, like other kinds, investigates the phenomena of nature for the purpose of applying natural principles and results to some end. ¹⁷

Evidently Dyce's lectures at the School gave rise to the Cole Group's motto of 'wedding science with art' which was launched in Richard Redgrave's Supplementary Report on Design in Manufacture shown at the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. (London 1851) This presented a bold criticism of British products and became the first textbook of the new regime at the School. (Boe, 1954, pp.40-85)

Dresser recommended it wholeheartedly in the preface to his The Art of Decorative Design, and we may conclude that Redgrave who had been appointed Master of Botany at the School in 1847 had also stimulated Dresser's studies of 'artistic botany'. Redgrave's lectures on 'The Importance of the Study of Botany to the Ornamentist' were published in The Journal of Design in 1849, (pp.147-151 & 178-181) . These presented botany

as crucial to the designer's education and general laws of vegetation was connected with essential principles and structures adopted by the artist. Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin (1812-1852) who was the main architect designer behind the Gothic and Medieval Revival, simultaneously endorsed these views in his Floriated Ornament (1849). This influential book propagated the idea of the symmetrical and geometrical arrangement of plants and strongly objected to 'the fictitious idea of relief, as if bunches of flowers were laid on' (1849, pp.1-3). Dresser expressed similar theories in his publications and frequently paid tribute to Pugin, who probably was the most persuasive writer on design at that time.

When Redgrave became Art Superintendent of the School in 1854, he recognised Dresser's capacity to assimilate his doctrines and recommended him to deliver 'a set of twelve lectures on the best mode of investigating the form and structure of plants with a view to the treatment as ornament, and to prepare the diagrams.'¹⁸ Dyce had propagated similar diagrams in his Drawing book and they were evidently a key element in the education at the School of Design. Dresser's handsome diagrams have been preserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A) to this day. (fig. 5)

Dresser's lectures, which were performed as part of his final training before graduating in the spring of 1855, were certainly successful for his engagement was renewed 2 March 1855:

Mr. Dresser, as scholar of the department having prepared a set of Botanical Diagrams and delivered a course of lectures satisfactorily to the Female School is to be accredited to the Provincial Schools as a competent person and the schools are to have the use of the Diagrams he has prepared. Mr. Dresser to¹⁹ have the usual payments for certificates when he takes them.

Clearly Dresser had fulfilled the Cole Group's motto of "wedding science with art", and we have noted that the twenty-year-old scholar, upon Semper's resignation in 1855, was found proficient to replace his tutor and formally was engaged as teacher of 'artistic botany' at the School of Design.

Dresser held this position until July 1868, when he resigned.²⁰ Dr. John Lindley's (1799-1865) lectures on botany at the school were also discontinued in 1855, and Dresser soon showed himself to be an expert on the subject.

Dresser, however, must have based many of his ideas on Lindley's lectures on 'The Symmetry of Vegetation, an outline of principles to be observed in the delineation of plants' and 'Form and Colour in the Vegetable Kingdom', performed in 1852 and 1854 respectively.²¹ Lindley who was professor of Botany at the University of London from 1829-1865 had been the first to publicise the science of morphology in Britain. His Introduction to Botany (1832) presented the recent advances on the topic, and emphasised that:

The reduction of all classes of phenomena to general principles, and above all, the adoption of the philosophical views of Goethe, together with the recognition of a universal unity of design throughout the vegetable world, are undoubtedly the principle causes to which this change is to be ascribed. (1832, p.125)

The desire to go back to the first principle and origins of nature clearly had led Dyce to the ideal plant illustrated in his Drawingbook and Semper to his classification of archetypes in design. The new morphological ideas offered a scientific solution to the problem of classification and evolution of the arts, and in 1859 Dresser was awarded a Ph.D. in absentia from the University of Jena, for his work on Goethe's doctrines on metamorphoses seen in relation to morphology.²²

DRESSER'S EARLY PUBLICATIONS AND DESIGNS

It was Dresser who most convincingly introduced these issues to the British public, and his lectures and publications were clearly based on the teachings of the Cole Group. These included the lectures on 'Botany as Adapted to the Arts' published in the Art Journal in 1857-58, - his lecture for The Linnaean Society on 'Contributions to Organographic Botany'

delivered in April in 1858, and his lectures for the Edinburgh Botanical Society and for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1859-1860, respectively in double lectures, entitled 'On the Morphological Import of Certain Vegetable Organs' and 'On the Stem or Axis as the Fundamental Organ of the Vegetable Structure' (Transactions VI, pp.321-22, 432-34) and 'On Abnormal Forms of *Passiflora Caerulea*' and 'On Morphological Laws in Plant' (Durant, 1973, bibliography VIII)

His first publications The Rudiments of Botany, structural and physiological and Unity in Variety, as deduced from the Vegetable Kingdom, being an attempt to oneness which is discoverable in the habits, and mode of construction in all plants, were both published in London in 1859, and his Popular Manual of Botany, being a development of the rudiments of botanical sciences without technical terms (Edinburgh, 1860) earned him a reputation amongst botanists.

Dresser at the time in fact seemed to have been more drawn to science than to art and in 1860 he applied for the Chair of Botany at University College, London, but having been rejected he dedicated himself wholeheartedly to design and the theory of art. The Art of Decorative Design lecture and publications presented the first tangible unification of his scientific and artistic preoccupations, and Dresser continued to return to the teaching of symmetry, structure, economy, and function of the plant in his writings and artistic pursuits, constantly comparing these phenomena with parallel aspects of the arts. It is evident that two of the most influential studies undertaken by Dresser at the School of Design were those concerning botany and Oriental art, both of which contributed to free him from the stalemate of Victorian historicism.

We have previously alluded to John C. Robinson's recognition of 'simple renderings of natural flowers and foliage, and elegant conventionalised floral ornaments' in the Japanese objects acquired by the Museum of Ornamental

Art in 1854, and Dresser would certainly have made similar observations at the time. Clearly the study of Japanese ornamentation advocated by Hudson in 1854, combined usefully with the botanical research undertaken by Dresser. His classification of archetypal floral ornaments, three of which were Japanese, was evidently a result of these studies.

Richard Burchett, Head Master of the school before it moved from Somerset House to Marlborough House in 1853, provided the first evidence of Dresser's artistic talent at the time. Participating in the discussion following Dresser's lecture for the Royal Society of Arts in 1871 he said that 'He remembered him as an extremely clever student, particularly in the matter of plants and floral forms, and his having distinguished himself in that way, not only at Somerset House, but also at Kew where he made a high reputation. (1871, p.222) Burchett's report for the year 1852 indeed mentioned the first recorded study days for the pupils at Kew Gardens:

During the summer vacation the scholars executed a considerable number of works at the royal gardens at Kew, having been kindly favoured by Sir William Hooker with accommodation for study at the garden. These works were nearly all purchased by the Department for its use, some of them, executed in a special manner, having reference to designing for textile fabrics, are being reproduced in coloured lithography for publication.²³

Michael Darby has pointed out that Owen Jones at this time began planning the Grammar Of Ornament, (1974, p.317), and the mentioned lithographs could well have been the first proofs for his chapter on 'Leaves and Flowers from Nature' to which Dresser contributed a plate of 'Plans and Elevations of Flowers', (Jones, 1856) (fig. 6). Dresser's formalised depiction of flowers unites artistic and botanical interests, and the Lady's Smock indeed was incorporated in his first recorded design for textile manufacture. This circumstantial evidence points to a possible connection with The Grammar of Ornament, and Dresser received prizes 'for four designs for printed fabrics' at the Exhibition of Students' Work at Marlborough House in May 1853. Clearly the study-days at Kew had been fruitful and the patterns

which were executed by Messrs. Liddiard of London, offered him a special prize for 'the best design, to be printed on cambric.'²⁴ (fig.7) A sample of this textile together with the three other pieces executed by Dresser were preserved in the V & A until 1938 when they were written off and sold at auction. Fortunately detailed descriptions were made in the museum textile register, and this has helped in identifying the samples in the Patent Office Design Registry where four designs registered by Liddiard & Co for Hargreaves Brothers & Co retailers in 1853 indeed correspond with the V & A registry:

Muslin printed with Lady's Smock in purple, and having longitudinal stripes of open mesh. An example of block printing in 1853, made by Liddiard & Co, London, for Hargreaves Brothers & Co, designed by C. Dresser student of Octavius Hudson's Class of Design, National Art Training School, Marlborough House.

Another sample was identical but on plain muslin, and two other designs were described as 'flowers in blue and in purple'.²⁵ (figs.8) The stylised simplicity and boldness of these designs deviate strongly from the output of naturalistic textile patterns of the day, and they were probably influenced by the oriental fabrics Dresser recalled having studied at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The Indian Department at the exhibition was certainly studied by the students, for the 'Report of the Exhibition of the Works sent from Various Schools of Ornamental Art in May 1852', listed exhibits of 'Indian ornament of the Great Exhibition by students of the Metropolitan Schools'. Dresser is recorded to have participated in the class of 'Applied Design' and to have received a medal, presumably for two signed drawings of an Indian dagger and an Indian turban, which have been preserved in the V & A²⁶ (fig.9) They have previously not been dated, but the dagger indeed is identical to one acquired by the museum at the post exhibition sale in 1851, and it was also recommended as a good study example by Gottfried Semper in his Report of the year 1852.²⁷ Evidently, Dresser with other

students at the time studied the Indian and other Oriental ornaments recommended in 1851, and his textile designs remain a palpable result of his simultaneous studies of Oriental art and artistic botany.

THE FIRST EXHIBITIONS OF JAPANESE ART IN BRITAIN 1853-1861

The first American expeditions to Japan in 1853-54, aroused a tremendous interest in the daily press in Britain, and in 1853 we hear of a Japanese stand at the International Exhibition in Dublin:

The most unique and remarkable contribution in the entire Exhibition is that of the Japanese specimens contributed by the Dutch Government. The many valuable specimens shown are in the care of M. van de Kastele, the Director of the Museum of Curiosities at the Hague, to whom the collection belongs. The beauty of the specimens is certainly unsurpassed, the small specimens of china exhibit a much higher condition of art than that of the Chinese, and the colours are brilliant and well chosen.²⁸

The critic praised a host of exhibited objects which included lacquer, arms, clothing, musical instruments, models of temples, screens and a large number of drawings, which 'scarcely ever had been seen in England, in consequence of the very strict laws prohibiting their being taken out of the country'. The same magazine simultaneously released a series of six articles on Japan, which were based on von Siebold's publications. A set of similar articles were published in the French Le Magasin Pittoresque in the same year. The Japanese exhibits were also mentioned in L'Athenaeum Francaise, and in its English equivalent The Athenaeum, as well as in The Illustrated London News which included two large illustrations of the Japanese objects, and particularly praised 'the painted hangings for walls.'²⁹

The Japanese collection contributed by the Dutch in 1853 clearly included the applied as well as the fine arts, and it is remarkable that art historians have not dealt more thoroughly with its content and artistic influence. It is quite likely that John Leighton who in the same year published his Suggestions in Design had based his Japanese ornaments on samples exhibited in Dublin.

Dutch enterprise was also responsible for the first sales exhibition of Japanese art arranged at the Old Watercolour Society in London in 1854. It was received with great acclaim and John C. Robinson, purchased 37 objects for the museum comprising the Arita jar already referred to, as well as two porcelain cups, a pair of bronze vases and candlesticks, lacquer boxes in green, red and black lacquer, and various bamboo and basket work. Robinson's annual report for 1854 assured that 'The Current acquisitions literally of daily occurrence were rendered immediately available to the public, and to the purposes of the department in respect of study'.³⁰ In addition the catalogue of the entire Japanese Exhibition was available in the library attached to the museum, and it was certainly studied by Dresser.³¹ (fig.10)

Clearly the study of Japanese ornamentation was incorporated into Dresser's education at the School, at least from about 1854, when the Japanese Exhibition received much attention by the Cole Group and by the public in general. The Times, The Leisure Hour, The Athenaeum and The Illustrated London News all contained extensive reviews of the exhibition, and the two latter anticipated the Japanese influence on British design, respectively saying that 'the exhibition claims the attention of all who are concerned in the progress of Art-manufacture' and that it ought to 'originate experiments among our potters'.³² The large illustration of the exhibition included in The Illustrated London News indeed provided the reading public with one of their first views of Japanese art-products, and several of the objects mentioned can be recognised. Significantly paintings and screens were also on display and these were described as showing 'Japanese of all ranks - both men and women - in a variety of costumes, of which that of a bride, and a female walking with one of the fanlike parasols commonly used in that country' and 'screens on which are depicted the houses and domestic manners of the

people'.³³ Timbs in 1855 referred to '18 model pictures of Japanese costumes' exhibited at the Missionary Museum in London, and these may well have been the ones exhibited in 1854, but their present whereabouts is unknown. (1855, p.18) We can ascertain, however, that samples of Japanese fine art were available for viewing in London around the middle of the 1850s. Evidently Oriental and Japanese art was widely admired in artistic circles in Britain and in France during the early 1850s and 1860s. The Cole Group and John C. Robinson's museum catalogues in particular were fundamental to the popularisation of Japanese art, and smaller selections were also provided for loan to a number of industrial exhibitions in Britain at the time.

When the Royal Dublin Society inaugurated their museum in 1857 they were proud to announce that the collection of Japanese artefacts was supplied by the newly opened South Kensington Museum.³⁴ Equally the catalogue of the Bristol Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art in 1861, listed Japanese bronzes lent from the S. Ken. museum amongst other Japanese exhibits. Notably on loan from a private collector 'an unrivalled collection from China and Japan, obtained in great measures during the late war, at the taking of the Summer Palace in Peking'.³⁵ This was probably acquired from the Christie's sale of Robert Fortune's collection, 'obtained at great risk during his recent visit to China and Japan' on 31 March 1861. It is tempting to suggest that the exhibits belonged to William Burges (1827-1881), who is recorded as having possessed a large number of Chinese and Japanese objects attributed to the Summer Palace in Peking after it was sacked in the war in 1860 (Crook, 1981, p.146), and that his friend Edward W. Godwin (1833-86) first encountered Japanese art at the Bristol Exhibition in 1861. Both are known to have been amongst the first passionate collectors of Japanese art in Britain, and Burges is recorded to have paid numerous visits to Godwin's Bristol house, which he decorated

with Japanese prints and straw matting in about 1862. Speculations on when Burges and Godwin in fact first encountered Japanese art can be solved with this dating of the Bristol Exhibition in 1861, which seems more likely than the 1862 International Exhibition, as suggested by other scholars (Harborn, 1949 p.78; Aslin, 1986 p.9) The appearance of so much Japanese art in Britain's main port is not as coincidental as it may seem, given that ships returning from Japan had unloaded their cargoes in Bristol since the late 1850s.

A similar fascination with things Japanese seems to have prevailed in the Scottish capital at the time. Several Japanese objects were exhibited at the Art Manufacture Association's exhibitions arranged in The National Gallery in Edinburgh in 1856 and 1857, and the 1856 catalogue listed two Japanese silver jugs lent by Messrs. Mackay, Cunningham & Co, four inlaid boxes and a Japanese case with stand contributed by the Dowager Lady Baillie, a Japanese bowl from Robert Napier's collection, and two work-tables from an anonymous lender.³⁶ Twelve Japanese trays from A. Trotter Esq and two Japanese teapots from James Hay's collection were exhibited in the 1857 exhibition.³⁷ As previously stated there is certainly evidence for a continuous interest in Japanese art in Scotland during the period in question, and it appears that the general public in Britain's largest cities had been presented with the opportunity of seeing Japanese art long before the so-called initial encounter at the International Exhibition in London in 1862. We shall see that the visitors flocking from all over the world to the Art Treasures of Great Britain Exhibition in Manchester in 1857, were offered similar facilities for viewing Japanese art.

The exhibition was the centre of interest for artistic circles in 1857, and it comprised paintings from all the major museums and private houses in Britain, as well as the first historical survey record of the fine art printing processes. The Athenaeum which contained a long and

enthusiastic review of the exhibition, described prints by Dürer. Rembrandt, Titian, Landseer, Dellaroche etc., and, significantly, mentioned that "Wood engraving was hunted with success through all its stages, from rude Japanese fourteenth-century work, of staring, sprawling men in rich dressing-gowns, down to early Italian playing cards and old Venetian rude illustrations", and concluded that 'The citron-coloured walls bring out well the deep soft blacks and rich green spots of light on these most excellent works of dead men's toil.'³⁸

The Official Catalogue of the exhibition indeed listed Japanese woodcuts contributed by William Russell, the famous art-collector of the day and described these as 'very remarkable for the power of drawing shown in outline, and on account of their being printed in colour - not stencilling'.³⁹ Clearly this agreed with the predilections expressed by Japonism artists some ten or more years later, and William Russell's prints may well have been a main source. They remained in his possession until his death and were evidently much used when they went for sale at Christie's in 1884, described as: 'Various old coloured Japanese woodcuts, much damaged, and a makimono.'⁴⁰

We have noted that ukiyo-e prints were accessible in the West and included in many private and public collections throughout Europe, but the samples exhibited in Manchester in 1857 as far as we know are the first known to have been on public display, except perhaps for the ones in von Siebold's museum in Leiden. Knowing that several of the South Kensington authorities and notably Owen Jones were involved in the exhibition, we may assume that Dresser was informed about its contents and that he like many other artists probably visited it. Significantly among the visitors recorded we find the American painters James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and John La Farge (1835-1910), who respectively were to become the leading figures of the Japonism movement amongst English and American painters.

JAPANESE PRINTS IN PARIS AND IN MANCHESTER IN 1856-58, AND THE FIRST AUCTION-SALES OF JAPANESE ART COLLECTIONS.

They had both gone to Paris to finish their education, Whistler in 1855 and La Farge in 1856, and circumstantial evidence suggests that they knew each other when they separately made their way to Manchester in 1857. Whistler by then had befriended the painter, Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904) who belonged to the circle around Theophile Gautier and Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1827-1867) and La Farge also had met the same people through his cousin, the journalist Paul de Saint-Victor. (McMullen, 1973, pp.66-79) Henry Adams has recently pointed out that La Farge, according to his own testimony, acquired his first Japanese prints in 1856. (Adams, 1984, p.121) Felix Bracquemond is said to have seen a copy of Hokusai's Manga in August Delâtre's atelier in the same year and to have acquired this in 1858. Clearly Japanese prints were available in the French capital in 1856, and it seems likely that La Farge and Whistler owed their introduction to the Japan enthusiasts, Gautier and Baudelaire. The latter is recorded to have been one of the first collectors of ukiyo-e in Paris and to have given some of these to his best friends in 1861. Among whom Bracquemond, Fantin-Latour and Whistler may be mentioned. (Yamada, 1980, pp.83-103)

Champfleury, in a retrospective article on La Mode Japonaiserie published in 1868, remembered the fashion to have been initiated some ten years previously by a French poet, and an American painter who had his atelier in London.⁴¹ This could only have referred to Baudelaire and Whistler, who are known to have maintained contact when the latter moved to London in 1859. Whistler and La Farge had certainly been introduced to Japanese art through Gautier and Baudelaire, prior to their visit to Manchester in 1857. Having witnessed the revival of print-making in Paris at the time, the two artists undoubtedly studied exhibits in the print department of the Art-Treasures of Great Britain Exhibition, and they would

not have missed the colourful Japanese woodblock prints praised in the catalogue and in the public press at the time. Significantly, La Farge soon after decided to become an artist (in 1859) and the Japanese influence immediately began to appear in his work, and Whistler on his return to Paris began to frequent August Delâtre's print shop, where Bracquemond in 1856 had seen a set of Hokusai's Manga. At this time, Delâtre is known to have prepared the printing of Adalbert de Beaumont and Eugene Collinot's Récueil de Dessins pour L'art et L'Industrie, which was released in two volumes in 1859, and indeed contained a series of accurate facsimile lithographs from Hokusai's Manga and from an album by Masayoshi. Clearly Delâtre had held back the prints for use in this publication, and they were only acquired by Bracquemond late in the year 1858.

The implications of the discovery of Japanese prints by these Japonism artists are complex, but we can suggest that Bracquemond, La Farge, and possibly Whistler had seen ukiyo-e in Paris in 1856, and that they certainly had encountered the collection exhibited in Manchester in 1857. It is probably no coincidence that Whistler in 1858 had his first etchings 'Douze eaux-fortes d'après nature' the so-called 'French Set' printed by August Delâtre, and that a certain Japanese touch is visible in these, such as for example 'En Plein Soleil', showing a girl by the river bank under a parasol, in the Japanese manner. His prolific work in this medium was further to stimulate the printmaking revival in England, France and the U.S.A. during the 1860s and 1870s. Toshio Watanabe has pointed out that some of Whistler's first London-pictures such as 'Billingsgate' (1859), 'The Millbank' (1861) and 'Westminster Bridge in Progress' (1861) were influenced by Hokusai and Hiroshige. (Watanabe, 1984, p.235) Henry Adams has also recently presented evidence to support the similarity between La Farge's 'Roses in a Tray' (1861) and Whistler's 'The White Girl' (1861) in which the use of roses and the white curtain background is indeed striking.

La Farge's motif of roses in a Japanese lacquer tray, however, must be counted the first Japonism painting proper, and it is worth noting that this was executed on a Japanese lacquer panel, the design of chrysanthemum and butterfly being visible on the back. (Adams, 1984, p.123)

Recent speculation concerning the discovery of Japanese prints in Paris, has been sceptical about the Bracquemond story (Johnson, 1982, pp.343-45) but Jean-Paul Bouillon has brought ample evidence for influences from Hokusai and Hiroshige in Bracquemond's early prints such as 'L'Etang' (1855-1860), 'Le Canard' (1856) and 'Les Canards l'ont bien passée' (1856), which indeed can be compared to the Hokusai facsimile included in Beaumont's and Collinot's 'Recueil' etc. (Yamada, (ed.) 1980, pp.83-103) Whistler during his visits to Delâtre's atelier in 1858 must have admired these Japanese prints as well as the sumptuous printing of the 'Recueil', which aspired to rival Owen Jones' 'Grammar of Ornament', and at the time indeed became just as famous in artistic circles in Europe. Dresser, who had contributed a plate to Jones' Grammar was certainly aware of its French counterpart, and we find Hokusai prints lifted directly from the 'Recueil' included as illustrations in his Japan, its Architecture and Art manufactures (1882). These may well have been taken from a well-used copy of 'Receuil' in the Minton & Co archives, for whom Dresser is known to have supplied Japan influenced designs for porcelain during the 1860s. (figs. 11 & 12)

I have dealt at length with the discovery of Japanese prints by Western artists in order to clarify the issues debated by various scholars, and to put these in context with the entirely neglected appearance of Japanese prints at 'The Art Treasures of Great Britain Exhibition' in Manchester in 1857. The first recorded impact of Japanese prints on European textiles has been discovered by Barbara Morris and Elisabeth Aslin as having taken place in Manchester the following year, but they have

failed to connect Daniel Lee & Co's production with the ukiyo-e exhibited at the exhibition (Aslin, 1969, p.80). The Universal Decorator Magazine in 1858 also devoted an article exclusively to 'Japanese Art' which is one of the first pieces known to have appeared in the press. The impetus may well have come from the Japanese collection shown in Manchester in 1857. The writer referred to Francis Hawks' publication released in 1856, and described what he called a 'child's primer' which clearly must have been a copy of Hokusai's Manga.⁴² Illustrations from the Manga which was included in so many of the first publications on Japan released during the 1850s, must have seemed synonymous with Japanese art to the general public. Facsimile reproductions were admired as the next best thing to the prototypes and Hokusai's popularity persisted throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. Dresser had certainly become acquainted with these prints in adulterated form as illustrations in the Japan literature he mentioned in 1863, and catalogues of museums and exhibitions visited by Dresser during the 1850s reveal that a wide variety of Japanese art was accessible for studies to 'the earnest student of Oriental art'. This on the whole has been neglected by scholars dealing with the subject, and further research undoubtedly could bring new light on this early phase of Japonism.

A number of auction sales of Japanese art for instance have been entirely overlooked, notably those which took place prior to the 1862 exhibition. The largest and most important of these was undoubtedly the sale of Robert Fortune's 'Choice Collection of Ancient Porcelain Enamels, and Lacquer Work, procured during his visit to China and Japan' which was undertaken by Christie's on 31 March 1861.⁴³ This released the largest amount of Japanese art ever offered on the market in London and Dresser, who acknowledged the quality of Japanese art later in the same year, may well have been aware of the sale which attracted all the main London

dealers.

Amongst the buyers are mentioned William Hewitt & Co, Farmer & Rogers who in 1863 employed Dresser's friend Arthur Lasenby Liberty as their manager, and significantly Murray Marks. Liberty and Marks became the chief London dealers in Japanese art during the 1860s and 1870s, and the majority of the first Japan enthusiasts remembered having made some of their first purchases at the rival houses. They were equally prominent buyers at Christie's sale of 'Oriental Porcelain, Bronzes, Ornaments, and Japan lacquer formed by Edwin Wadham Esq., during 17 years residence in China and Japan' in 1862, and they made substantial purchases at the post-exhibition sale of 'The Splendid Collection of Chinese and Japanese Works of Art Contributed to the International Exhibition by Messrs. Remi Schmidt & Co'.⁴⁴

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40. Christie's Auction Catalogue, 18 December 1884, lot no.563.
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CHAPTER III

JAPAN AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN LONDON IN 1862AND DRESSER'S DESIGNS AND PUBLICATIONS**JAPAN AT THE 1862 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION**

The collection which had been exhibited with Sir Rutherford Alcock's display amounted to 156 sale-items of predominantly Japanese origin, and the thirty three pieces of enamel vessels with turquoise ground-colour and rich patterns attracted particular attention due to their extreme rarity. Japanese enamels had never previously been exhibited in Europe, and their diaper borders as well as the peony and lotus scrolls and ornaments became tremendously influential for French and English designers of porcelain and metalware during the 1860s. The majority of the lotus or flower ornaments, so called 'anthemions', illustrated in Dresser's first article on 'Japanese Ornamentation' were copied from enamel patterns, some of which are recognisable in the illustration of Japanese enamels in James Waring's Masterpieces of The International Exhibition. (figs. 13 & 14B) It seems likely that Dresser would have acquired some of the enamel-vessels at the post-exhibition sale, but this is difficult to verify as only dealers were annotated in the Christie-catalogue. Alcock, however, does not appear to have sold his vast collection publicly, but both Dresser and Leighton made purchases and received presents from him at the close of the exhibition. When lecturing on 'The Art Manufactures of Japan' for The Royal Society of Arts on 30 December 1878, Dresser expressed his gratitude to Alcock.

In 1862 he kindly permitted me to make sketches of whatever he possessed and I made about eighty drawings, such as they were, in the Exhibition, from the various articles which he had brought over, and at the close of the Exhibition I became the possessor of a fair selection of the objects which formed his interesting collection, and to the treasures which I thus became possessed of I have almost constantly been adding, till now my house is rather a museum than a comfortable abode for civilised beings. Feeling the beauty of these objects I have done what I could to encourage their introduction into this country. (1878, p.177)

Dresser's Japonism appears to have been fully developed by the time of the 1862 Exhibition, and it is possible that the eighty drawings mentioned are included in the 145 drawings of Japanese porcelain acquired by the V & A from Dresser's widow in 1905.¹

Descriptions in the catalogue of the Alcock collection, however, are too general for speculations on identifiable pieces. Some of the objects were fortunately described more thoroughly by Dresser, Leighton and Burges, and a number of these were also acquired by other individuals and museums. Waring's publication provided coloured lithographs of bronzes and lacquer-work exhibited in addition to the mentioned plate of enamel vessels. He remarked that many of the lacquer items were adorned with 'geometrical patterns, irregularly applied'. The bronzes depicted were described as 'All classes of design, from purely conventional to the perfectly realistic, and pervaded by a strong sense of grotesque fun'. Waring finally hinted at the educational value of the Japanese pottery included: 'In fact so great a variety, and all so good, both in design, colour, execution, and ingenuity, that our manufacturers would have derived great advantage from a close study of them'. (Waring 1863, IIV pp.248-282) (fig.14A)

This strong expression of the appeal of Japonism accorded with that expressed by Dresser and other writers on the exhibition, and Alcock's Japan stand received tremendous public acclaim. Dresser certainly expressed the consensus of opinion in 1863 when he stated that 'The chief idea which we, and our neighbours also, have of Japanese art, has been derived from the works of Japan shown in the recent International Exhibition, especially from those collected by Sir R. Alcock'. (1863, p.308)

The Japanese section prepared by Alcock in 1862 was certainly the most influential event in the history of Japanese art in the West, and among the objects sent from Japan are mentioned, 238 specimens of 'Lacquer Ware, Inlaid Wood and Lacquer Mixed, Lacquer of other materials such as Ivory,

Shells, and Tortoiseshell etc.', 46 items of 'Straw and Basket Works, 85 Specimens of China, Porcelain, and Pottery', 152 'Bronzes and all work of Metals', 19 items of 'Textile-fabrics, Silk Capes, Silk and Satins, Tapestry, Printed Cottons, Articles of Clothing, made from the bark of tree', 26 'Works of Art, - Carvings on Ivory, Wood, and Bamboo, - Paintings, Illustrated Works, - Lithochrome, - Prints, - Models', and 30 numbered 'Educational Works and Appliances, - Books of Science, - Copies of European Models and Instruments, - Toys etc.' A 'Miscellaneous' department contained objects contributed by other individual collectors such as Remi & Schmidt & Co, Captain Vyse, H.M. Consul of Yokohama who lent 'a pair of large screens once the property of the Tycoon', - Mrs. Crawford, C. Copeland, Mr. Neave and Dr. A. Barton who all supplied specimens of lacquer and porcelain, - and Mr. McDonald whose collection of 'specimens of wall-paper from Japan' was mentioned by Dresser in his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation'.² An album of Japanese wall-papers in the V & A, annotated Sir Rutherford Alcock's album of wall-papers from the 1862 Exhibition', displays motifs illustrated by Dresser in his articles.³ (fig.15A & B)

Lord J. Hay, who was probably also the Lord James Drummond Hay who exhibited Japanese objects in Edinburgh in 1856, is recorded as having contributed a 'Very valuable gold-lacquer luncheon-box' and some specimens of raw silk samples that were of paramount interest to British merchants which earned him a medal from the Commissioners' jury. Medals were also received by Alcock for 'The fine Japanese bronzes displayed by him', and by Remi Schmidt & Co for 'The large bronze piece exhibited by them.'⁴

An overall impression of the Japanese stand at the 1862 exhibition can be gained from the full-page illustration provided by The Illustrated London News on 20 September 1862. (fig.16) as well as from the previously mentioned publication by Waring, but few of the actual objects can be traced. The V & A made purchases from the post-exhibition sale, but only

one item has been preserved in the collection, a large Owari porcelain jar with raised decoration of waves and cranes in white on blue ground.⁵

(fig.17) The pattern which is frequently met with in Japanese art, became tremendously popular in Britain, and inspired a number of Japonism designs executed by Dresser and other artists. This jar remains one of the first documented sources of inspiration for Japonism in Britain. (fig.18)

Alcock's large scale collection presented a quantity of products never previously seen in Britain, and it attracted a vast number of visitors. From this time onwards Japan was represented at the major exhibitions in the West, the Japanese themselves eventually taking an active part in marketing their products. All they were prepared to contribute in 1862 were some specimens of plain Japanese papers and some timber proofs, but they were certainly not entirely disinterested in the venture, for a Japanese diplomatic mission arrived in London and participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition. This was called the 'Takeuchi Mission' after the leading Japanese Official, and Toshio Watanabe has provided evidence to show that a number of similar missions visited the West. The first being the 'Mizuno Mission' to America in 1858 and 1860 and then, in order of sequence, the 'Takeuchi Mission' to London in 1862, which also visited France, Holland, Prussia, Russia and Portugal, and other missions to France in 1864, to England and France in 1865, and to Russia via Europe in 1866. Finally the famous 'Iwakura Mission' of the new regime visited France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Italy and England in 1867-68. (Watanabe, 1984, pp.83-86) The missions were widely commented on in the Western press, and they certainly contributed to the enrichment of the exotic imagery of Japan. The visitors to the International Exhibition in 1862 were pictured in all their Samurai splendour in The Illustrated London News whose artist in Japan since 1859 had been Charles Wirgman (1832-1891) who also provided a series of 'Views of Japan' which excited

the reading public. A 'Grand Panorama of Japan' shown at the Royal Polytechnic Institution, contrived to complete the picture of Japan presented in London during the exhibition year. (Altick, 1978, p.481)

THE FIRST ARTISTIC RESPONSE TO JAPANESE ART IN BRITAIN

It was in 1862 that Dresser and other Oriental enthusiasts were able to obtain information about Japan and examine Japanese art on a grand scale. This created a particularly receptive milieu among artists in Britain and it appears that they were ready to relate their comments much more to contemporary Western art and design than Alcock and other travellers had been. Significantly most of them were positively predisposed from prior opportunities of seeing Japanese art. The architect William Burges, in his extensive review of the Japan stand in The Gentleman's Magazine in 1862, for instance underlined that

Since Lord Elgin's visit (1858), numerous articles of Japanese workmanship have come to this country, and been eagerly bought up, but the present Exhibition gives the first opportunity of seeing them collected together in any quantity.' (Burges, 1862, pp.243-254)

We know that George Audsley and James Bowes also began collecting Japanese art in 1858, and Lord Elgin and other travellers to Japan evidently made a limited range of samples available to the first Japan enthusiasts in the West.

William Burges was regarded as the most brilliant architect-designer of his generation working in the English Gothic or Medieval Revival style, and his notebooks preserved in the RIBA, reveal that he had copied details from Hokusai's Manga as early as about 1860-61.⁶ In 1858 he had befriended the painter and designer E.J. Poynter (1836-1919), who had studied in Paris from 1855 until 1858, and been part of the group collected around James M. Whistler. (McMullen, 1973, pp.63, 123) It is quite likely that Burges's introduction to Hokusai stemmed from Poynter, who in 1858 became his assistant and helped him to decorate a number of furniture creations in the

medieval painted style, but it was not until after the 1862 Exhibition that more recognisably Japanese motifs such as butterflies and crest-patterns were incorporated in Burges' furniture and in his interiors for Cardiff Castle (1868-1881) and Tower House (1875-78). Burges's biographer, J. Mordaunt Crook, and Toshio Watanabe have brought evidence for the fact that he created one of the first Japonism designs in Britain, - the famous Elephant Inkstand, which is mentioned in Burges's Abstract of Diaries from 1862-63, and which was made of a Chinese bronze elephant topped with a porcelain and cloisonné ink-holder crowned by a Japanese ivory netsuke. (Crook, cat. 1981, p.115) Watanabe in particular has made a point of the fact that Burges already in 1858 had created decanters topped with similar Chinese jade animals and that 'The Elephant inkstand therefore shows us the Japanese art enriching an already established type which combined the Oriental with the appearance of the medieval'. (Watanabe, 1984, pp.170-171) It was this notion which inspired Burges's enthusiastic comments on the Japan stand in 1862:

I hope I have said enough to shew the student of our reviving arts of the thirteenth century, that an hour or even a day or two, spent in the Japanese department will by no means be lost time, for these hitherto unknown barbarians appear not only to know all that the Middle Ages knew, but in some respects are beyond them and us as well. (p.224)

Dresser, as we have seen had expressed similar views when classifying Japanese ornamentation in relation to other Oriental styles and to the Early English or Medieval in his lecture in 1861. The affinity between Japanese and Medieval Art was likewise noted by other artists commenting on the 1862 exhibition, and the general feudalistic society of Japan at the time contributed to the endorsement of this analogy. Such metaphors can also be traced in the language and representations of the travellers, who reinforced the attractive features of Japan by simplified romanticisations drawing upon Europe or the Bible.

Burges obtained much of his general information on Japan from Oliphant's Narrative etc. (1859), which he frequently quoted, and he particularly favoured the metal-work, lacquer and papers exhibited in 1862. His review was clearly governed by his own artistic preoccupations and dealt at length with the colourful inlays and metal-hinges in Japanese furniture. In recommending a lacquer box he suggested the educational value of its decoration, which in turn influenced his own furniture-designs and the entire Japonism movement in Britain:

It is singular that the artist, in his horror of regularity, has actually made one side of the heart and one corner of the fan to go over the edge and round on to the sides of the box. One can imagine how the whole School of Design would call out if one of its pupils attempted so audacious a departure from European precedent, but somehow it looks all right, and the eye is quite satisfied. (p.250)

Burges, however, was not very inquisitive about the characteristics and underlying criteria of Japanese art, and it was left to Dresser and Leighton in their lectures and articles released in 1863, to attempt to describe Japanese art on its own terms. Dresser was certainly aware of Burges's review, for he is recorded as having chaired the meeting of The Architectural Association on the occasion of Dresser giving his lecture on 'The Prevailing Ornament of China and Japan' in 1863. Burges was clearly regarded an authority on the topic by then, and had certainly on prior meetings discussed this with Dresser, who in his publication The Development of Ornamental Art in The International Exhibition of 1862 (London, 1862) echoed Burges's notion of the anticipated Japanese influence on British furniture:

Nearer the east end of the building, we have, in a similar position, three ebony chairs with red seats, by Messrs, A.F. Bornemann and Co. of Bath. They are of a quaint and unique Japanese character, yet manifest one very pleasing feature in the side supports of the back rising from the sides of the chair, and slanting upwards, instead of being an upward continuation of the back legs; but this is not the only merit, for the back of the rail is also supported by a central passage, which rises from the centre of the back of the seat. Although there is a quaint elegance about these chairs, and the structural peculiarity might

advantageously be applied in a simple form to furniture of a more ordinary character. (p.90)

DRESSER AND THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN 1862

Dresser appears to have been the only commentator on Japanese art at the time, who seriously considered its practical adaptation to Western aesthetics and needs. In pointing to this early phase of Japonism in furniture design he anticipated a style which Edward Godwin subsequently named the 'Anglo-Japanese'. (Godwin, 1877) This indeed was characterised by the ebonised finish and by the 'quaint and unique Japanese character' of side, leg and back supports which often displayed a play with solid and void, regular and irregular seen in Japanese lacquer furniture. Although unlike Japanese prototypes, this furniture showed features which originated from studies of Japanese étagères, cabinets, lattice panels, screens and grille walls, and the above mentioned chairs may well have been designed by Godwin or even by Dresser, both of whom were active as designers at the time, and are known to have designed chairs of similar appearance. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) Philip Webb, (1831-1915), and J.P. Seddon (1827-1906) are also recorded as having designed ebonised furniture of a somewhat Japanese appearance for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co's stand of the 1862 Exhibition, but these have all been identified. (Aslin, 1986, no.67) (fig.19)

Dresser's article on The Art of Decorative Design published in 1862 stated that he 'at special request' had 'furnished many designs to the manufacturers to be wrought for the forth coming Exhibition - perhaps as many as any individual'. (1862, p.185) Knowing that he frequently commented on his own designs without giving their provenance, it is possible that Dresser had in fact designed the ebonised chairs of a 'quaint and unique Japanese character', and a design included in his article on 'Art Furniture' published in The Technical Educator in 1870 indeed correspond

to this description. Dresser in Principles referred to it as 'a chair of my own designing , in which I have sought to give strength to the back by connecting its upper portion with a strong cross-rail of the frame'. (1873, p.55) (Fig.20) Regrettably no circumstantial evidence can connect this Dresser chair with the 1862 exhibition, and additional furniture designs of his from this early period have not survived. Similar furniture however, was subsequently produced by Dresser for Bushloe House in 1879-1880, and for the Art Furnishers Alliance between 1880-1883, much of which have a 'Japanese character' and may have been based on the chairs noted by Dresser in 1862. (figs.21)

The hypothetical notion of unattributed Dresser designs, referred to in his publication of 1862, has been further strengthened by the location of a number of Minton & Co creations executed for the exhibition, which by closer examination appear to concur with drawings in the Dresser sketch books in the Ipswich Museum, and with the vases referred to by Dresser in

The Development of Ornamental Art etc:

Messrs. Minton & Co, in their large enclosure, have some very excellent works. In the north-west corner there are some well-managed plates, the centres being plain, and the borders in many instances well treated. On the shelf level with the eye in this corner there are two very small bottle like vases, consisting of a neck rising from a flattened body beneath the local colour being pink, these are worthy of marked attention, as each is surrounded by a simple belt of fine ornament. In the north-east corner there are also some excellent plates: and on the shelf level with the eye there are two very fine Persian vases, with the larger forms in blue, and the smaller in two golds, and dull red. On the large shelf there is a low three-handled vase surrounded by a broad belt, at the upper portion, of ornament of a somewhat medieval and somewhat Persian character, which is very excellent; and two small elongated vases enriched with Chinese or Japanese ornament in white on a strong cream ground, bordered with pink. (p.146)

Dresser again alluded to the influence of Japanese art, and he was clearly aware of its artistic potential even at this early stage. Having come across an album with drawings of Minton & Co, 1862 exhibition samples, it became evident that production numbers 688 and 743 agreed with the two

elongated vases described and together with other designs in the album could be attributed to Dresser. (figs. 22) We have no other proof of Dresser's connections with Minton at the time, but his name occurred as 'Dresser's border' and 'Dresser design' in the Company's Estimate books for 1867, and clearly these were household expressions at the factory by then.⁷

The Dresser designs included in the 1862 exhibition album at Minton's indeed stand out as entirely original in comparison with other examples, and the printed catalogue prepared by Minton for the exhibition provided coinciding evidence for production numbers, decoration and measurements of the designs.⁸ Both the shape and the decoration of 688 and 743 in particular were evidently derived from Chinese or Japanese vases, and the catalogue confirmed that they were executed with a cream ground-colour, but that other varieties in pink and in red were exhibited as well. The decorations occurring on shape 743, both seem to be derived from Japanese prototypes. One incorporated two different borders of key and cusp-forms, which was utilised by Dresser in a number of his subsequent Minton-designs, and the other includes lotus scrolls and foliage ornaments resembling those illustrated in Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design. Shape no 688 was decorated with a powerful dragon-scroll border with circular ornaments between the dragon-heads. This particular decoration was derived from a Chinese drinking vessel in the S. Ken. Museum which Dresser also described and illustrated in his The Art of Decorative Design. (fig.23) Dragon-scrolls became one of Dresser's most popular motifs and a unification of the decorative elements in shape no.688 and 743, occurred in another Minton-vase from the time, shape no. 1073, which was clearly based on inspiration from the East and incorporated the key and cusp borders as well as the dragon motif lifted almost directly from the illustration in Dresser's book. (fig.24)

Precedence for another five Dresser designs amongst the 1862 Minton-

drawings, can be found in the Dresser sketch-book. This includes a sheet of about fourteen different borders and fret-patterns that were utilised in these designs. A pencil-drawing of Minton shape no.1017 itself occurred in the sketch-book annotated '1862 Exhibition' and 'Angular treatment of the herb-robert, semi-conventional, rather natural, light shade, no shadows'.⁹ (figs.25 & 26A & B) A series of other match-pots shape no.943 also incorporated borders and swastika patterns included in the sketch-book sheet. (fig.27) The match-pot shape was evidently based on Chinese or Japanese pencil-pots. Vase no.610 also incorporated three different borders from the same sketch-book and a jewelled pattern on turquoise ground consisting of cusped lines recommended and illustrated by Dresser in The Art of Decorative Design (pp.55-56) The shape itself was taken from a Japanese vase illustrated in Joseph Marryatt's History of Pottery and Porcelain (1857, fig.139) (fig.28), and the jewel or enamelling effect of the decoration constituted the first so called 'cloisonné ware' produced by Minton. This technique is said to have been invented by Eugene Collinot in Paris in 1861, (Jacquemart, 1861, p.507) and clearly Dresser's creation for Minton was almost simultaneous. Dresser's cloisonné porcelain design, inspired by Chinese and Japanese prototypes was to become increasingly popular during the 1860s and 1870s. Minton's tulip-vase, shape no.935, also included in the exhibition album incorporated another border from the Dresser sketch-book and the bamboo design is reminiscent of Chinese and Japanese vases. Dresser's bold patterns however, are entirely original, and none of the designs discussed can be said to be imitative. (fig.29) Two other bamboo designs executed at Minton's at the time, although not exhibited in 1862, are equally inventive. They are evidently based on Chinese or Japanese bamboo objects. The jug, shape no.618, incorporates the same pierced swastika pattern identical to that in matchpot 943, and the angular handle and general shape is similar to jugs designed by Dresser for

Elkington & Co later in his career. The tea-pot design, shape no.619, novel as it is for its time, can also be seen as a prototype for similar electroplate or silver teapots subsequently designed by Dresser.(fig.30) (see also fig.44)

The Dresser designs in the Minton exhibition album, stand out as bold and inventive compared to the imitative historicism that characterise their production at the time, and his creations clearly manifest a unification of his studies of 'Artistic Botany' and Oriental art undertaken at the School of Design. The 'conventional' and 'angular' treatment of botanical motifs, which was annotated the drawing for Minton's matchpot shape no.1017, indeed distinguished the rest of Dresser's designs for the 1862 exhibition, and the shapes as well as ornamental devices such as the dragon-scrolls, swastika patterns, cuspforms, key-borders, and other ornaments were evidently taken from Oriental prototypes. Dresser's first designs for Minton & Co and his simultaneous lectures and publications on The Art of Decorative Design indeed presented the first 'vue d'ensemble' of the policy of the School of Design after its reformation. The Cole Group's first principle, that of 'wedding science with art' was most successfully demonstrated by Dresser, and he managed to prove that certain scientific laws in plants had given rise to some of the 'most exalted' ideal ornaments and forms in various historical styles. Dresser's classification of ornaments, was based on the consideration of 'the anthemion' or floral ornament, but swastika patterns, frets, cusps and key ornaments were also included in Dresser's discussion, as well as in his first designs for Minton & Co.

DRESSER'S THE ART OF DECORATIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORNAMENTAL ART AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

The Art of Decorative Design, represented the most palpable unification of Dresser's artistic and scientific education, and was first

delivered as lectures for The Royal Society of Arts under the same title the 5 and 12 December 1861. Dresser's letter to the Society dated 9 October 1861 listed the following topics:

'The Decorative Art, - The true relation of plants to ornament, - Grades in decorative art, - The affinities of the aesthetic arts, music, ornament &c., - Analysis of Ornamental forms, - Principles common to all ornament, - The Laws in conformity with which plants grow are the laws of ornament, - A parallel between plants and ornament, Curves, - The Union of straight lines with curves, - Proportion, - Repetition or series, - Alternation, - Symmetry, - Adaptation, - Other and minor considerations, - The power of Ornament to express feelings and ideas, - Ornament as modified of position, - Horizontal and vertical ornaments, - Varied classes of patterns; Field patterns, Running patterns, Powderings, Diapers &c, - Colour, - Harmonies, - Contrasts, - The Laws which govern application of colour to ornament.'

Only the last part on colour was omitted from The Art of Decorative Design, but it was included in The Development of Ornamental Art at The International Exhibition published later in the same year.

The subjects clearly accord with those taught by Dresser's tutors at the School of Design, but the preface of his book regretted however, that;

'Although studying under men of undoubted talent and kindness, these teachers did not at the time appear to recognise the existence of such general principles in Ornament as could be explained to the student after study and research which occupied a period of 15 years.'

Nevertheless he recommended Richard Redgrave's Report on Design and Owen Jones' Grammar of Ornament as 'works of great value' to the student, and he frequently quoted these authorities as well as other teachers at the School. It appears that it was the capacity to synthetise and unite the diverse ideas manifested in their principles which Dresser felt was lacking among his tutors, and his publication thus aspired to remedy this.

The first two chapters of Dresser's book analysed 'The Nature and Character of Ornament' and 'The Ministrations of Plants to Ornament' and advocated the utilitarian idea of the decorative arts. This as we know had been taught at the School of Design long before the functional tradition in Western art, and the most original doctrine launched by Dresser was that

'Ornament is that which, superadded to utility, renders the object more acceptable through bestowing upon it an amount of beauty that it would not otherwise possess', but that 'The application of Ornaments to objects cannot be said to be absolutely necessary'. (p.1) This devaluation of ornamental values was probably the most revolutionary idea presented by Dresser, and although sensitive to the beauty of ornaments, he later proclaimed that 'A vessel must be constructed but when formed need not of necessity be ornamented.' (Dresser, 1873, p.138)

This notion served to liberate Dresser from the dominance of ornamental and imitative historicism prevalent in his teachers' creations, and it appears that a scientific study of botany adapted to the arts acted as a basic inspiration to his doctrines:

Seeing the possibility of clothing an idea in form, the plentitude of suggestions afforded by plants to the ornamentist is impressive, for every flower not only presents to us a shape, but also affords an idea which may be embodied in conventional forms, and herein rests the fullness of the ministrations of plants to ornament. (p.33)

Dresser's studies of the morphology of plants had led him to the idea that plants could 'furnish the ornamentist with abstract forms' (p.25), from which he deduced both shapes and ornaments that were free from historical or naturalistic relativity, and in conventional form expressed the morphological laws of organic matter.

We have seen that the idea of the abstract had been discussed in Dyce's Drawing-book for The School of Design and by other teachers at the School, but these pioneers failed to recognise the perpetual duality between the drive toward the abstract and the naturalistic creation. Dresser however, considered abstraction and geometric formalism a necessary antithesis to naturalism, and his primary element was not the natural model but the laws he abstracted from it;

The influence of matter in motion upon matter, whether moving or fixed is at all times worthy of study, for by observing the

aspects of matter when acted upon by various influences, and diligently inquiring into the nature of the mental conception of facts and occurrences, it will be found possible to express feelings and ideas by ornaments without the aid of symbolic forms. (p.177)

Dresser above all stressed 'The Power of Ornament to express feelings or ideas'.(p.177) He argued that the naturalistic and allegorical symbolism dear to all Victorians could more successfully be embodied in abstracted forms, similar to the anthemion ornaments illustrated in his plate no. IX. This led Dresser to rigid lines, to inert crystalline forms and delineated sections in which he could find repose from the reinterpretation of styles prevalent at the time, and with which he, in his own words, could 'express the sentiments of the age in which it had originated' and a 'New scheme of ornamentation'. (p.14) He was one of the first theorists who detected that the classical and historical precedence had outlived itself in the wake of mechanical and scientific progression. As an alternative he drew attention to alien and so called primitive cultures like the Indian and the Japanese, whose ornamental volition was primarily directed toward the abstract and conventionalised.

In the search for a principle of order and classification that could be applied to the decorative arts, Dresser analysed ornamental patterns down to their simplest units, and his third chapter on 'Grades in the Decorative Art' discussed morphological methods utilised in the classification of ornaments launched in his lectures in 1861. This point of departure constituted a severe attack on the naturalist school, and he proclaimed that 'If mere imitation is ornamentation, the ornamentist must at once give place to the photographer' and consequently 'Natural adaptations are the lowest form of ornament' (pp.34-37)

By placing applied art in relation to the technological discoveries of the age, Dresser, stated that 'Many brutes can imitate but only few can create' (p.40), and the next step of ornamentation considered was the

'conventional treatment of natural forms'.(p.37) Still following an ascending series he classified 'the embodying in form of a mental idea which has been suggested by nature, and yet the form neither represents any actually existing object nor any imitation of nature', (p.39) and finally 'the Purley Ideal ornament', which was the most exalted: 'It being wholly a creation of the soul; it is utterly an embodiment of mind in form, or an offspring of the inner man, and its origin, and nature give to it its elevated character'. (p.39)

Having based the classification of ornaments on the amount of mental power expressed in its features, Dresser suggested the examples previously referred to:

Thus we have as examples of the first, most exalted grade of ornament the Greek, the Moorish, the Early English, much of the Indian, and many features of the Japanese, and some parts of the Egyptian and Renaissance. In the second class, following a descending series, we may instance much of the Egyptian and Chinese, and a few features in the Greek and Japanese. In the third a great portion of the middle-age work, especially the later Gothic, and many features of the Chinese or Indian: and in the fourth or last class, much of the Pompeian and our modern floral patterns. (p.40)

Clearly the same part of decoration could by two features illustrate two grades, and Dresser exemplified this by referring to the modern naturalistic floral patterns whose composition belonged to the fourth class but whose colouring also could belong to the first or second class in view. We have already stated that Dresser's doctrines owed much to the teachings of his tutors, Octavius Hudson and Gottfried Semper. Semper's similar classification of styles was only published in 1860-63 in Der Stil in der Technischen und Tecktonischen Künsten, at about the time Dresser released his lectures and publication. Dresser's representation was evidently unassuming compared to Semper's thorough examination, but his classification found a receptive public, particularly following the 1862 International exhibition, which provided good feed-back for many of his ideas.

The desire to go back to the origin of nature and art, had led Semper

to what he called the 'Urform' and Dresser to the 'Purely Ideal Form', from which they deduced design principles that were common to all cultures. Dresser elaborated on these doctrines in his fourth and fifth chapters entitled 'Analysis of Ornamental Forms' and 'The Affinity of the Aesthetic Arts, Music, Ornament, etc.'

Dresser was probably influenced by Charles Baudelaire's famous notion of an affinity between colour, music and mathematics, (Le Fleurs du Mal, Paris 1857) and his most original contribution to the discussion on science and art that 'Harmonious chords in music, when translated into form, furnish examples of beautiful proportion'. The urge for the ideal and abstracted form was summed up in the words, 'The Zoologist and botanist likewise strive to observe the unit, out of which all vital forms are wrought, and to discover the "Ultima Thule" of life'. (pp.48-49) Clearly this view was to inspire a gradual rehabilitation of art as a formal organism, which only found its full expression in our century. Significantly Japanese and other Oriental styles, which were free from traditional precedence in Europe, explicitly contributed to the reinterpretation of art which until then had been seen purely within a classical context.

The chapter on 'Analysis of Ornamental Forms' was illustrated with botanical examples, and he stressed that 'The combination of forms cannot be carried on successfully unless the forms themselves are understood and the conditions of the association ascertained'. (p.50) This led to the conclusion that a geometrical plan of arrangement occurred in plants and ornaments alike, and Dresser thus deduced his principles of order, repetition, curves, proportion, alternation, and adaptation, which were considered in separate chapters, and constituted the remainder of his book.

Order, according to Dresser, prevailed in all the best ornaments of every age, and this decorative scheme was founded upon a geometric basis, (p.70) which most clearly could be seen in the laws of repetition, in

radiation, elongation, or a variety of the two. He again alluded to previously mentioned 'anthemion' patterns, whose repetition of identical leaves, was considered 'the most exalted grade of ornament' (p.91) and that these offered infinite possibilities for variety of construction. (fig. 3B) Curves were subjected to an equally analytical examination and Dresser found that the beauty of the curve increased with the complexity and subtlety of its origin. His curvilinear doctrines were finally summed up in the demand for 'Power' in design. This was exemplified with an analogy to the 'Line of Life' in nature, which he had observed in young plants in the spring and in tropical vegetation, 'Where the leaves are of colossal size and the vitality of the plants at its maximum'. (p.184) His doctrines on Proportion evolved from the notion that 'proportions, like the curves must be of a subtle nature', (p.102) and Alteration was explained as a principle which could be observed in the alternate arrangement of petals or leaves of the flower, and which similarly prevailed in ornament as a natural desire for variation of its units. (p.107-109) Particularly advanced for the time were Dresser's comments regarding the designer's materials which he emphasised were susceptible to a certain fashioning: 'This will reveal to us the folly of attempting the imitation of one material with another.' (p.137) The adaptation of ornaments to articles of utility was analysed likewise, and he particularly objected to ornaments that obtruded from the surface and 'sharp edges that could cause injury to the user.' Accordingly walls should be flat, but relief paper decorations could be tolerated in the parts with which the body was in no contact. Low relief papers produced by the firm Scott, Cuthbertson and Co. of Chelsea were particularly recommended. Dresser objected most strongly to the carpets with naturalistic depictions of flowers or landscapes, which were so popular at the middle of the century, and the abundance of these decorations in British design had appalled the Cole Group and the Pre-

Raphaelite Brotherhood alike. It is significant that the most talented designers who emerged from the respective groups, Christopher Dresser and William Morris, (1834-1896) simultaneously put forward their programmes for a revolution of English design.

Their chief preoccupations were frequently the same, particularly with regard to adapting ornaments and objects to their surroundings, which had been so neglected in early Victorian Britain. Morris, when attempting to decorate his house in 1859 found that all the decorative arts were in a state of complete degradation, and consequently set about designing himself. This led to the foundation of the firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in 1861, which produced alternative furniture, tiles, glass-paintings, embroideries, textiles and wallpapers, but it was not until later that Morris presented his views to the general public. He first lectured on decorative art in 1877, fully fifteen years after Dresser had lectured and published extensively on the topic, and it is tempting to suggest that Morris, although never acknowledging Dresser, in fact derived many of his ideas from the latter. They both preached the gospel of art for the masses, but Morris could never match Dresser's tremendous output of designs, for mass production, and his more exclusive arts and crafts products initially reached only a small circle. Morris, following his friend John Ruskin, in fact was rather sceptical about the machines, but Dresser in The Art of Decorative Design boldly asserted that the arts must reflect the knowledge of the age, and 'teach us the perfection of machinery and the greatness of our mechanical skill, and they will also tell in future ages, of the vastness of our power.' (p.169) Where Morris looked to the medieval arts and crafts tradition for inspiration, Dresser delighted in the discoveries of his own time and derived his chief stimulus from mechanical skill and newly opened Japan and the other Oriental cultures recommended by the Cole Group. Clearly their practical effort for a better-

ment of British design was fundamentally opposed, but their principles were frequently in accordance. Whereas Dresser, for example, summed up his doctrines on 'adaptation' by saying that 'pretty things when juxtaposed often had an offensive appearance and ought to be adapted to the circumstances in which they are to be placed', (p.164) Morris gave similar instructions in his lecture on 'The Beauty of Life' in 1880: 'Have nothing in your houses which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful'.¹¹ Indeed it was largely due to their teachings that greater care was given to interiors of ordinary houses in Britain, and Dresser must be credited for first having launched the new ideas.

It was the concern with interiors and their paraphernalia which had stimulated Dresser to write The Art of Decorative Design, and he referred to Owen Jones as his main source of inspiration on the subject. Jones's interiors for the Crystal Palace and St James Palace, were held up as models for a 'new order of modern decorative art' and Dresser regretted that little tribute had been paid to the designer by the nation.(p.8)

It becomes evident that it was the desire to create a 'new style' based on abstracted elements from historical prototypes, that pervaded Jones's and Dresser's artistic volition. This rational and indistinct eclecticism, according to Dresser was most perfectly observed in Jones's designs for St. James Hall:

That St James Hall is beautiful, admits of no dispute, but should the style of the decoration be asked, we could not reply. It has features which are Egyptian, yet is not Egyptian. It has parts which are somewhat Greek, yet is not Greek. Few styles have appeared that are not suggested by some ornamental character, and yet the decoration is neither in any style, nor in all jumbled together. (p.16)

He also spoke highly of the 'Mysticism which pervades the decoration of this hall' and was certainly thinking about the colouring and lighting which had given a similar vitreous and vibrative effect to the Crystal Palace. Michael Darby has pointed out that the stimulus for this

decoration originated with Jones' travels in the Near East, and that it was achieved by 'Painting the all-embracing vault in the primary colours and lighting it from below by means of star-shaped gas burners.' (Darby, 1979, p.28) This illumination of the hall evidently caused the decoration to glow like stained glass, and thus contributed to the mystical and beautiful effect observed by Dresser.

Dresser's General Principles of Colouring were indeed extracted from Jones's propositions and from J.T. Lyon's unpublished 'Ideas on Colouring', as well as from the chemist George Field's (1777-1854) Chromatography published in London in 1835. The principles were not included in The Art of Decorative Design but appeared in The Development of Ornamental Art which on the whole dealt with exhibits at the 1862 International Exhibition, and it becomes evident that colour schemes observed at the exhibition also provided an important stimulus to Dresser:

The colours when viewed from a distance should give the impression of a natural bloom, similar to that of the peach, where all the colours of the rainbow combine to produce a neutral glow of colour. Yet, while this is the case, a most desirable effect may in some case be gained by causing one colour to prevail in one surface, and another in another surface, and so balancing them all, that the hues of colour presented by the different surfaces again harmonize. Thus in the ceiling, while all the primary colours are present, and are so carefully arranged that a soft bloom results from the harmonizing colours, blue may prevail. On the wall the same principle of colouring may be adopted, the distribution of all the colours in small masses, yet yellow shall slightly prevail, and while the flower has a like treatment red shall prevail, and the red hue, the yellow hue and the blue hues shall harmonize. (p.29)

Clearly Dresser was more conscious of the overpowering effect of the primary colours utilised by Jones, and he suggested hues or tones that were achieved when adding a touch of white or black to the colour. Primary colours according to Dresser should be used in ornaments and the like as 'well-set jewels' and in the background secondary or tertiary colours should prevail.

The colour scheme quoted above was recommended as ideal for drawing

rooms because it would inspire the feeling of 'purity, activity and enlightenment', and Dresser's subsequent publication Principles of Decorative Design (London, 1873) provided an illustration of this kind of interior decoration. It appears that the colours were toned down and we shall see that Dresser in the majority of his designs preferred secondary and tertiary colours such as purple, green, orange, citron, russet, and olive.

The notion of the capacity of the colour to induce certain ideas or feelings in the viewer, was taken from J.T. Lyon's unpublished ideas, and given further explanation by Dresser: 'In the same manner as blue, red, and yellow suggests ideas of strength, beauty, and purity, respectively; so purple, green and orange suggest feelings of repose, gladness, and excitement, respectively.' (p.24) This somewhat far-fetched idea provided the basis for Dresser's interior decorating schemes, and he accordingly outlined a programme for a blue study, a green breakfast room, ~~a red~~ dining-room, a purple nursery, and yellow for drawing room and bedroom alike. Kitchens, pantries, store-rooms etc. being intended for manual work should be coloured in a way which distracted the attention of their inmates, such as dark yellow or buff colour. (pp.31-32)

We have seen that Dresser's colour-ideas had much in common with those expressed by Charles Baudelaire during the late 1850s. The notion of the mystical capacity of colour and its kinship with 'harmonious chords in music', was to become of great importance to the artistic coteries collected around Whistler and Algernon Swinburne who both looked to Baudelaire and Gautier for inspiration. Their exclusive creed of 'art for art's sake' however, had little in common with Dresser's desire to bring art to the average man, and we have no evidence of direct contact between Dresser and 'the aesthetic group' who met at Whistler's. Their preoccupations nevertheless frequently coincide, and in particular their plea for aestheticism and admiration for Japanese art. Dresser's lectures

and publications, from the time of the International Exhibition in London in 1862, analysed The Affinity of the Aesthetic Arts, Music, Ornaments, &c more clearly than the Whistler group. He pioneered the idea in Britain that the aesthetic experience originated from the sensuous or intuitive perception of a unity between mind and form. In addressing himself chiefly to the designer and ornamentist Dresser as we know characterised the 'purely ideal ornament' as 'being wholly a creation of the soul; it is utterly an embodiment of mind in form, or an offspring of the inner man' (p.40) and illustrated this with several samples of Japanese leaf-ornaments.

Dresser published and advocated his ideas long before the so called 'aesthetes' were able to do so, and it appears that many of their doctrines probably emanated from Dresser. They joined in rebelling against conventional art, but where Dresser adapted the cultural language of the time to new purposes, more in tune with the urban and industrial society of which it was a part, the 'aesthetes' offered 'art' as a counterbalance to industrialism. 'The Aesthetic Movement' as it has been called grew out of a friendly allegiance between Whistler, Swinburne and the Rossetti brothers in 1862, which also included Alphonse Legros, George du Maurier, John E. Millais, Thomas Armstrong, Edward Poynter, George Meredith, and Frederick Sandys. Edward Godwin joined the group in 1863 and the painters Albert Moore and Simeon Solomon in 1865. They were later followed by younger artists such as Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Walter Sickert, Sidney Starr, and Theodore Russell who during the 1880s helped to consolidate the movement. Their creative play with colour, form and texture, liberated from the narrative and allegorical forms of the Victorians, stressed the visual composition as a whole and the universalism of the arts, which accorded with the ideas advocated by Dresser. He was certainly one of the first and most ardent 'aesthetes', but Dresser would have rejected this appellation with scorn and always referred to himself as an 'art-workman'.

Significantly, it was Dresser's view of design and interior decoration as a collective expression of a cooperative and harmonious principle, which became the special challenge of the Aesthetic Movement and was practiced by Godwin and Whistler alike during the 1860s and 1870s.

Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design and Development of Decorative Art in the International Exhibition set forth a set of doctrines that could be applied to the creation of a harmonious interior, and his publications were certainly just as influential as Charles Locke Eastlake's Hints on Household Taste (London 1868) and subsequent books on the topic. Furthermore, Dresser, Goodwin, Eastlake and Whistler to their surprise found that these doctrines were most perfectly adhered to in Japanese interiors.

This alleged affinity facilitated their receptivity to Japanese art, and Dresser's lectures and publications on 'Japanese Ornamentation' from 1863 aimed at presenting the similarities balanced with the lure of differences and sheer novelty.

NOTES

1. V & A entry nos. 397-541. 1905.
2. The Illustrated catalogue of the Industrial Department at the International Exhibition. (London 1862) pp.89-101.
3. V & A reg. no.E.140-184. 1955.
4. Reports by the Juries of the International Exhibition, (London 1862).
5. Audsley and Bowes, Keramic Art of Japan, (London 1875-79) Vol.II pl.XLVIII.
6. Royal Institute of British Architects, William Burges' 'Small Note Books'.
7. Royal Doulton-Minton Archive, MSS.1539.
8. Royal Doulton-Minton Archive MSS. 1905, 1380 and 1467.
9. Ipswich Museum, MSS. 1972-73.
10. Greater London Record Office, Royal Society of Arts Mss. Correspondence, A/RSA/16/E 1-15, no.116a & b.
11. William Morris, The Collected Works of William Morris. I-XXIV, (London 1910-15).

CHAPTER IV

THE EMERGENCE OF JAPONISM 1863-1869**THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF THE JAPAN STAND AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN LONDON IN 1862**

Christopher Dresser, John Leighton and William Burges together with the art critic William M. Rossetti were the first artists in Britain that responded perceptively to the Japan stand at the London International Exhibition in 1862. Rutherford Alcock, who had organised the exhibits, was probably instrumental in encouraging their attitudes for he had himself sought a more scholarly and 'photographic accuracy' in the publications on Japan released at the time, and in the Spring of 1863 he published his recollections of The Capital of the Tycoon.

Alcock however, was neither factually nor art-historically inclined in his treatment of Japanese art, and his importance for Japonism was evidently that of an intermediary. It was left to the European artists themselves to explore the aesthetic criteria behind Japanese art, and to relate their comments to contemporary Western art and design. The individual responses of Dresser, Leighton and Rossetti presented in 1863 clearly reflect specific artistic preoccupations. Dresser thoroughly explained the characteristics of Japanese interiors and their art manufactures, and the illustrator and printer Leighton was mainly concerned with the Japanese colour-prints but also with art objects. The poet and fine-art critic William Michael Rossetti dealt with Japanese woodcuts in an illustrated 'story book brought from Japan'. (1863, pp.501-503)

Echoing Burges's review of the Japan stand, all writers expressed the reassuring similarities between Japanese art and the medieval art which was in vogue at the time. It is peculiar, as Elisabeth Aslin has remarked, that the Japonism movement should have been 'sparked off by a group of medieval devotees'. (Aslin, 1969, p.80) Clearly the inspiration to draw parallels

between Japanese and medieval or other Western styles stimulated its attractiveness in the eyes of these artists, and their comments in this respect frequently agree. The apparent difficulty in defining affinities, however, was balanced by a consideration of the more striking differences, and finally its novelty was praised as a main point of appeal.

This divergent assessment must be viewed against the background of the earlier fascination with China, which was prevalent around the middle of the nineteenth century, and clearly the equally remote and exotic Japan replaced the China mania. The colonial attitude in the West at the time probably enhanced this change of taste, and social, political and economic reasons underlie this procedure, but this is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Dresser, Leighton and Rossetti all endorsed Burges's notion that Japanese art had in fact been accessible for viewing even before the 1862 exhibition, and Leighton in particular referred to his visits to the museums in Holland. Dresser however regretted that the opportunities for acquiring Japanese art had been scarce, and their articles and lectures evidently aimed to encourage a greater public demand for Japanese art. The tutorial value of Japanese art was recognised by all writers, but Dresser alone continued to stress this aspect throughout his artistic career: 'If they would like to get their ornament to lay hold of the sympathies of the people in the same way (as the Japanese), their ornamentation would be a success, and they would prosper in a way they did not at present.' (1863, p.388)

This Japonism appeal was expressed by Dresser in his lecture on 'The Prevailing Ornament of China and Japan' delivered on 19 May 1863 for the Architectural Association which was chaired on this occasion by William Burges. Burges's young friend Edward Godwin who at the time showed his Gothicist drawings of architecture at the same institution, would probably not have missed Dresser's lecture, knowing that he had already decorated

his house in Bristol in a Japanese manner in about 1862. One of Godwin's undated sketchbooks indeed contains a page with Japanese diaper patterns annotated 'from drawings of Dr. Dresser' and this might well have been copied from the diapers which Dresser thoroughly dealt with in his lecture.¹ We have noted that Burges and Godwin probably first encountered Japanese art around the time of the Bristol Industrial Exhibition in 1861, and Burges in fact is recorded as having exhibited some of his Chinese and Japanese cloisonnés at the Archaeological Institute Exhibition in London in the Spring of 1863, at the time he chaired Dresser's lecture. Photographs of the Burges collection indeed reveal that shapes of the cloisonné objects resemble later designs by Dresser for metal ware. (Crook, 1981, p.196) (fig.31)

Certainly the connection between Burges, Godwin and Dresser at the time was probably more firm than previously assumed. Godwin and other architect-designers interested in Japanese art would not have missed the précis of Dresser's lecture that appeared in The Building News 22 May 1863. The original manuscript, however, has not been preserved, but Dresser's anonymously published articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' simultaneously occurred in The Builder Journal. These in fact deal with objects and subject matter which correspond precisely to those presented by Dresser in his lecture and in his The Art of Decorative Design, and the articles with certainty can be attributed to him. Amongst the objects discussed was a lacquer box with hawthorn branches wrought upon it, and a vessel designed to imitate the eclipse of the sun. Japanese leaf-ornaments, diapers, borders and fret patterns were analysed in accordance with the classification that he had launched in The Art of Decorative Design. Dresser more thoroughly than in his book, however, evinced evidence for the elevated character of the Japanese ornamentation, and most of the illustrations accompanying the articles occur in other Dresser publications,

as well as in his designs for Minton & Co porcelain and Hukin & Heath electroplated silver. (fig.32) All the crest-patterns depicted can be found in Dresser's album of Japanese crests, acquired by the V & A from the Dresser family after Dresser's death.² (fig.33)

According to Dresser, it was Sir Rutherford Alcock who introduced him to the secrets of the Japanese crests, (1863, 388) and these albums probably originated from Alcock, whose exhibits of Japanese wallpapers Dresser also studied at the exhibition in 1862. In Japanese Ornamentation Dresser praised their harmonious character and recognised design principles he had launched in The Art of Decorative Design and in Development:

Rigid flatness is found in every one. Flowers, birds, clouds, and conventional ornaments are all rendered with the same flatness. (see fig. 5 & 6)...The wall-papers are as dull and neutral as the lacquered objects are bright and positive...The wall of an ordinary apartment should always be treated as a background. It should hence be neutral in character; it should recede from the notice rather than obtrude itself upon the attention. If it is thus negative, it will cause the furniture, and even the occupants, of the room to look attractive and beautiful. If it is positive, it will draw to itself that attention which ought to be left free to fix upon more noble objects. (1863, 365)

Considering that no Japanese interiors as such were exhibited in 1862, it is remarkable that Dresser should have come to this understanding of their characteristics, but we know that he profited greatly from discussions on the topic with Alcock, and that he was familiar with the literature on Japan published up to that time. Dresser was certainly more perceptive in this matter than other writers and his 1862 publications had waged war against the so called naturalist school in decoration, whose obtrusive floral patterns he rejected:

Yet in all cases both the wall and the floor, hence the paper and the carpet, should serve as background to the contents of the room, and should be of that subdued character which enhances the value of the furniture exposed. (The Art, p.152)

Dresser as one of the first of the design reformers in Britain advocated the use of neutral backgrounds in interior schemes and plain colours, as

for example the use of yellow for the drawing-room. It is significant that other Japan enthusiasts such as Godwin in his Bristol interiors (1862) and Whistler in his home in 1866 adhered to the same principles. The latter in particular recommended the yellow colour of his drawing-room, which he made popular in his joint interior design with Godwin for the 'Paris Exno Universelle' in 1878 and in his exhibition ventures at the Grosvenor Gallery where the walls were painted yellow. This deflection from the common Victorian wallpapers became tremendously popular in Britain with the development of the Aesthetic Movement, and it was satirised as 'Greenery-gallery, Grosvenor Gallery' in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta Patience or Bunthorne's Bride in 1881. (Aslin, 1969, p.126) Dresser was one of the main initiators of the fashion, and furthermore recommended citrine and yellow coloured walls in his Principles of Decorative Design. (1873, p.87)

The lessons absorbed from Japanese art were certainly crucial for Dresser. It was precisely the naturalistic and imitative 'Japonaiserie' patterns in French decorative art at the time which he initially attacked in his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation', saying that they had 'failed to discover the purport of significance of the forms they had borrowed' and that they had 'copied forms and groupings without seizing the spirit of the work.' (p.308) This recognition of a Japanese influence in France, contradicts the theory of most art historians who claim that Japonism in applied art only began around the time of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in Paris in 1867, when Felix Bracquemond exhibited his dinner-service with designs derived from Hokusai's Manga. (Yamada, 1980, pp.83-109) (fig.34) Bracquemond as we have noted had probably acquired this album from August Delâtre in 1858, and he is in fact recorded as having designed 'Panneau Japonais' for Theodore Deck's porcelain stand at the 'Paris Expo Industrielle' already in 1863.³ He also produced similar 'panneau à l'exemples des Japonais' for Eugène Rousseau that were exhibited at the

'Expo Industrielle' in Paris in 1865. (Burty, 1866, p.178) Several other manufacturers are recorded to have supplied porcelain influenced by Japanese prototypes for these exhibitions, and this is not surprising when considering the existence of an artistic milieu receptive to Japanese art in France during the 1840s and 1850s. Albert Jacquemart and Edmond le Blant's Histoire Artistique, Industrielle et Commerciale de la Porcelain released in Paris in 1861, compiled most of the accessible information about Japanese porcelain in the West at the time. August Demmin's Histoire de la Céramique (Paris, 1863) as well as Adalbert de Beaumont's articles on the industrial exhibition of 1863 published in the widely read 'Revue des deux Mondes' in the same year contained enthusiastic appraisals of this early phase of Japonism in French porcelain manufacture, which may well have been known to Dresser from these publications or from products exported to Britain.

Dresser's notion of French Japonism, points to certain links between the Japan enthusiasts in London and in Paris, and already in 1862 he had commented on some furniture of a 'Japanese character' produced by H. Lemoine of Paris. British artists evidently kept in close contact with the French artistic milieu at the time, and they probably acquired some of their Japanese prints and artefacts from Mme Desoy's shop, 'Le Porte Chinoise', which had opened in 1860 and attracted such japonists as Astruc, Baudelaire, Bracquemond, Philip Burty, Champfleury, the Goncourt brothers, Frederic Villot, Emile Zola, and the painters Whistler, Carolus-Duran, Degas, Fantin-Latour, Manet, Monet, Millet, Theodore Rousseau, Alfred Stevens, and Tissot. A number of these Japan enthusiasts founded the famous Société Japonaise du Jing-lar in 1867, which met at Léon Solon, the director of the Sèvres factory. (Lacambre, 1964, pp.81-94) We have noted that Champfleury in La Mode Japoniserie published in 1868, remembered the fashion as having begun some ten years earlier following the meeting of a

young French poet and an American painter, who were almost certainly Baudelaire and Whistler.

Clearly the ideas of Japonism amongst painters were developed in Paris at the time, and reached London with Whistler, who settled there in 1859. Dante Gabriel Rossetti remembered that, after visiting Madame Desoy's shop in 1864, he found that the 'costumes' (kimonos) he was looking for 'were being snapped up by the French artist, Tissot, who it seems is doing three pictures, which the mistress of the shop described to me as three wonders of the world.' (Watanabe, 1984, 68-71) Watanabe has brought evidence for the fact that Rossetti, Whistler, Tissot, and Fantin-Latour all incorporated elements inspired by Japanese costumes and artefacts in their paintings throughout 1863-65. This rather trivial assimilation of Japanese paraphernalia, however, was evidently closer to that which, according to Dresser, characterised French art manufactures at the time.

His articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' expressed severe criticism of this superficial adaptation of Japanese art and he emphasised that:

The opportunities we have had of observing Japanese ornament should enable us to form a tolerably correct judgement upon its merits. They should also qualify us for forming a reasonable opinion of the ornament produced in imitation of that of Japan. They should likewise enable us to say whether the spirit of the imitated ornament has been caught, whether the forms employed in the imitative productions are characteristic of the style from whence they have been derived, and, whether above all, those forms are intelligently used which are expressive of the faith, wants, or superstitions of those who first produced them.
(p.308)

Evidently Dresser at this early stage discarded imitative reproductions of Japanese prototypes, and he asked for a proper understanding of the spiritual contents of Japanese art, which he strove to achieve throughout his life. It was the essential features of the most purely ideal Japanese ornament such as the stylised waves and flowers 'anthemions' borders and fret-patterns he therefore dealt with in the first article. (fig.32) His second article treated the second-best form of ornaments, those derived

from flat and conventional renderings of natural forms which Dresser had recommended in his publications, and he listed a number of favourite motifs such as chrysanthemums, the sacred bean (lotus), china aster, bamboo, blackthorn, almond, (cherry), narcissus, castor oil-plant, hibiscus, pomegranate, convulvulus, umbelliferous, reeds, grasses and other trees, - small birds, dragons, deer, storks, bats, butterflies, grasshoppers, and feather ornaments. Amongst these the dragon, bat, stag, and stork were described as being some of the most popular for ornamental use, and Dresser emphasised that: 'The storks are given in every conceivable attitude, and a flight of these birds is commonly presented on the surface with a view of ornamenting it. But the birds are not treated naturally, but ornamentally. Conventional forms are produced sufficiently like the creature intended to suggest it to the mind.' (p.364)

We shall see that Dresser incorporated precisely these motives in his designs, and that his arrangement of individual ornaments concurred with that described in his articles as: 'The groups or ornamental forms found in Japanese ornament, are frequently of a methodical or symmetrical character, but these groups are applied with great irregularity'. (p.364) Burges, Leighton and Rossetti made similar observations, and clearly the sentiment of movement or irregularity in the balancing of Japanese ornaments contradicted the geometrical arrangement preached by the School of Design. This provided the greatest challenge to Western ornamentists, and Dresser expressed a certain scepticism towards the deflection from the regular and geometrical tradition, but later came to embrace this characteristic in his ornamental compositions. He was not satisfied with merely covering a surface with ornament however, but aspired to make this harmonise with, and support, the useful purpose and material of the article upon which it had been placed: 'The principle of preserving the true condition of the surface decorated is maintained rigidly in all Japanese works'. (p.365)

This perceptive notion agrees with that presented in his books and in his subsequent designs. Dresser's articles on the whole are marked by an insight which certainly cannot be detected in any other literature on the topic released up to that time. Burges, Leighton and Rossetti for instance were governed more by curiosity and a craving for novelty rather than by a desire to comprehend the aesthetics of Japanese art. Dresser on the other hand strove to understand its criteria, and his third article dealt with the complicated topic of 'symbolic forms' in Japanese Ornamentation, which had never before been recognised by Japan enthusiasts in the West.

Dresser as we have noted, discarded the allegorical symbolism dear to all Victorians, and suggested that this might more appropriately be replaced by 'abstract ornament in conventional form'. This was precisely what he recognised in Japanese ornaments, such as the dragon, the cloud-patterns, crests, and the 'sacred bean', analysed in his final article, which ended with an appeal to Western artists:

Rather than copy ornamental forms, we should extract the good from all styles, and appropriate it to our purposes. We should borrow principles rather than forms. The sacred bean does not address our understanding; it is no more to us than any other flower; hence for us to use Japanese ornament, as it stands, would not be desirable. But if we use it we should employ its noblest qualities, and select from it those forms which are of an aesthetic rather than a symbolic character. We certainly should, in all cases, avoid the mean feature of a style, and employ those only which are exalted. These considerations of Japanese ornament will aid us in selecting the true art qualities from the Japanese, if we must follow the fashion of the French, and produce designs in the style of worthy character. (p.424)

This favourable recommendation of Japanese art evidently had a marked impact on British artists, and it is unique in context of the European art milieu, where similar reactions only occurred after the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867. Editors of art periodicals however seem to have been reticent regarding the merits of Japanese art in the 1860s, for except for the articles discussed here, only brief and superficial comments appear in their columns. The literature on Japan, on the other hand, was enlarged

with a few more travellers' descriptions during the decade, and popular books such as J.W. Silver's Sketches of Japanese Manners and Customs (1867), the anonymous Visits to Japan 1865-66 (1869) and R.M. Jephson and Edward P. Elmhirst's Our Life in Japan (1869) all contained chapters on the art and art manufactures of the country. Although these were in general rather unscholarly and frequently contradictory, positive comments prevail. Simplicity, sombreness of colour, elegance, refinement, and beauty are emphasised as virtues of Japanese taste, and give the impression that Western travellers were highly impressed by Japanese art. Architecture and sculpture were almost entirely neglected, however, and fine art was discussed in a condescending tone. Clearly the critics' personal views rather than the art historical facts dominated these publications, but they contained some sumptuous chromolithograph reproductions of 'original coloured pictures by native artists', which provided European artists with a view of the popular ukiyo-e prints. Jephson and Elmhirst's book in addition was illustrated with photographs taken by Lord Walter Kerr and Felix Beato, who published several series of photographs from Japan during the 1860s. These gave a much more accurate impression of Japanese art and architecture, and were only rivalled by the illustrations in the London Illustrated News, which were done by Charles Wirgman, who had resided in Japan since 1861 and was a friend of Beato. Clearly these artists had responded to Sir Rutherford Alcock's call for more photographic accuracy in the information on Japan which was to be released in the West.

AUCTION-SALES AND EXHIBITIONS OF JAPANESE ART IN EUROPE

The reputation of Japanese design in England really established itself during the period under consideration, and the sales and exhibitions of Japanese art in Europe at the time helped to consolidate its position. A number of auction sales contributed to facilitate its popularity, and in 1863 there were several sales in Paris and in London. Murray Marks is

recorded amongst others as a keen buyer:

Maintenant c'est M. Marx (sic. Marks) et M. Louinetet, qui s'occupent de cette specialite. M. Marx (sic.) qui est Anglais, tire se marchandise de Londres, et il n'est pas rare (les communications sont si rapides) de voir revendre a Paris, une⁴ paire de vases adjugee a Londres, quelques jours auparavant.

Evidently the connections between the Japonist milieu in London and Paris, were firmly established by then, William Michael Rossetti in his Summary of Art News of 1863 also mentioned a number of Japan sales that had taken place in London, and notably that of William Russell's porcelain collection.⁵ We know that Russell had exhibited his collection of Japanese prints already in Manchester in 1857, but this was only auctioned in 1884.⁶ These sales were followed by many more during the 1860s, especially by that of Joseph Marryat's collection in 1866, which included several Japanese samples which were acquired by the S. Ken. Museum.⁷ Prince Tokugawa's vast collection, which had been exhibited at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867, went for sale in Paris in 1868-69, and attracted a large number of buyers, including the S. Ken. Museum and Lord James Bowes. These auctions made Japanese art available to an ever wider circle of the general public. (Lacambre, 1983, p.35)

The S. Ken. Museum during the 1860s indeed continued their pioneering efforts to exhibit Japanese art, and they acquired objects from Mme Desoy's shop in 1864, among others Nabeshima porcelain, swords and armour, silk-textiles and a kakimono from Queen Victoria in 1865, wallpapers from Thomas Archer, keeper of the Edinburgh National Museum in 1866 and 46 Toyokuni prints from a Mr. J.W. Wilde in the same year. A quantity of art manufactures, paintings and prints were also purchased from the post-exhibition sale in Paris in 1867-69, and according to a list of photographs taken by Charles Thurston Thompson in 1864 lacquer, porcelain, a bronze stork and book-prints were on loan from the Earl of Elgin. These acquisitions, except for the loan objects, are preserved in the museum, and this

clearly contradicts Phyllis Floyd's recent statement that the collection of Japanese prints was formed late in the century. (Floyd, 1986, p.125) Philip Burty in 1867 recommended the Japanese collection in the museum as one of the best on public display in Europe, saying that '5 salles double renferment tout ce qui les officers de la reine ont pu recueillir de plus intéressant du Japon'⁸ (fig.35)

French Japan enthusiasts as we have noted, had similar access to examining Japanese art and the first 'Expo Union centrale des Beaux-arts a Palais de L'Industrie' in 1863 featured 'meubles en lacque et porcelain du Japon'.⁹ The subsequent industrial exhibitions of 1865 and 1869 contained separate Japanese sections, and significantly in 1865 'albums et feuilles Japonaise' contributed by Philip Burty.¹⁰ The cloisonné enamels exhibited in 1869 received particular attention by A.C. Racinet in his 'Polychromatic Ornament' (1873, pls XI-XV) and clearly these artefacts contributed much to the creation of similar objects both in metal and in porcelain in Europe.

One of the largest and most interesting Japan collections was shown in Amsterdam in 1863. It belonged to the famous japonologist, Baron Philip Franz von Siebold, who during his second stay in Japan from 1859 to 1862 had amassed a considerable quantity of artefacts. The show travelled to Würzburg in 1865 and was subsequently upon Siebold's death in 1866 acquired by the Staatliches Museum vor Volkekunde in Munich, where it remains to this day. Siebold's library which contained 1,088 Japanese works, including illustrated novels and picture books, was bought in entirety by the British Museum in the same year, and contributed to enlarge the museum's collection of Japanese prints which by this time was indeed extensive. (van Gulik, 1981, p.41)

The largest collection of Japanese objects shown in England after the 1862 Exhibition, was exhibited at the 1865 Dublin International Exhibition. The Japan section, which occupied the west transept of the exhibition hall,

contained objects that originated entirely from English and Irish owners, and an examination of these gives us a good idea of the sort of Japanese art that was collected in Britain at the time. Sir Rutherford Alcock again contributed the most substantial number of exhibits, and they included together with a quantity of various lacquer objects:

sundry bronzes the finest specimens of Japanese art. 45 medallions repoussé metal brooches illustrating Japanese art, manners and customs. 40 choicely carved ivory figures and groups, illustrating Japanese progress in art, their manners, religion and customs,...eggshell porcelain cups,...specimens of Japanese pottery: illustrated books - nine octavo volumes of woodcuts, coloured and plain,...book of patterns (cotton fabrics), roll of coloured woodcuts, a hanging lamp of bronze from Osaka,...bronze inlaid water can(antique): candlesticks, water¹-bottle (melonshape),...several studs or brooches of metal work

C.W.Dugan of St. John's Enniscorthy, Wexford, in Ireland contributed scientific books, textiles, bronzes, lacquer, and 'eggshell porcelain cups, saucers, and bowls, turned out of wood almost as thin as porcelain, Japan spill vases of bamboo cane.' etc. Lord John Hay exhibited a similar collection of raw silks to that which he had shown in 1862, and P.L. Simmonds of London exhibited various specimens of Japanese paper and embroidered silks. Most interestingly, dealers in Japanese goods also showed some of the objects that probably could be obtained at their premises. Wheeler and Wilson of Liverpool exhibited 'Three framed specimens of rich embroidered silk pictures, beautifully worked by the needle in Japan,' and W. Hewett & Co., King William Str. London E:C and Hong Kong, major supplier of Oriental and Japanese goods during the 1850s and 60s showed:

Articles manufactured from paper in imitation of leather; a pair of curious models of Japanese warriors; ancient carvings in ivory; group of female figures, lifesize, representing a princess at her toilette, and attendants; vases with raised dragons and ornaments; ancient bronze representing a priest riding on a buffalo; pair of Japanese swords; curious shell with painted figures of foxes; Japanese cups, covered with the finest wicker work; valuable specimens of ancient lac; porcelain; a large model of joss-house; ¹²table decorated with raised gold lacquer work; hand screen.

Other industrial exhibitions around England, such as the Pendleton Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition in Manchester in 1867, and the South Staffordshire Industrial and Fine Arts Exhibition in Wolverhampton in 1869, included specimens of Japanese art objects, (Wallis, 1869, p.22) and provided people in the provinces with the opportunity of seeing Japanese art. The S. Ken. Museum continued their pioneering efforts in disseminating Japanese art to the public, for they contributed a loan collection to the Manchester Exhibition in 1867, which contained porcelain, bronzes, lacquers, paintings, wallpapers, and a kimono.¹³

Dresser may well have visited these exhibitions, and he was certainly acquainted with the extensive Japan collections of the South Kensington institution, where he had been active as a lecturer until 1868. His favourable attitude towards Japanese art in general was a fundamental factor in his gradual detachment from the medieval revival which, through Pugin's and Burges's advocacy, had dominated the artistic milieu in England in the 1850s. Younger architect-designers such as Dresser, Godwin, Thomas Jeckyll (1827-1881), William Eden Nesfield, Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) and Bruce J. Talbert (1838-1881) had come under the influence of the eclecticism preached by the School of Design and their choice of style was no longer dictated by any dogmatic theory. A certain sense of liberation can be detected among them, and they looked to newly opened Japan as a fresh well of inspiration. Dresser in his The Art of Decorative Design had rejected gothicism entirely, saying that it was 'unsuitable for the decoration of Protestant churches, and a modern society where Catholic mysticism had lost its function' (p.15) and his final article on 'Japanese Ornamentation' presented it as a more suitable alternative to 'the art of the Middle Age (which) is not appropriate to us'. (1863, 424) Yet, as we have noted, Dresser had an entirely formalist attitude to Japanese and other historical styles alike, and emphasised that one should 'borrow

principles rather than forms'.

DRESSER AND EARLY JAPONISM IN BRITAIN

Dresser was the first of these younger architect-designers who put his admiration for Japanese art into writing, but his importance for the early Japonism in England has not yet been sufficiently appreciated by other scholars dealing with the topic. Dresser, however inadequately at times, clearly strove to achieve a proper comprehension of the aesthetic criteria underlying Japanese art and to adopt these to his own doctrines and experimental designs. He thus contributed to the creation of an entirely new form of art in Britain, which was to become known as Anglo-Japanese.

A number of his young colleagues had similar preoccupations at the time, and Nesfield in particular was one of the first admirers of Japanese art in Britain. His sketch books from around 1862 indeed contain sketches from 'Drawings of the Japanese Novel' which he may have undertaken at the 1862 London International Exhibition.¹⁴

Watanabe has pointed out that Richard Norman Shaw recalled his rooms when he went into partnership with Nesfield in about 1862-63 to have been decorated with Oriental artefacts and 'Japanese curios', and that both architects during the 1860s and 1870s incorporated decorative motifs of a Japanese character in their buildings, - notably in Nesfield's Cloverly Hall, Shropshire (1865-70), and Kinmel Park, Denbighshire (1870-74), and in Shaw's Willesley, Kent and Farnham Bank, Surrey (mid. 1860s). (Watanabe, 1984, pp.179-182) Shaw, however, when setting up his own office, became known as the revivalist of the Queen Anne style and the most successful Japonism creation that emanated from their collaboration was the folding screen designed by Nesfield for Shaw and his wife on their wedding in 1867. It was commissioned by James Forsyth as a wedding present, and it incorporated genuine Japanese bird panels, with gilded borders of Japanese diapers, fret and crest-patterns on ebonised wood above and below, and an

open lattice base at the bottom. (fig. 36) A similar lattice base was used by Nesfield's pupil Thomas Jeckyll in a wrought-iron gate produced by Barnard, Bishop and Barnard for their stand at the Paris Expo Universelle in 1867.¹⁵ Jeckyll who in 1862 had also befriended Whistler, indeed continued Nesfield's ideas, and during the 1870s designed Japan inspired fireplace fittings with overlapping crest-patterns, sunflower and irons, and the sunflower cast-iron pavilion exhibited by Barnard, Bishop & Barnard in Philadelphia in 1876 and in Paris in 1878. (fig.37) Jeckyll's designs became some of the most popular Japonism creations in Britain, and even more well known perhaps was his collaboration with Whistler on the Peacock room for Frederick Leyland's house in 1876. (Aslin, 1969, pp.93-95)

This early phase of Japonism in Britain, which was apparent around the middle of the 1860s, evidently received considerable stimulus from the enthusiastic recommendations of Dresser, Burges, Leighton, Rossetti and Waring alike, and Japanese artefacts could be acquired from such dealers as William Hewitt, Murray Marks and Arthur Lasenby Liberty, then an employee at Farmer & Rogers. An article in The Reader in 1865, probably written by W.M. Rossetti who wrote extensively in this magazine, indeed recommended a large collection of Japanese fans sold by Farmer & Rogers, which may have inspired Whistler's preoccupation with Japanese fans at the time and Simeon Solomon's 'The Fan' painted in the same year. The Reader article, considering Japanese artefacts as a whole, was certainly influential with artists working in the mid 1860s and, echoing Dresser's views, it recommended the educational function of Japanese art

The decorative rendering of ordinary incidents in life and facts of nature points to an almost entirely new field for ornamental art. The value of Japanese work of artists and decorators can hardly be exaggerated, and one would only beg any sceptic to this point to place it by side of any ordinary English or French art manufacture. If he does not admit its superiority, he must at least confess we may learn much by its study...For wall-papers illustrations of books, and many ornamental purposes, very

valuable suggestions may be derived from careful examination of the technical processes of the Japanese.¹⁶

The impact was immediate and the fashion was set by the Rossettis when Dante Gabriel designed book-covers with Japanese crest-patterns for Swinburne's Atlanta in Calydon and his brother William Michael's The Comedy of Dante Alighieri in 1865. Whistler in the design of his picture-frames also incorporated similar ornaments, and his friend Edward J. Poynter in 1866 designed a stove for the S. Ken. Museum grill room, which included Japanese crest decorations. We have noted that Nesfield and Shaw assimilated Japanese elements in a similar way and this is also apparent in William Burges's and Bruce J. Talbert's furniture designs from the period. Their rather superficial adaptation of Japanese motifs such as crests, frets and borders, however was frequently highlighted by Japanese objects exhibited in conjunction with their furniture. Talbert's rather 'gothic' cabinet for the 1867 'Expo Universelle' in Paris was adorned with Japanese Imari porcelain, and his friend Burges by this time also had amassed a quantity of Japanese artefacts in his neo-gothic house.

Owen Jones's drawings for the Chinese and Japanese Courts at the S. Ken. Museum from 1865 remain a vivid example of his Orientalism. They were in fact acquired by the V & A from Dresser's widow in 1905, and correspondence in the museum prove that the drawings had come into Dresser's possession when Jones died in 1874.¹⁷ It is tempting to suggest that the transaction took place because Dresser had collaborated with Jones on this decorative scheme. Knowing that he had been rather dismissive about Chinese ornaments and had entirely neglected Japanese ornaments in his Grammar, Jones may well have consulted Dresser who had already published on the subject. Jones, later came to revise his attitude to Chinese ornamentation and in 1866-67 published Examples of Chinese Ornament, but he is not recorded as having had the slightest interest in Japanese art. It is quite likely that he asked his pupil Dresser's advice when he designed the

Chinese and Japanese decorations for the museum, and the schemes incorporated patterns which were inspired by Chinese and Japanese cloisonné patterns respectively. (fig.38) The Builder Journal commented enthusiastically on these drawings when they were exhibited at the Architectural Exhibition in 1865, and interestingly enough on what was said to be a 'Japanese Villa, with offices, to be erected for Mr. James Veitch at Coombe Wood' designed by H.H. Brunell.¹⁸ These architectural schemes must be counted as the first examples of Japonism in Western architecture, but they have been neglected by art historians and it has not been possible to obtain further information on the 'Japanese villa'.

In 1865 Godwin also left his Japan-inspired house in Bristol and moved to London, and from this time onward his distinctive style developed. When decorating his rooms in 1867 Godwin recalled the transformation that took place:

When we came to the furniture I found that hardly anything could be bought ready made that was at all suitable to the requirements of the case. I therefore set to work and designed a lot of furniture, and, with a desire for economy, directed it to be made of deal, and to be ebonised. There were no mouldings, no ornamental metal work, no carvings. Such effect as I wanted I endeavoured to gain, as in economical building by the grouping of solid and void and by a more or less broken outline. The scantling or substance of the framing and other parts of the furniture was reduced to as low a ¹⁹denomination as was compatible with the soundness of construction.

His catalogue of Art Furniture produced jointly with William Watt in 1877 included several of the pieces he designed in 1867 and notably a square ebonised coffee-table and a sideboard described to be 'Anglo-Japanese', whose elegant lightness, play with voids and constructional frames are rendered in an almost abstract Japanese manner. This remarkable furniture is extant in about four different versions and invariably includes Japanese leatherpapers in the door-panels. Godwin's source of inspiration was most certainly the Japanese portable cabinets, the 'zushidana' and the irregular shelves that Alcock had exhibited at the London Exhibition in 1862. (fig. 39)

We know that Dresser had commented on ebonised furniture of a 'quaint and Japanese character' exhibited already in 1862, and it is significant that both he and Godwin popularised this new style which Godwin in 1877 named Anglo-Japanese. Dresser as we shall see designed similar furniture, and his review of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867 endorsed the superiority of Japanese prototypes stating that: 'The delicate cabinet work of the Japanese is not anywhere surpassed.' (1867 p.12) Godwin's and Dresser's Anglo-Japanese furniture and interior decoration schemes manifested a style which most successfully managed to assimilate Japanese aesthetics and ideas. They adapted Japanese constructional devices from studies of 'zushidas', shelves, screens, lattice and grill walls, in an entirely artistic manner which was devoid of commonplace imitation. Godwin's drawings for the furniture and interiors of Dromore castle from 1869-70 display some of his most beautiful Anglo-Japanese creations and he continued designing in this style for the remainder of his career.

Unfortunately, information on Dresser's designs from the 1860s is scant except for those which he provided for the international exhibitions in London in 1862 and in Paris in 1867. Dresser, however, was certainly well known as a designer at the time, for The Building News in 1865 referred to him as 'One of the most active revolutionisers in decorative art of the day' and as 'being largely engaged in designing carpets and paper hangings for the principal manufacturers of England, and even for some French houses'.²⁰ Writing about this period in retrospect in 1875, Dresser recollected having been particularly productive in 1864-65:

About two years after this [1862] I was sitting in my study, which now looked to the west. A glorious pleasant evening and tranquil autumn day was closed by a most glorious sunset, which I watched dreamily till the last streaks of colour had vanished from the sky. I felt an influence coming over me of which now I have learned to know the nature. Pointing a number of pencils, and placing on my table a quantity of smooth paper, I commenced to draw, when, without the least effort of which I was conscious, and without exercising, so far as I know any control over my pencil, forms and compositions which were new and vigorous, yet

often eccentric, were produced with such rapidity, and in such quantities as astonished me. At two o'clock in the morning I had filled many sheets of papers with drawings, and feeling fatigue, retired to my chamber. I could not, however, shake off this strange influence: so taking a bundle of letters from my pocket, I drew patterns on whatever plain paper they furnished. (1875, p.341)

The Dresser sketchbooks in the Ipswich Museum contain a number of drawings, made on envelopes dated 1862-64, and these most certainly originated from the state of elevated artistic inspiration experienced by him in 1864.

Dresser is recorded to have lectured on 'The Decoration of Flat Surfaces' for the Architectural Association in the same year, in which he more or less reiterated the views on the topic released in 1862. The chairman, James Edmeston, on this occasion recommended some of his designs which were exhibited at the institution's annual exhibition, as 'displaying unusual good taste'.²¹ The Building News critic however, referred to the seven designs exhibited as 'More curious than beautiful' and added that two were intended for wall-paper diapers and one for textiles.²² The same journal mentioned a new patent for low relief wall decoration 'at the smallest cost' which was produced by Dresser for J. Catto & Co in May 1864²³ and these may well have been the exhibition samples. An effort to locate this pattern in the Patent Office Design Registry has led to a design entered by Catto, 15 July 1864 composed of regularly repeated geometrical forms lifted almost directly from Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design and which may well have been inspired by Japanese diaper and fret patterns. (fig. 40A & B) Similar patterns, as we have noted had been incorporated in Japan inspired designs by Nesfield and Jeckyll, and a wallpanel created by Dresser in 1865 for the textile manufacturer James W. Ward's house in Halifax contained a Japanese fret-pattern with a large crab and fish as well as superimposed shells, smaller fishes, dragon scrolls and aquatic plants. The frontally depicted crab and fish was certainly derived from Japanese prototypes, and similar crab motifs can be found in

Japanese drawings that belonged to Dresser which are now preserved in the British Museum and in the V & A²⁴ (figs.41 & 42) The panel was reproduced in the Furniture Gazette in 1880, when Dresser was art-editor of the journal, and described as:

The separate plate was designed by our Art-Editor as one of a series which filled the coving of a recess in the dining-room of J.W. Ward Esq, J.P. of Halifax. The series represented fish, fruit, wine and beer. Our illustration gives the group in which fish is introduced. The work was executed about 15 years ago.²⁵

Regrettably, neither the house nor any of the other panels have been located, but the creation remains a proof of Dresser's interior decorating schemes at the time, and such frontally depicted crabs, fishes and other animals were included in a number of Dresser's subsequent designs for Minton & Co porcelain and for other manufacturers.

The Building News in 1865 also referred to Dresser's first designs for Elkington & Co. electroplated silver, saying that

Messrs. Elkington have long had in preparation a class of goods for these purposes, from designs by Dr. Christopher Dresser, and which in point of manufacture, will come between the costly beaten work and the meretricious common ware which, dignified by the general denomination of "plate", have been accustomed to adorn the tables of our middle classes at many a suburban villa. A collection of these novelties will probably be sent to the Paris Exhibition in 1867.²⁶

Adrian Tilbrook's recent article on Christopher Dresser; Designs for Elkington & Co erroneously dates Dresser's involvement with the company to about 1873, (1985, pp.23-28) but the Elkington records preserved in the V & A clearly provides evidence of an earlier date. Their pattern books for the 1860s to 1880s are not complete, but production numbers run successively, and no.10197 dated 20 June 1866 as well as no.10272 of the same year can be attributed to Dresser on the basis of stylistic similarities with subsequent designs.²⁷ (figs.43 & 44) At the time of the 1867 Paris Exhibition Dresser stated that he was active as a designer of metal vessels and emphasised that

'The Japanese make teapots (in bronze) and very beautiful some of them are. Why we should not make bronze tea-services I cannot see, yet so strong is our prejudice against them that I have been unable to induce even one English manufacturer to prepare a trial set'. (1867, p.18)

The Dresser sketchbook in the Ipswich Museum indeed contain, drawings of sugar bowls in bronze and other metal vessels, and two of these sugar bowls are entered in the Elkington Pattern books in March 1885, but they were illustrated already in Dresser's articles on Principles of Decorative Design in 1872 and in bookform in 1873. (fig. 45) Clearly these designs were executed prior to 1885, and certainly by the time of the Philadelphia exhibition in 1876, when they were displayed in a cabinet by Kimbel and Cabus. (Spofford 1878, p.83) Elkington's sugar bowl no.10197 dated 20 June 1866 bears a close resemblance to these striking creations and the projecting beads correspond to Dresser's doctrines. (fig.46) 'Instead of forming a vessel throughout of thick metal, we may construct it from a thin sheet of silver, but in order that it possess sufficient strength we must indent one or more beads in its side.' (1873, p.136) An identical sugarbowl was shown in the Dresser exhibition in Cologne, and these creations probably originated from Dresser's studies of Japanese bronze tripod-vessels and teapots. The teapot production no.10272 indeed resembles Japanese prototypes, and was most certainly designed by Dresser to match the sugar bowls. (fig.44)

It is interesting to compare this kettle to the porcelain teapot designed by Dresser for Minton & Co in the early 1860s, and these bold Japan inspired designs stripped of ornamental details formed the basis for a number of later pouring vessels designed by Dresser. (fig.30) Several designs for teaset were included in the Dresser sketchbooks which probably date from this time, and it is quite likely that some of these were produced by Elkington & Co for the Paris Exhibition, where the company is recorded by The Times to have stood 'clearly forward as our most advanced

metal workers'.²⁸ (fig.47) The company showed their first enamel-works at this exhibition and The Building News praised these as having been made 'with much taste and the quiet and discrete treatment is greatly superior to those of any other nation represented...The best features of the decorative arts of the present day have been resorted to with complete success.'²⁹ None of these designs have, alas, come to light but Dresser in his sketchbooks made specifications for the enamelling of some of his metal vessels and door plates. Examples of the latter were registered by Elkington & Co with the Patent Office Design Registry on 3 February 1866, and these designs can be compared to other Dresser creations and were most certainly supplied by him. (fig.47 & 48)

Dresser as we have noted had studied the rare Japanese cloisonné objects exhibited in London in 1862 and five of the so called 'anthemion' ornaments illustrated in his Japanese Ornamentations articles, were copied from cloisonné patterns. These samples probably provided the impetus for Elkington & Co's enamel works, but their French art directors Leonard Morel-Laudeuil (active 1859-1885) and Antoine Willms (1885-1899) are also recorded as having supplied enamel designs. Dresser was engaged as a freelance designer for Elkington & Co until 1888 and throughout this period created some of their most forward-looking and original designs.

By the mid 1860s Dresser had become one of the leading lights in the reform movement of the day, and he appears to have been tremendously active as a writer, designer and lecturer. When lecturing on 'Art Foliage' at the Architectural Association Exhibition in 1865, The Building News announced that he had 'the ability of delivering a lecture with greater facility than any other person we know'. (1865, p.307) Dresser remained an indefatigable and appealing speaker throughout his life and his rhetoric was frequently praised. His lecture on 'Art Foliage' and a series of lectures 'On Botany' presented at the S. Ken. Museum Lecture Theatre in 1867 aimed to summarise

the core of the lectures which he had given on 'Artistic Botany' at the School of Design over the years, but they did not add much to the doctrines published in The Art of Decorative Design. More startling and important for the design movement in England at the time was his claim of equality of status between the manufacturer and the designer, which he firmly expressed when he adjudicated the first Art Workman's Exhibition in Manchester in 1865:

These exhibitions have also this advantage; they connect the artisan with his works. If those works are good, they receive the reward of public approbation, always so valued by a workman: if bad, he has the advantage of hearing his defects pointed out. To dis sever a man from his works is a modern folly. We are we hope, going back to the practice of past times of giving credit where credit is due to the right source, and of awarding blame just where the blame is likely to be felt. Why should not the artisan take the place in society with the producer? ³⁰ Their interests are the same; there is elbow room for both.

This remarkably egalitarian consideration of the designer's rights, preceded those expressed by Engels, Marx, and William Morris by at least ten years, and Dresser to my knowledge is the first who in modern socialistic terms brought this notion to the attention of the public. In 1872 he further argued for the rights of designers to become members of the Royal Society, and his views soon gained ground in England. Matthew Digby Wyatt in his report of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867 was pleased to note that "Our Artist" is no longer confounded with "Our Traveller" or "Our Warehouse-man" but he is put forward as responsible for his own share in the productions of the house'. (1868, III p.2) A marked difference in attitude indeed had taken place since the last universal exhibition in 1862, but another ten years or so would pass before designers' names were allowed to figure jointly with the maker's mark, and Dresser was in fact one of the first industrial designers to obtain this right. Dresser's progressive design ideas placed him on equal footing with his former tutors, and George Cooper in a lecture delivered for the Royal Society of Arts in May 1866, expressed the consensus of opinion when he said that:

Our Schools of Design, in spite of their many shortcomings, are I am glad to say exercising an important influence on our manufacturers, an influence which has resulted not only in our designers having ceased to be mere copiers of the works of continental artists: but in our having, thanks to Mr. Owen Jones, Dr. Dresser, Digby Wyatt, and such men, established a School of decorative art, peculiarly English, pure in its character, and in its colouring perfect.³¹

DRESSER AND JAPAN AT THE 'PARIS EXPO UNIVERSELLE' IN 1867

We have noted that these men had been particularly inspired by Oriental art in their creation of a new British style of decorative art, and Matthew Digby Wyatt in his report of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867, emphasised that in studying the Indian, Persian, Chinese and Japanese collections 'the artist and manufacturer could obtain the secret of taste, harmony, and proportion' (1868, II, p.5) Dresser wholeheartedly recommended Japanese art in his publications and lectures of 1862-63 and his series of twelve articles on the Paris Exhibition released in The Chromolithograph 1867-68, endorsed these views saying that

'Such an acquaintance with Eastern art (Indian, Chinese and Japanese) could scarcely fail to influence the ornamentation of objects in this country; neither has it done so; and it has not only influenced the decorative art of Great Britain, but also that of continental Europe'. (1867, 112)

Evidently Japonism had manifested itself by then, and the movement received further impetus from the extensive presentation of Japan by the Japanese government itself.

The exhibits contributed comprised ceremonial costumes, armour, swords, lacquer furniture and utensils, porcelain and ceramics, metalwork, paper, 61 books including illustrated samples such as Hokusai's Manga, a screen by Shosen-in-Kano, and significantly a number of ukiyo-e prints by Yoshitoshi, Yoshiiku, Yoshitora, Kunichika, Hiroshige II and Kunisada II, as well as oil-paintings by Dogen Miyamoto, Horin and Sessai. The two largest provinces of Saga and Satsuma in addition exhibited no less than

66,143 items of porcelain, and lacquer, timber, tea-utensils, bamboo work, textiles and camphor. The tea-ceremony was attended to by imported geishas in a thatched tea house in the Japanese garden, and this was recorded as one of the most popular attractions of the entire exhibition. (Watanabe, 1984, pp.95-100)

The enthusiasm was overwhelming and the Japanese won gold medals in craft-work, sericulture and paper. Most of the exhibits, which were mainly of contemporary production, were sold in Paris after the close of the exhibition, and continued attracting attention until the end of the 1860s when Prince Tokugawa's private collection went for sale in Paris in 1868-69. (Lacambre, 1981, p.35) The Prince had stayed on in Paris and inspired a good deal of Japan exoticism, such as James Tissot's 'Atelier Japonais', opened in 1868. (Yamada, 1980, pp.146-150) The S. Ken. Museum as we have noted acquired a number of artefacts from the prince's collection, numbering some 118 items and comprising a variety of porcelain, lacquer-work, metal objects, cloisonné enamels, and two small kakimono and water-colour paintings by Kuniyoshi Yoryu as well as 19 ukiyo-e prints.³²

Notably amongst these purchases a cloisonné teapot which inspired James Tissot's similar creations exhibited as his 'Modern Exhibition' in London in 1882,³³ and a pilgrim bottle in porcelain which is reminiscent of Dresser's pilgrim bottles produced by Minton & Co and Josiah Wedgwood & Sons in 1867.³⁴ (figs. 49 & 50) (See also figs. 57, 59 & 70)

James Bowes' and George Audsley's publications combine to complete the picture of the kind of objects that were brought to England from the post exhibition sales in 1867-69, and they particularly favoured some 'oblong plaques of Japanese porcelain painted with views' (Audsley, 1872, nos.986-87) which are visible in photographs from the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867. These original photographs in the Victoria and Albert Museum also provide evidence for the presence of Japanese paintings at the exhibition

in 1867, but scholars have so far overlooked this important source material.³⁵ (fig.51)

Japanese art and Japonism creations by Dresser and other Japan enthusiasts had become part of the Western artistic vernacular by the time of the 1867 Paris exhibition, and Dresser in particular exhibited a quantity of these designs. His friend, the famous art critic George Augustus Sala (1828-1895) in his Notes and Sketches of the Paris Exhibition (London, 1868) stressed that Dresser's name although absent from the exhibition catalogues, could be 'fairly affixed to a score of the most remarkable productions in the Champ de Mars', and he added that:

For some years past the taste and skill of Dr. Dresser has been put in requisition by some of the leading manufacturers both of England and the Continent, and both as designer of models of patterns, and as "general adviser", his talents have been of the very highest service to firms whose principles, as in the case of Messrs. Brinton & Lewis, (Wilton carpets) combining capital and indefatigable enterprise, are laudably determined to bear Art as sedulously in view as they do industry; and who scorn, merely because a thing is "sure to sell" and "must find a market" to sow bad taste, broadcast and perpetuate ugliness. (p.278)

Digby Wyatt in his report was equally enthusiastic about Dresser's contribution to the British stand, and he particularly praised the Brinton & Lewis Axminster carpets which received gold medals:

Dr. Dresser has been good enough to inform me that, out of Messrs. Brinton & Lewis' collection the white-ground carpet with drab shadow and crimson arabesque scroll, is intended for large rooms, where two-breath designs are usually preferred, as giving greater scope for the artist's treatment of a massive subject in relief like this, of flowers and foliage, treated in self colours (ton sur ton) with heavy scroll-work to form the setting or panel-work of the whole (Wyatt, 1868, II, p.27)

John Brinton Ltd. had been founded in 1783 and merged with John Lewis from 1858 to 1870. They first received a medal at the Dublin International Exhibition in 1865 (Catalogue). We have noted that The Building News in 1865 referred to Dresser as 'being largely engaged in designing carpets and paper hangings' and he may well already then have been engaged by Brinton & Lewis for whom he designed carpets until at least 1885. Dresser as we know

had pioneered the need for a reform of the British carpet industry in his The Art of Decorative Design saying that 'the carpet should serve as a background to the contents of the room' and that plant ornaments if incorporated should be conventionalised and founded on a geometrical radiating basis in the way that we would see plants and flowers from above. (pp.152-154) It was precisely the naturalistic flower carpets so dear to the Victorians which Dresser objected to, and looking to the geometrical patterns of oriental rugs he formalised a set of doctrines which eventually came to revolutionise carpet manufacture in Britain and in America, where his ideas were frequently referred to during the 1870s and 1880s. His subsequent publication on Carpets in G.P. Bevan's British Manufacturing Industries (London 1876) contributed much to the popularisation of his creations which were characterised by geometrical and flat patterns combined with scroll work and broad borders banded by narrow edges that gave them a peculiar linear effect, a frame, as it were. This was recognised by Digby Wyatt already in 1867, and the scroll-work in 'ton-sur-ton' brings to mind characteristics of Chinese carpets, or the linearity of Japanese art, which Digby Wyatt strangely enough alluded to: 'Such fabrics are full of subtle contrivances which seem to spring into being spontaneously under the hand of the true artist. The painted picture-books of the Japanese are singularly rich in these subtleties'. (1868, II, p.17) Unfortunately, no illustrations of Dresser's designs for Brinton & Lewis have survived, but a number of patterns registered by the company with Patent Office Design Registry at the time correspond to Digby Wyatt's description and to some of the patterns in Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design. Digby Wyatt's report also praised Dresser's wallpapers for William Cooke & Co. of Leeds and described these as:

Twenty four original designs, founded on different flowers and plants, amongst which many are very good and few altogether unpleasing. The treatment of the hop, the hawthorn, and the anemone are particularly agreeable to the eye both in form and

colour. The Chinese primrose also makes a very pretty delicate diaper. (pp.11 & 17)

A series of designs registered by Cooke & Co. with the Design Patent Office 18 September 1866 correspond precisely to this description and to a number of drawings in Dresser's sketch books and pattern books, which are marked 'C' for Cooke. The ornaments and panel scrolls reflect the conventional angularity or 'rustic and broken' manner praised in Dresser's Japanese Ornamentation articles in 1863 (p.364) as well as the so called 'neutral' colouring of the Japanese wall-papers, which characterise the demure and tertiary colours in his designs. (fig.52A & B, 53A & B) The Builder in their review of the Paris exhibition recognised this particular quality in the wallpaper designs supplied by Dresser for William Woollams of London.³⁶ Dresser had been engaged by this firm already in 1858³⁷ and he continued to provide designs for the company until the early 1880s. (Sugden, 1925, p.237) A sample book of Woollams's papers from 1866 preserved in the V & A contain patterns that match with drawings in Dresser's pattern book, and these may well have been exhibited in 1867 when The Building News stressed that his designs for Woollams were 'particularly good'.³⁸ (fig.54A & B)

Recently three designs by Dresser for Jeffrey & Co's wallpaper dated 1867 have come to light, named 'Dragon', 'Cairo', and 'Celtic Knot', and it is quite likely that these were also exhibited in Paris in 1867 when Jeffrey's work figured prominently with patterns by Owen Jones and others. The three striking designs bring to mind the angularity and the scrolls referred to above, as well as Dresser's favoured dragon device in Japanese ornamentation, which he had stressed in his articles in 1863 and reiterated in his review of the Paris Exhibition in 1867:

The Chinese and the Japanese have used the grotesque most frequently and for it they manifest a decided partiality. The drawings of dragons, celestial lions, mythical birds, and beasts, and fishes, and insects, and other inhabitants of the Elysian plains which these people produce are most extraordinary. It must be noticed that power or tameness (feebleness) may be associated with the grotesque; thus some of the Chinese and

Japanese dragons seem perfect embodiments of power and ferocity while others are quaint merely, and others still are more numerous. (1867, p.36) (fig.55)

We know that Dresser had a particular liking for the grotesque in art, and that similar dragon scrolls had been incorporated in a vase produced by Minton & Co in 1862. (figs.22 & 23) Dresser continued designing wall-papers for Jeffrey & Co until about 1887, and his 'Dragon' design is included in his pattern book.³⁹ The 'Celtic Knot' appears in his Modern Ornamentation (London, 1886, pl.15) A similarly ferocious flame spouting dragon was incorporated into a cast-iron stove designed by Dresser for Coalbrookdale Iron Co. at the time. (fig.56) The angularity and crispness of the designs favoured by Dresser was also dominant in a number of cast-iron coat stands, chairs and benches designed by him for the same company in 1867. These may well have been exhibited in the Paris exhibition in 1867, when Dresser commented on similar motifs and characteristics of design in The Chromolithograph

Angularity, when considered from an art point of view, is stimulating; rounded forms are soothing. The crispness of a thistle leaf is exciting, while the large forms of the banana leaf present an appearance of tranquility. (p.19)

Dresser is recorded as having supplied designs to Coalbrookdale for cast-iron furniture, stoves, fireplace surrounds and grates until about 1880, and some of these are marked by a certain Japanese influence.

It was precisely the notion of the angular, conventionalised, and grotesque in Japanese art, which characterised Dresser's first Japan inspired designs for Minton & Co porcelain in 1862, and this is even more apparent in the many creations he produced for Minton's and for Wedgewood & Co.'s stands at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867. Significantly these stand out in sharp contrast to the exhibits of Japan influenced French porcelain, such as Felix Bracquemond's 'Service Rousseau', which displayed naturalistic motifs lifted directly from Hokusai's Manga on plates which one would associate with the rococo style. (fig.34) Neither Dresser nor the Japanese

themselves would have sanctioned such imitative adaptations of fine art elements for utilitarian articles. It was this difference in attitude between Dresser and the French Japonists that marked one of the most decisive differences between the development of Japonism in Britain and in France, and which induced the angular, conventionalised and grotesque in the Anglo-Japanese style as opposed to the naturalistic, swooping lines in French Japonisme, a kin to the rococo style and precursor of Art Nouveau. This divergent attitude was recognised by the Japonist Philip Burty in his Chefs d'Oeuvre of the Industrial Arts released in Paris and London in 1869:

Our ceramic artists have surpassed the productions of Minton in point of independence and painted decoration, but none can come up to them in outline, or in suitableness to their several uses. (.121)

Clearly the Minton samples examined by Burty in Paris in 1867, reflected Dresser's utilitarian and linear doctrines as expressed in The Art of Decorative Design. This is not surprising for a number of Dresser designs were exhibited on the Minton stand. They are all in the cloisonné style inspired by Chinese and Japanese cloisonné on porcelain and in metal.

The ground colour is invariably turquoise, buff, yellow or cane, with patterns of brighter colours in slight relief, encircled with gold or black lines as in the Japanese prototypes, which Dresser had admired at the London exhibition in 1862. Indeed, the first production number in a series of vases created by Dresser in 1867, no.1303 is a flat-shaped pilgrim bottle which must have been modelled on 'a very fine flat shaped pilgrim bottle in cloisonné' shown by Remi, Schmidt & Co. at the 1862 exhibition.⁴⁰ Two pilgrim bottles in the Alcock collection decorated 'with flowers and birds in brilliant colours on turquoise ground',⁴¹ may also have served as prototypes, for Dresser's design incorporated precisely such a bird in brilliant colours - a peacock shown frontally with laurel wreaths in the beak. The exhibition sample had a buff ground colour, but the same design was produced on turquoise ground in December 1868. The 1303 vase remained

one of Minton's most popular shapes during the 1870s and 1880s and in July 1869 it also received a Dresser pattern of large butterflies encircled by scroll work in the Japanese manner, and down the decades these two patterns were frequently referred to as 'Japan Birds' in the Minton sale and estimate books. (figs.57 & 58) A similar pilgrim bottle no. 1348 in cloisonné style was also created by Dresser for the Paris exhibition in 1867. (fig.59)

The majority of the creations designed by Dresser for Minton & Co in 1867, are annotated Dresser in their estimate-book and most of the original design-works, described in Herbert Minton's Art Catalogue of 1871, have been preserved in the Royal Doulton Minton Archive in a Dresser file.⁴² Several of the shapes are derived from Japanese and other oriental prototypes, and the decorations incorporate conventionalised flower, leaf, and anthemion borders derived from Dresser's studies of Artistic Botany combined with cloisonné and scroll-patterns he had observed in Japanese models.

He had dealt with several of these motifs in his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' in 1863, - such as birds, butterflies, beetles, insects, feathers, and beasts. The Minton decorations were rendered in the grotesque and conventionalised way Dresser had admired in Japanese art, and particularly the 'insects, grass-hoppers, and beetles' which were underlined as favourite motifs in his lecture on 'The Prevailing Ornament of China and Japan' in 1863. (p.388)

Vase no.1342 incorporates formalised salamander-beasts combined with pansy flowers, and nos.1347 and 1348 patterns are derived from Owen Jones's Examples of Chinese Ornaments which was published at the time, but the motifs in fact may well be Japanese. The most original of these designs was probably the grasshopper skeletons in echelon holding tridents between them for vase no.1346, which were referred to as 'grotesques' in the Minton

estimate book in March 1868.⁴³ (figs.60 & 61)

Two of the most famous Japan collections in Britain amassed during the 1860s, those of Sir Rutherford Alcock and the Duke of Edinburgh, are recorded as having contained objects decorated with 'grasshopper processions',⁴⁴ and Dresser later referred to this theme as one of the most popular Japanese decorations, (Dresser, 1882, p.272). A similar design inspired by the bugbear, and entitled 'Old Bogey' was illustrated in Dresser's Principles (1873, fig.22)

The butterfly motif combined with angular scrolls, leaves and conventionalised flowers was first introduced by Dresser in seaux no.1329 for the Paris Exhibition, and it was combined with grotesque beetles and angular leaves in shape no.1342 in August 1867, and in 1346 in February 1871. A pattern-sheet with 23 different butterfly designs has been preserved in the Royal Doulton/Minton Archive, and provides an important source for the identification of other Dresser designs.(fig.62) Dresser launched the stylised insect in decoration a generation before these themes were to become popular in design, and he continued to draw on this source of inspiration throughout his artistic career.

Two more Dresser designs exhibited by Minton in 1867, bear the earlier production-numbers of 1103 and 1184, which indicates a date of about 1865. They represent two of Minton's first Chinese or Japan inspired shapes, and the substructures resemble those shown at the Japan stand in 1862, and this constructional detail was used by Dresser in a number of subsequent Minton vases. Vase no.1103 was decorated with Dresser's grotesques 'Our dog tray in the spirit' and 'Our dog tray in the flesh' and vase no.1184 incorporated a stylised flower medallion first published in The Art of Decorative Design (1862,pl.II) and the ribbon and pendant ornaments occur in a number of subsequent Japan inspired decorations by Dresser. (figs.63 & 64)

A number of table and toilet ware patterns were also designed by

Dresser for Minton & Co. in 1867, and at least one of the dinner plate patterns was exhibited in Paris in 1867. (A 143) Another seven patterns are preserved in the Dresser file at Minton's and two of these were adapted to toilet-ware and entered in Minton's pattern books as A 7320 and A 7321 in January 1867. A tea and coffee service pattern entitled 'Dresser's sprigs' was introduced at Minton's in March 1867, and this became one of Minton's most popular patterns. Another four designs for breakfast plates are kept in the Dresser file and these probably originate from the same period. (figs.65 & 66)

None of these can be said to be directly inspired by Japanese designs, but they display the conventionalised borders, flower and leaf ornaments which Dresser had praised both in his artistic botany and in Japanese art. A similar dinner plate design for Wedgwood & Co. was registered by the company with the Design Patent Office 16 March 1867 with two other Dresser designs for Wedgwood vases dated 11 and 20 March 1867.(figs. 67 & 68A & B) The plate was illustrated in Pevsner's article on Dresser (Pevsner 1937, p.183) and these ornaments are reminiscent of tropical plant leaves but also of the Japanese feather ornaments mentioned by Dresser in 1863. One of the vase patterns was illustrated in Principles with the following description:

I have sought to embody chiefly the idea of power, energy, force, or vigour: and in order to do this, I have employed such lines as we see in the bursting buds of spring, when the energy of growth is at its maximum, and especially such as are to be seen in the spring growth of a luxuriant tropical vegetation: I have also availed myself of those forms to be seen in certain bones of birds which are associated with the organs of flight, and which give us an impression of great strength, as well as those observable in the propelling fins of certain species of fish.(fig.18 & p.17)

Clearly the same source of inspiration can be detected in the other Dresser designs released by Wedgwood in 1867, and the first pattern was adapted to two different shapes also designed by Dresser. They are equally vigorous

and were perhaps inspired by Japanese spill vases such as those illustrated in Audsley & Bowes' Keramic Art of Japan (London, 1875, Vol.II, pl.IX), described as emanating from the Duke of Edinburgh's collection which was amassed during the 1860s. This may well have been known to Dresser.(figs.69) A number of descriptions in the Wedgwood estimate books from the 1860s are annotated 'Dresser', but only a few of these patterns have been located, including a pilgrim bottle similar to the ones launched by Minton & Co in 1867. Wedgwood's shape 1212 was also executed in the same year in turquoise, red and cane ground-colour decorated in enamel-colours with Dresser borders and grotesques, one showing the cross-section of a crane flying and the other a flat fish en face.⁴⁵(fig.70) Knowing that these Dresser designs were executed early in the Spring of 1867, we may assume that quite a few of these designs were exhibited at the Wedgwood stand in Paris in the same year, which also marks Dresser's first contact with the company. Evidently, George A. Sala, was right in mentioning Dresser amongst the most well represented designers at the Paris Expo Universelle, and we shall see that the Japanese influence established in the production of Dresser and other artists received much attention from the critics.

JAPONISM ESTABLISHED

The fashion for Japanese art had developed to become a kind of mania when in 1867 a group of French devotees had founded the Société Japonaise du Jing-lar. Two of its members, the critics Philip Burty and Zacharie Astruc were particularly active in championing the new movement in art, and Astruc in his article on 'L'empire du Soleil Levant' published in 'L'Étandard' of 23 March 1867 enthusiastically proclaimed 'Faisons-nous Japonais'. The Goncourt brothers in a letter to Philip Burty in the same year endorsed the mania with their famous: 'Japonaiserie forever' (Sutton, 1984) and Champfleury as we have noted wrote about the origin of 'Le Mode Japonaiserie' in La Vie Parisienne in 1868. The fashion was such that

The Manufacturer, in 1868, could inform its British readers that even ladies' dresses and jewellery was affected: 'The latest fashions from Paris are inspired by Japanese tastes, the high chignon, the silken bow tied behind, the long narrow petticoats, being all seemingly copied from Japanese costumes'.⁴⁶ Burty in his article on 'Les Émaux Cloisonnés Modernes' released in Le Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité in 1868, praised 'L'idée d'imiter directement ces cloisonnés japonais' (p.162) practised by Eugene Reiber and Alexis Falize in Paris, and in 'Le Mobilier Moderne' published in Le Gazette des Beaux Arts (1868), he recognised the beauty and 'lois des ensembles' in Japanese interiors which Dresser had himself emphasised already in 1863:

Le mobilier japonaise nous est révélé, dans toute son élégante simplicité, par les albums qui représentent des scènes de la vie civile: des paravants en laque ou en papier, des coussins pour s'asseoir les jambes repliées, des portemanteaux mobiles pour accrocher les vêtements, des coffres pour les serrer, des plateaux pour présenter les aliments et les rafraîchissements, voilà tout ce qui le compose. On s'étend pour dormir sur des pièces d'étoffes et la tête s'appuie sur un petit trépid en bois laqué. Tout est d'une légèreté idéale. Il semble que ce peuple si fin, si artiste, si sagace, n'attache qu'une importance secondaire à ce qui lie l'homme aux nécessités implacables de l'existence. Son mobilier est mobile comme son théâtre. (Tome 24, pp.27-28)

Research on early Japonism has centered almost entirely on the impact of ukiyo-e prints on Western painters, but clearly they also provided views of Japanese interiors and decorative art which became of great importance to European designers, and it is significant that Dresser's and Burty's views on the subject coincide.

Ernest Chesneau's (1833-1890) Peinture-Sculpture; Les Nations rivales dans l'art (Paris, 1868) a report on the Exhibition of 1867, presented the first attempt on the part of a French critic to see Japanese art in a historical perspective, and thus it gave further impetus to the Japonism movement amongst painters. The effect was immediate and Fantin-Latour in the following year planned a painting which included Whistler's kimono

hanging in the centre surrounded by Japanese boxes and prints, which he called 'Japonisme' and thus coined the word which was to become indicative of the whole movement. (Yamada, ed. 1980, p.65) It is significant that the expression originated from the joint venture of the two leaders of the coterie of Japonist artists, Whistler and Fantin-Latour, and not from Philip Burty as alleged by him in his article on 'Japonisme' published in 1872, (English version in The Academy in 1875). (Yamada, ed. 1980, p.116)

Clearly Japonism was well established by then, and William Michael Rossetti in England continued the promotion of Japanese art by including a reprint of his article from 1863 in his book Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary which appeared in 1867. Reproduced in Rossetti's publication was also a letter from John Ruskin, dated 28 February 1867, which gives a clue as to the divergent attitudes prevalent in England at the time. Ruskin condemned the performance of some Japanese jugglers who had performed in London and in Paris in 1867, as monstrous and demoniacal, and he utterly regretted the 'Increasing interest in Japanese art, which has been harmful to many of our painters':(p.28) The Workshop Journal, however, endorsed the views of Dresser and Rossetti alike in an article on 'Our Present Need' in 1868:

As a consequence of this system of copying and imitating, all the styles of past periods in Art have, in turns, been put to the test, however strange and uncongenial to modern habits and feelings. Last of all we have cast our eyes upon the far off countries of the Eastern Worlds. Enamoured of the gorgeous brilliancy, of the richness of colours, displayed in Eastern art, we have been lost in contemplation before the productions of Persia, India, China and Japan.⁴⁷

In 1869 James Jackson Jarves (1818-1888) an art critic and a key figure behind the Japonism movement in the U.S.A. published the first article to appear on 'Japanese Art' in the British Art Journal. Dealing with Hokusai's prints he ventured into the subject with great aplomb, using such adjectives as demoniacal, burlesque, realistic. Japan's triumph at the international exhibitions in 1862 and 1867, as well as the increasing flow

of information about Japanese art, had taken Western critics and artists by storm. Its effects had become so patent by the end of the decade that Owen W. Davis (1838-?) designer of wallpapers, in a short notice on 'Japanese Ornament' published in The Building News signalled the emergence of a Japan mania:

In the studios of artists and amateurs we find increasing collections of Japanese, Chinese, or other Oriental objects, from inlaid mother-of-pearl cabinets, textile fabrics, faience, trays, fans, and screens, down to the unpretending pot of preserved ginger; in fact it has become a little mania to exercise a show of taste in that quarter.

We have noted that Dresser in his series of articles on the Paris Exhibition, had expressed similar views, and particularly praised the Japanese furniture, enamels, bronzes, lacquer work, as well as the effect of the conventionalised, the angular and the grotesque in these works.

Clearly Dresser was at the time a primary agent of the communication of Japanese ideas, as well as for the presentation of creations inspired by Japanese art. A strong Japanese influence was noticeable in his works from the latter 1860s, but eclecticism on the other hand prevailed as the second source of inspiration. This is clearly demonstrated in two electroplate designs for Elkington & Co executed in 1869. The decanter appears to have been inspired by traditional English church ware with borders which resemble those executed for Minton & Co at the time, - and the tureen probably by Japanese tea ceremony vessels. The severely geometric shape stripped of all ornament is extremely surprising for its time. (fig. 71A & B)

Similarly divergent attitudes can be seen in Dresser's designs for Brinton & Lewis carpets and for J.W. & C. Ward's silk damasks, for whom Pevsner recorded Dresser as having provided no fewer than 67 and 169 drawings respectively in 1869. They display Dresser's artistic botany at its best, and the principle he had observed in Japanese Ornamentation in 1863:

In all cases the natural object is subjected to a conventional treatment. The flowers are "displayed" rather than rendered symmetrical; that is they are spread out flatly upon a surface. (p.364)

This characteristic is equally dominant in Dresser's designs for Minton's cloisonné executed in the late 1860's. A range of vases based on Japanese and Oriental shapes were created by Dresser in the autumn of 1867, and the first production no.1376, a spill-vase in the form of a Japanese pencil-vase, was decorated with a striking anthemion pattern in turquoise, olive, blue, red, orange and ivory. The design occurred both in Dresser's sketch books and pattern-books, and a more typical Japanese 'anthemion' pattern was issued for the same vase in December 1868. (fig.72) Vase no.1378 was inspired by a Japanese bronze-vase exhibited at the London Exhibition in 1862, and incorporated the feather ornaments noted by Dresser in his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' as well as an 'anthemion' border.(fig. 73A & B) Similar feather-ornaments combined with Dresser-borders occurred on a garden-pot no.1171 simultaneously launched by Minton, and in vase no.1518 executed in December 1869, which also incorporated 'gilt scrolls of dragons and floral ornaments' on turquoise ground. The latter feature was replaced by Dresser's scrolls and butterflies in May 1870, and his entire range of designs for Minton & Co in this period contributed to illustrate motifs discussed in Japanese Ornamentation.(figs.74 & 75) Shape no.1379 is based on a Japanese vase illustrated in Jacquemart & Le Blant's Histoire Industrielle et Commerciale de la Porcelain (Paris 1861, p.4) and this was decorated with Dresser-borders and stylised leaf-ornaments, later referred to as 'Dresser's ornament in green and gold'.⁴⁹ It became one of Minton's most popular shapes and was reproduced with a variety of Dresser decorations, of which pattern O 1717 from November 1867 incorporates a beetle-border similar to that of his grasshopper and butterfly design. (fig.76) Shape nos. 1381, 1382, 1384 and 1385 display Dresser borders and flower-sprigs copied from his sketch-books. (figs.77A & B, 78, 79) Another version incorporating scroll-panels in the Japanese manner was applied to vase 1381 and 1384 alike, and on a number of subsequent attributed Dresser-

designs. Vase no.1384 in particular was frequently reproduced by Minton with recognisable Dresser-decorations down the decades.

Among Minton's 1,400 production-series from the years 1868-69, at least six can be attributed to Dresser: nos.1414, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1481, 1487. Vase no.1414 was introduced early in 1868, and a similar tripod-shape occurs in Dresser's sketchbook. The source of inspiration was probably Japanese cloisonné tripods exhibited in London in 1862, and the first decoration on turquoise ground indeed incorporated a mask-like scroll-pattern with a pair of eyes, which Dresser had listed as a popular Japanese motif in 1863. This kind of grotesque was particularly favoured by Dresser and occurred in a number of his subsequent designs. (fig.80A & B) Shape no.1470 and 1471 are clearly inspired by Japanese prototypes and the cloisonné decorations on turquoise ground contained Japanese crests that occurred in Dresser's crest-album preserved in the V & A. A sheet of 19 different circular crest motifs, similar to the butterfly pattern-sheet, is kept in the Royal Dolton/Minton Archive, and provide an equally important source for attributing designs to Dresser. (figs.81, 82 & 83) The two designs were created in February-March 1869, and so were three fan-shaped vases on stands in the Japanese manner nos.1472, 1481, 1487, with patterns on turquoise ground that display many of Dresser's favourite motifs such as anthemions, angular scrolls, peacocks, dragons, butterflies, crabs and flower-sprigs. (figs. 84, 85 & 86)

Four more Dresser designs for Minton & Co. from 1869 remain to be considered. A 'Dresser-border' in cloisonné colours on turquoise ground was entered in the table-ware books in January 1869, and the same stylised leaf and flower-border was incorporated in vase no.1507 together with a Japanese cusp-border and crest-motifs from Dresser's pattern-sheet.(figs.83 & 87) Vase no.1505 received similar ornaments on turquoise ground, and tobacco-caddy 1512 was decorated with a beautiful cicada ornament, whose

rounded outspread wings are adapted to the shape of the caddy. This pleasing effect was propagated by Dresser in his articles on Japanese Ornamentation in 1863, as well as in his The Art of Decorative Design: (fig.88)

The principle of preserving the true condition of the surface decorated is maintained rigidly in all Japanese work. (The Builder, 1863, p.364)

The ornament must tend to emphasize the beautiful quality of the object and not destroy the form, for no decoration is tolerable which militates against the general beauty of the shape. (1862, p.179)

Dresser's rational and constructive perception of forms and decorations went far beyond his contemporaries and can only be compared to that expressed by Art Nouveau artists around the turn of the century. Clearly Dresser's stylised forms owed much to his admiration of Japanese art, and the simplicity, angularity and grotesque touch prevalent in most of his designs stand out as entirely novel in a contemporary Japonism context. French designers such as Felix Barquemon, Eugène Reiber and Theodore Deck, had drawn their main inspiration from Japanese prints, and thus failed to recognise the characteristics noted by Dresser. Their patterns are imitative and naturalistic but it is true, as Stephan Tschudi-Madsen has pointed out, that in these motifs we find the precursor for Art Nouveau in France. (1955, p.174) Dresser's designs, however less Japanese at first sight, reflect his thorough study of the decorative and constructive style of the Japanese, and it is from this divergent attitude that the difference in French and English Art-Nouveau would germinate.

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CHAPTER V

DRESSER'S PRINCIPLES AND THE JAPAN CULTESTABLISHED 1870-75**DRESSER'S 'PRINCIPLES OF DECORATIVE DESIGN'**

Dresser's rapid emergence as a designer, writer and theorist in the 1860s had brought him to the forefront of the artistic milieu in Britain, and as an indication of his success and increasing fortune he moved from Hammersmith to a larger house, Tower Cressy in Aubrey Road, Campden Hill, in 1868-69, built by Thomas Page (1803-77) in 1854. During the 1870s Dresser received a tremendous feed-back for his ideas which became an important stimulus for design reform in Britain, America and on the continent. The striking effect of his endeavours was facilitated by the publication of his Principles of Decorative Design, released in articles in The Technical Educator between 1870-1872, and in book form in 1873. We shall see that these 'principles' were endorsed in Dresser's designs at the time, and that his concern with the social status of the crafts-man, designer and working man alike brought his ideas to a wide range of people who wished to become educated. His introduction stressed that he desired to address himself especially to 'working men' and that he saw himself as one of them: 'Workmen! I am a worker, and a believer in the efficacy of work.' (1870, 49-50)

The first part of his articles published in 1870 dealt with general principles of design, and the laws which regulate the application of colours to objects, and these on the whole reiterated the doctrines presented in the books published by Dresser in 1862. The classification of historical styles, 'utility', 'fitness or adaptation to purpose', 'economy and appropriate use of the material', as well as the combination of curves, proportion, order and repetition in ornamentation. Two more chapters were added however, one which dealt with 'Truth, Beauty, & Power in Ornamentation'

explaining the subtitle and frontispiece of his book, and the other with 'Employment of the Grotesque in Ornament'. This reflected Dresser's ideas on the topic as presented in his articles in Japanese Ornamentation of 1863 and in his review of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867. His attitude had evidently changed since the publication of The Art of Decorative Design in which he strongly disregarded 'ornamental compositions such as tend to suggest the human countenance, or any monster'. (p.185)

His source of inspiration is evident:

As regards Eastern nations, while nearly all have employed the grotesque as an element of decorative art, the Chinese and Japanese have employed it most largely, and for it they manifest a most decided partiality. The drawings of dragons, celestial lions, mythical birds, beasts, fishes, insects, and other supposed inhabitants of the Elysian plains, which these people produce, are most interesting and extraordinary. (1870, 151)

We have noted that Dresser's own designs during the later 1860s were marked by a similar partiality for such grotesques, and particularly the dragon which he highly admired:

Of all the grotesques with which I am acquainted, the dragons of the Chinese and Japanese are those which represent a combination of power, vigour, energy, and passion most fully (1870, 152)

Clearly his studies of Chinese and Japanese art had led to the final notion that 'The grotesque should frequently be used where we meet with naturalistic imitations' (1870, 153), and this kind of ornament was associated with what Dresser called the 'power' in design.

His chapter on 'Truth, Beauty, and Power' in fact dealt with a motto which Dresser had himself taken to heart, and which he had impressed in a shield-like creation on the door to his study. (fig.89) Truth represented 'science', beauty equalled 'art', and 'power' the artist's capability of uniting the two. Dresser defined truth in relation to falsehood which mitigated against the scientific and natural capacity of the material, for example painted 'faux marble'; 'The imitation is always less beautiful than the thing imitated; and as each material has the power of expressing

beauty truthfully, thus the want of truth brings its own punishment'. (1870, 120) Beauty accordingly 'Must be truthful in expression, and graceful, delicate, and refined in contour, manifesting no coarseness, vulgarity, or obtrusiveness...The beautiful manifests no want, no shortcoming'. Power should be manifested by 'earnestness'. 'Power means energy, power implies a conqueror'. The artist was seen as the conqueror who could unite 'truth' and 'beauty' in 'power': 'We shall not be believed if we do not utter our truths with power, let truth, then be uttered with power, and in the form of beauty' (1870, 120-21)

Dresser's doctrines on 'Colour' elaborated on those he had presented in 'Development' in 1862, and he particularly underlined that 'The works of the Japanese are not to be overlooked, for in certain branches of art they are inimitable, and as colourists they are almost perfect. On the commonest of their lacquer trays, they generally have a bit of good colouring, and their coloured pictures are sometimes marvels of harmony'. (1870, 230)

ART FURNITURE

The last three articles published by Dresser in 1870 were entitled 'Art-Furniture', and recommended the use of black or ebonised wood (pp.311-406) in the manner of Japanese lacquer works. We know that he had praised much furniture of a 'quaint and Japanese character', already in 1862 and a chair illustrated in Principles described as being a chair of my own designing in which I have sought to give strength to the back by connecting its upper portion with a strong cross-rail of the frame' in fact appears to be similar to this.

We have suggested that the two chairs were identical, but regardless of such speculation, it seems safe to conclude that this powerful design was at least inspired by the 1862 exhibition piece, and as such represents Dresser's first Japan-inspired furniture design. (fig.20) This angular,

squat and quaint chair certainly displays characteristics which Dresser had associated with Japanese art, and the play with vertical and horizontal rails, solids and voids, as well as the honest display of constructional elements, could well be compared to some of the Japanese furniture admired by Dresser at the Paris exhibition in 1867, and to the 'Anglo-Japanese' furniture created by Godwin in the same year and described in retrospect as:

No mouldings, no ornamental metal work, no carving. Such effect as I wanted I endeavoured to gain, as in economical building by the grouping of solid and void and by more or less broken outline, the scantling or substance or the framing and other parts of the furniture was reduced to as low a denomination as was compatible with the soundness of the construction. (Godwin, 1877, p.5)

Dresser in his articles had expressed similar views and in criticising Charles Lock Eastlake's and William Burges' neo-gothic furniture he emphasised that: 'The general want which we perceive in modern furniture is simplicity of structure and truthfulness of construction'. (p.378) The curved frames and legs in Eastlake's furniture, according to Dresser, were constructed on false principles, and would collapse beneath the weight of their recipients. Ironically, Dresser himself, had designed a pair of gothicised chairs with curved legs, which were illustrated in The Furniture Gazette in 1880, but these according to The Cabinet Maker had been created prior to the publication of Dresser's articles in 1870.¹ However sceptical Dresser was towards Eastlake's furniture designs, he did comment favourable on his Hints in Household Taste published in London in 1868, which in accordance with Dresser's own views advocated the principle of entire interior decorations, of 'more elegance and lightness'. Eastlake in pointing to Japanese art also endorsed an important source of inspiration for the modern 'art-furniture', (p.46) which he anticipated would be created. It was indeed Eastlake, who coined the word 'art-furniture' and his ideas materialised with the formation of the short-lived 'Art Furniture Company' in 1868. Arthur Blomfield and Edward Godwin are

known to have been connected with this company which only existed for about a year. It is possible that Dresser, who clearly created furniture which compared with that of Godwin may also have been engaged as a designer, but this assumption cannot be verified due to the lack of information concerning this company. The manufacturer of the furniture shown by Dresser in his articles remains a mystery, but we know that similar creations were produced by Chubb & Co. in the early 1880s from his drawings. Regardless of this puzzling lack of information Dresser was certainly the first designer to publish exclusively on 'art-furniture' and who attempted remedying the gap which had emerged between art and manufacture. Dresser stressed that this was a fictitious division, and that the artistic capacity of modern manufacture was equal to that of the craftsman in former times. Clearly with the advent of the arts and crafts-movement during the 1870s the need to emphasise the artistic nature of industrial manufacture gave rise to such related expressions as art pottery, art glass, and art interiors.

Dresser's criteria for the design of art-furniture was summed up in his demand for the creation of 'the greatest amount of strength with the least expenditure of the material' and that the simplicity and justness of the structure should be such that its frame was visible and not obstructed by excessive upholstery and even reveal constructional elements such as tenons, mortises, and pins. Carving accordingly, should be sparingly used, and inlaying or painting was to be preferred because it left the flatness of the surface undisturbed. Regarding window and picture frames inside the interior, Dresser claimed that these fulfilled similar duties, and ought to be coloured darker than the wall, and that curtains as such not always were needed, but if used should be hung on 'a simple and obvious pole'. (1871, p.24) This diverged strongly from the Victorian practice of heavy gold frames and elaborate hangings, and Dresser's thoughts on interior design

launched a series of principles which have prevailed to the present time.

SURFACE DECORATION AND DECORATION OF CEILINGS

These views were further elaborated upon in his additional articles on 'Surface Decoration and decoration of Ceilings', 'Wall Decorations', 'Carpets', 'Hangings and Woven Fabrics generally', all published in 1871. Dresser's doctrines on the decorations of ceilings reflected those of Owen Jones:

Any amount of colour may be used on a ceiling, provided the colours are employed in very small masses, and perfectly mingled, so that the effect produced is that of a rich coloured bloom.
(p.56)

Deviating strongly from the Victorian habit of white washing ceilings, Dresser recommended Oriental colour schemes and he particularly advocated the blue colour of the sky dispersed with white or cream-coloured stars which was 'much in favour with the Japanese'.(p.57) This idea seems somewhat unfounded, but the accompanying illustration show star motifs frequently met with in Japanese ceiling decorations, (fig.90A & B) and the majority of Dresser's ceilings indeed were inspired by Oriental prototypes.

WALL DECORATIONS

Clearly Dresser strove to communicate that the vernacular of Japanese art could be adapted to Western interiors. We have seen that he already in 1863 advocated similar views and his notion of dull (subtle) and neutral colours in Japanese wall papers, as well as the yellow colour associated with Japonism interiors, was repeatedly recommended in Dresser's articles on 'Wall Decorations' in 1871. Yellow or citrine coloured walls and the blue ceiling above, combined with the dado, frieze and cornice scheme was launched by Dresser as a perfect decoration for drawing rooms. Such matching frieze, dado, wall, cornice and ceiling papers had been produced in France in the early nineteenth century, but Dresser was the first to

propagate these schemes in Britain. He stated that he had supplied a complete series of these papers to Jeffrey & Co., and Metford Warner of this firm later confirmed that they indeed had been instrumental in introducing this fashion.² The patterns illustrated by Dresser in 1871 were probably produced by Jeffrey & Co, but he also alluded to narrow dado papers designed by him for Wylie & Lockhead of Glasgow, who in the same year took over the company Catto & Clay, for whom Dresser had supplied designs in 1864.³ (fig.90)

Dresser preferred plain coloured walls as in Japanese interiors, combined with a patterned dado, frieze and cornice, and he warned against 'huge bunches of flowers and animals or the human figure' and recommended patterns 'of a simple geometrical character, or patterns which designs are "powdered" or placed at regular intervals over a plain ground.' (p.151) A number of decorative schemes for friezes and ceilings were illustrated and all seem to be inspired by Oriental ornamentation, and particularly that of an arch scheme, which is almost identical to decorations incorporated in Dresser's designs for the interiors of Allangate Mansion in Halifax, executed at the time.

ALLANGATE MANSION AND DRESSER'S AESTHETIC INTERIOR

These Dresser interiors have been altered many times since their creation in 1873; but are amongst the few that have been located and preserved. According to Castles and Country Houses in Yorkshire, (1885) Allangate at the time was owned by an MP, Mr. Thomas Shaw, who had engaged Dresser to carry out the alterations of the entire interior of his house, which included 'even the renewal of the fire places, gas, and other fixtures, and of the whole of the furniture';

The fireplaces throughout the building are of polished black marble and incised work in gold, and the whole of the wood-work and the furniture, which was manufactured from special designs prepared by Dr. Dresser, is in ebonised wood with incised gold work. Dados are found in all the rooms, and like the upper

portion of the walls are flatted in aesthetic colours with suitable archaic patterns stencilled thereon...There is no house anywhere in the district and few in England fitted up with such elaborate and artisitic thoroughness.'⁴

Evidently Dresser's interiors at Allangate, were amongst the first so called 'aesthetic interiors', created according to his Principles of Decorative Design and his observations of Japanese interiors in 1863: 'The wall-papers are as dull and neutral as the lacquered objects are bright and positive...The wall of an ordinary apartment should always be treated as a background'. (1863, p.365)

Aesthetic decoration indeed derived a great deal from the restraint of Japanese art and interiors, and particularly in the choise of subdued colours in the surface decoration contrasted with ebonised furniture and colourful ceramics, glass, metalwork and textiles. Rarely described by leaders of fashion but frequently caricatured by cartoonists, such as George Du Maurier (1834-1896) in Punch, perhaps the only rooms that could meet the high principles of aestheticism were those designed by Dresser, Godwin and Thomas Jeckyll in the 1870s. No designer in this period had done more to promote the style of such decorations than Dresser. His publications, lectures and designs between 1862 and 1873 demonstrate his ability to create the total interior.

The colour scheme of the rooms at Allangate are described as cool green with chocolate dado in the library, cool buff with crimson dado in the drawing-room, and 'aesthetic green and chocolate tints' in the bedroom-suites, contrasted with brighter cornices in blue, black and gold and the colourful ceilings advocated by Dresser. Unfortunately only the cornices and ceilings remain intact in the house. The one in the library was described as 'considered by Dr. Dresser to be the most remarkable feature in the ornamentation of the whole building, and his own veritable masterpiece.'⁴ (fig.92) The Furniture Gazette later compared it with those executed by Owen Jones in Carlton House in London,⁵ and Dresser's creation

bears a strong resemblance to Jones's Persian plates in The Grammar of Ornament (pl.XLVI) and his decorations for the Oriental courts in the South Kensington museum. (fig.38) The elaborate enamel colouring of green, turquoise, blue and rich gilding is also reminiscent of his creations for Minton & Co cloisonné ware, and certainly must have contributed an 'Arabian Nights' atmosphere to the room. The drawing-room ceiling is equally bright in colouring, reflecting Dresser's doctrine that 'Any amount of colour may be used on a ceiling'. The drawing-room was fitted up with a double ceiling, consisting of open-work trellis construction painted blue and black and with gold bosses at each of the intersections. The panels visible through in the upper ceiling was painted with floral patterns in the overlapping Japanese appliqué style. The coffered effect is that of a Japanese temple ceiling which may have been known to Dresser, and the choice of flower motifs, cherry blossoms and chrysanthemums, is distinctly Japanese. (fig.93)

The decoration of the stained glass windows in the drawing-room is also characteristically Japanese and the main-panels include many of the motifs mentioned by Dresser in Japanese Ornamentation: butterflies, cherry blossoms, lilies, and pomegranates combined with birds against a fret-background. The side panels contain roundels with bird motifs from Hokusai's Manga and stylised flowers, and the colour scheme of all the windows is subdued in keeping with Dresser's 'Principles' on stained glass published in 1872: 'Strong colours should be rarely used on windows, as they retard the admission of light'. (p.360) (figs.94 & 95) Some circular stained glass windows in the drawing-room represent 'morning', 'noon', 'evening', and 'night' in the form of female heads lit from behind by gas jets at night. Particular focus was given to the two fireplaces in the room described as:

Each being tiled in an aesthetic shade of electric blue. They

are surmounted by elegantly designed overmantels of cabinet form ascending almost to the roof, and whose shelves, as indeed are the tables and wall cabinets in this and other apartments, are filled with a profusion of the choicest old cloisonné, Persian, Chinese and Japanese ware... There are also in the room a number of very handsome bronze and other lamps of unusual and artistic designs. The furniture is of extremely massive and tasteful character.⁶

The typical fireplace mantel of the aesthetic interior was almost imposing in character, and often imbued with a mystical, quasi-religious effect, which is apparent in one of the Allangate fireplaces flanked by recesses intended for plants and decorated with a frieze in black and gold with the biblical motto: 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow for they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these'. (fig.96)

The favoured 'aesthetic' treatment of ebonised wood and furniture, combined with turquoise blue tiles, oriental porcelain and cloisonné as well as bright metal lamps, created the artistic environment sought after by the tastemakers of the day. Other Japanese art-objects are recorded as having been displayed around the house, and the bedroom furniture in particular seems to have been inspired by Japanese lacquer furniture: 'The pattern is produced with an enamelled surface of cool grey tint which upon the jetty black of the body of the furniture has an exceedingly tasteful and charming effect'.⁸ Unfortunately neither the furniture nor the lamps have been preserved, but they appear to have been similar to the bedroom suite created by Dresser for Bushloe House in 1880 and to the brass and bronze lamps designed by him for Benham & Froud. We know that he was connected with this company during the 1870s and the first designs supplied by Dresser were probably some coal boxes registered with the Patent Office Design Registry 1 September 1870. He may well also have created lamps for this firm in the early 1870s when the Allangate interiors were executed. (fig.97)

Dresser is recorded as having carried out similar decorative schemes

for another Halifax client, the carpet company John Crossley & Sons in the early 1870s, and these also included gas fittings and so-called 'star-lights' which were probably produced by Benham & Froud. Correspondence between Dresser and John Crossley provides descriptions of the furniture, wall and ceiling decorations supplied by Dresser for the factory offices in 1870, and for the Crossley brothers' respective houses in 1873,⁹ but none of these creations have been preserved. The ceilings of the residences, however, were referred to in Dresser's obituary, and they appear to have been as elaborate as those created at Allangate in the same year.¹⁰⁹

CARPETS

Dresser's contact with John Crossley & Sons may have gone back to the time of the London exhibition in 1862, when he commented favourably on their exhibits in his Development (p.75) but he is first recorded as a designer of carpets for the firm in 1871. Pevsner, in his article on Dresser, mentioned him as having sent no fewer than 142 designs to Crossley's in 1871, (1937, p.184) and the Catalogue of the International Exhibition in London for that year listed seven of these Dresser designs.¹¹ Dresser in his series of articles on 'Principles of Decorative Design' had published a set of rules for the creation of carpets, which reiterated those expounded in Development of Ornamental Art. He objected strongly to naturalistic patterns, and advocated the use of geometrically repeated ornaments of a 'simple radiating symmetry' stressing that carpets should form 'suitable backgrounds for furniture and living objects'. (p.191) A number of designs registered by John Crossley & Sons at the Patent Office Design Registry in 1871-72 are similar to those designed by Dresser. An outstanding pattern with angular scrolls in the Dresser-style and Japanese Paulownia emblems, was most certainly by him, for similar Paulownia motifs may be found in his album of Japanese crests.(fig.98) The Art Journal

described the colouring of the exhibition carpets as 'subdued' and well balanced 'in the mass',¹² and The Graphic journal bestowed great honours on Dresser by saying that:

The real competition is between the great ornamentists Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, Mr. Owen Jones and Dr. Dresser. To the last-named must be awarded the palm. Seven large carpets from his designs are sent by the manufacturers, Messrs. John Crossley & Sons. In two of these especially Dr. Dresser has made an advance for English art work. They are not copies, either in pattern, colouring, or character, but are English. Yet they achieve in great degree as art work what the quite dissimilar Eastern carpets already referred to do. There is entirety in the effect of the design, and fine colouring. That in which citron is the predominant tint is best. The next best is that facing the citron carpet, having a fine scroll pattern in blue of a good subdued tone, not like the garish blues now so plentiful in use.¹³

We know that Dresser also designed carpets for John Brinton & Co at the time, and samples illustrated in The Art Journal Exhibition Catalogue of 1871, resemble the Crossley carpets and were probably designed by Dresser as well. According to The Warehouseman and Drapers Trade Journal, Dresser designed all the Crossley carpets exhibited at The International Exhibition in London in 1872:

There are about a dozen or more specimens of various grounds, blue, green dark purple, light purple, crimson, sky blue etc. The contrast of the arrangement of the colours in the patterns is very characteristic, being an admirable blending of richnesses, with effects of beauty...The borders of these carpets are clear and well drawn and all the masses of colours in the centre are so arranged as, so to speak, define the border without cutting it out.¹⁴

As has been previously mentioned, the characteristics of Dresser's carpets, lie in the harmonious blending of subdued colours and the linear framework borders combined with geometric and conventional patterns. It was Dresser and William Morris who provided the thesis for a reform of the carpet industry in Britain, and they seem to have been much in agreement about the topic, but Dresser was again the first to publish his ideas and designs. Morris began producing Kidderminster carpets in 1873 and in 1880 he introduced his more expensive hand knotted 'Hammersmith' carpets, meant 'to make England independent of the East for carpets'.¹⁵

CURTAIN MATERIALS, HANGINGS AND WOVEN FABRICS GENERALLY

Dresser's doctrines on 'Curtain Materials, Hangings and Woven Fabrics Generally' was first published in his series of articles in 1871. He advocated a similar reform of textile-manufacturing in Britain in general, and he particularly lamented the 'Want of simple structure, want of simple treatment, want of simplicity of effect' (p.312) apparent in textiles at the time. It was this aspect of simplicity in Japanese art manufactures which had first attracted Dresser and other Japan enthusiasts in the early 1860s and he certainly looked to Japan and the East for inspiration in the formulation of his ideas. Flat and geometrical ornaments such as, circles, diapers, straight lines, and diagonals were recommended for hanging fabrics such as curtains, table cloths and bed spreads, of which an illustrative sample with circular motifs have a Japanese effect.(fig.99) Curved patterns according to Dresser 'would look common place on a waved folded ground' and the patterns and colour-scheme should next be adapted to the quality of the textile:

Muslins, being open in character, should have larger patterns than calicoes, which are closer in texture, or the pattern will be indistinct in the one case or coarse in the other. (p.327)

Silk which conveyed an idea of costliness, could accordingly take patterns that were richer in colour than could cheaper fabrics. This is apparent in four silk damasks designed by Dresser for J.W. & C. Ward's stand at the International Exhibition in London in 1871, one of which is reminiscent of Japanese scroll patterns incorporated in Owen Jones's designs for the Japanese Court in the S. Ken. Museum. (fig.100 & fig.38)

POTTERY

Dresser's article on 'Pottery', the last in the series published in 1871, was pervaded by the same regard for function, purpose and honesty in the use of the material of manufacture:

Clay is a most desirable material with which to form works of

utility and of beauty, and this for many reasons. First, it is so inexpensive as to be almost valueless; secondly, it is easily formed into vessels of almost any required shape; thirdly, it is capable of being "worked" into shapes of great beauty by a momentary exercise of skill; fourthly, clay is naturally of many beautiful colours; fifthly it is capable of receiving by application to its surface any amount of colour, and of preserving such colours as are supplied to it in an unimpaired state for ages; and sixthly, it is susceptible of the highest art-finish, or the bold sketchy touch of the modeller's hand. (p.342)

The clear-cut shapes provided by Dresser for Minton and for Wedgwood porcelain during the 1860s and 1870s indeed reflect these characteristics, but it was not until much later that Dresser became involved in ceramic production at the Linthorpe Art Pottery in Middlesborough on Tees, which he founded with John C. Harrison in 1879. (Lee, 1934) The tenets concerning the correct placing of handles and spouts as well as the suitability of the form to its purpose was reiterated from The Art of Decorative Design, and Dresser added that naturalistic ornaments should be avoided on plates intended for food. These should be decorated with geometrical or conventionalised borders along the edges, or alternatively after the Japanese fashion with circular ornaments such as those illustrated in the article; 'There are other methods of treatment than those just named. The Japanese are very fond of placing little circular groups of flowers on plates, saucers, and bowls'. (p.378) (fig.101)

Similar plates are preserved in the Dresser file at Royal Doulton Minton Archives, and they appear to be part of a range of Dresser designs exhibited by Minton & Co. at the International Exhibition in 1871.¹⁶ The majority of these are in the two-colour scheme and were probably produced at Minton's experimental Art Pottery Studio at South Kensington, which had been established under William S. Coleman's (1830-1904) supervision in the spring of 1871. (fig.102) The venture which lasted until 1875, according to one of the apprentices, George W. Rhead, employed students, ladies, and well-known artists such as Henry Stacy Marks, William Wise, Dresser, and

his student John Moyr Smith. (Rhead, 1906, p.360) Moyr Smith had arrived in London in 1867 and was trained in Dresser's studio until about 1871 when he is recorded as having begun to design furniture for Collinson & Lock and pottery for the Minton Studio.

The five Minton designs for blue and white plates incorporating 'little circular groups of flowers' as well as the 'broken diapers, irregular powderings and strange key patterns' recognised in Japanese Ornamentation by Dresser in 1863 indeed must have been the five plates exhibited by Dresser at the International Exhibition in 1871 together with other designs from the Dresser file at Minton's. These according to the Official Catalogue of the exhibition in addition comprised 'Three circular 'seauxs' with grotesque ornament, frogs, flowers etc.'¹⁷ One of these is preserved in the Dresser file and the two matching patterns were illustrated in The Furniture Gazette in 1880. These 'grotesque' patterns were evidently inspired by Japanese prototypes, and Dresser in his book on Japan (1882, p.272) listed 'the battle of frogs, the grasshoppers procession, and such subjects' as some of the most popular Japanese motifs. He had also mentioned frogs in Japanese Ornamentation in 1863, and his daughter Nellie in retrospect informed that he 'had a thing about frogs'.¹⁸ (figs.103A, B & C) The grotesque animal processions commonly encountered in Japanese art were also adapted to 'Six cylindrical vases with conventionalised ornament' exhibited in 1871. These designs comprised a crane procession which can be compared to a tile-pattern registered with the Patent Office Design Registry by Minton & Co. in 1872, (fig.104A) and the favourite Japanese duck 'Kinmodsui' motif is similar to a Japanese textile donated to the South Kensington Museum by Queen Victoria in 1865. (figs.104B & 105) The bats, beetles, grasshoppers and insects had been listed amongst other prominent subjects in Dresser's articles on Japanese Ornamentation in 1863 (figs.106 & 107), and we have noted that these motifs had been utilised in numerous

Minton designs. The procession of frontally depicted cats in a so called 'Moonlight Scene' is reminiscent of Japanese cat-motifs (fig.108) and match a Minton Art Pottery design for vase no.1303, described by George W. Rhead as a 'semi-humorous Dresser-design' and 'a small circular bottle with a flat surface, upon which was represented a rencontre of two cats on a garden wall, with a moon behind'. (Rhead, 1906, p.360) These vigorous designs entitled 'The Meeting' and 'The Parting' bear a striking resemblance to a drawing by Eduard Manet from 1868 called 'Rendezvous des Chats' which was inspired by a Hiroshige print and reproduced in Champfleury's book Les Chats in 1869. It seems likely that Dresser would have known this popular publication. (figs.109A & B) A similar circular panel with flying cranes and stylised waves in the Japanese manner in the Royal Doulton/Minton Archive is signed 'C D' and was probably intended for vase no.1303 as well. It was perhaps incorporated in Dresser's 1871 exhibition vases described as: 'A Pair of vases, circular, flat sided, with enamelled birds'. (no.4222) (fig.110A & B) Dresser had introduced a similar crane and moon pattern for Minton tiles in 1870 and such Japan inspired crane designs combined with typical angular scrolls and bamboo motifs appear in a variety of table-ware borders from the time. The crane-patterns became tremendously popular and were plagiarised by other designers at Minton's, but Dresser's cranes are distinguishable by their ferocious look and simplified two-pair talons. An identical crane can be observed in the drawing of an Imari vase that belonged to Dresser, and cloud patterns and seaweed scrolls apparent in the same vase are incorporated in other Dresser borders for Minton & Co. tableware.(figs.111A & B)

Another four Dresser designs for Minton & Co. are recorded as having been exhibited in 1871: - a cup and saucer, two sets of ewers and basins, - and a vase decorated with 'conventionalised leaves and ornaments.'¹⁹ Only one tea-ware pattern from Dresser's designs were executed at Minton's in

1870, pattern no.G298 (fig.112) matching Dresser's butterfly, beetle and leaf-pattern designs first made in 1867. The same pattern on turquoise ground was adapted to a ewer and basin as shown in no.G 383 in April 1870. This was most certainly on show in 1871, together with another Dresser toiletware pattern decorated with the 'Dresser-border' launched in 1867,(fig.65) and the vase listed may well have been production no.1507 with leaf-border identical to table-ware pattern G 596. (fig.86)

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons are also recorded as having exhibited designs by Dresser and these comprised jardinières, five 'hanging vases' and three so-called 'fish-vases',²⁰ which seem to have been identical to the jardinières, and hanging vases with crane and fish motifs made by Wedgwood in 1867. Another 'fish vase' design by Dresser was registered with the Patent Office in October 1872, and this incorporated fishes, seaweeds and beetles in the style of Japanese Imari patterns. (fig.113A & B) Dresser was clearly well established as a designer of pottery by the time of the 1871 exhibition, and the Watcombe terracotta pottery samples exhibited at the same exhibition may also have been executed by him. Watcombe was established in Devon near Torquay in 1869, and several of the shapes produced are similar to those produced by Dresser for other companies, but there is so far no proof of a definite connection. (fig.114) Dresser paid considerable attention to the production of pottery in his articles on Principles published in 1871, and samples of Japanese, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Mexican pottery were held up as suitable examples. Recommending 'bold art-effects' rather than 'excessive finish' Dresser referred to Japanese pottery in his own collection:

I have before me some specimens of Japanese earthenware, which are formed of a coarse dark-brown clay, and are to a great extent without that finish which most Europeans appear so much to value, yet these are artistic and beautiful. In the case of cheap goods we spend time in getting smoothness of surface, while the Japanese devote it to the production of art-effect. We get finish without art, they prefer art without finish. (p.343)

We know that Dresser according to one of the sale-catalogues of his collection possessed some samples of Bizen and Seto ware which correspond to this description, and that a gourd-shaped bottle in particular was illustrated in his article.²¹ (fig.115) The notion of such coarse earthenware is significant in the history of western awareness of Japanese art, for previously more readily collectable antiquarian porcelain had dominated the market. Dresser in fact pioneered a change in the collectors' pursuits which during the 1870s and 1880s reflected the general growth of such ceramics production in Japan. The Meiji Government in order to provide work for unemployed artisans following the revolution, had encouraged the establishment of numerous new kilns which stimulated export production and the nationwide expansion of ceramics for domestic consumption. These became increasingly popular in the West and in turn influenced the production of Dresser and other artists looking for 'bold art-effects'. In Principles, Dresser emphasised that 'Japan can supply the world with the most beautiful domestic articles that we can anywhere procure'. (p.344)

GLASS

Dresser's chapter on 'Glass' published in 1872, is marked by the same urge for bold effects rather than 'excessive finish' typified by the engraved and cut glass so beloved by the Victorians. On the whole, he rejected such 'wasted labour' and maintained that the material should be treated in the easiest and most natural manner, that of glass-blowing:

Whenever a material is capable of being "worked" in a manner which will so secure the operation of natural laws as to modify the shapes of the objects into which it is formed, it is very desirable that we avail ourselves of such means of formation, for the operation of gravitation and similar forces upon plastic matter is calculated to give beauty of form. (p.24)

Dresser's ideas concerning the use of colour in glass, which up to then had been restricted to the ruby, emerald or yellow colour of the hock-glasses were unusual for the time:

It is curious that we should confine ourselves to these colours when glass is capable of assuming the most delicate of shades, of appearing as a soft, subtle, golden hue of the most beautiful light tertiary green lilac, and blue, indeed, of almost any colour. (p.49)

Following the old example of Roman and Venetian glass production, Dresser had developed a set of new rules for glass-making in Britain, which was also influenced by Dr. Antonio Salviati's foundation of the 'Venice and Murano Glass Company' in London in 1868. Dresser thus laid the ground work for the emergence of an 'art glass' production much in the same way that he had provided the impetus for 'art pottery' and 'art interiors'.

A number of recommended shapes for bottles, decanters and jugs were illustrated in Dresser's article, and he was clearly active as a designer of glass at the time but a manufacturer has not yet been traced.(fig.116) We find the handblown technique and daring use of colour in his designs for James Couper & Son's 'Clutha Glass' of the 1880s and 1890s, (fig.117) and recently similar shapes and colour schemes have been recognised in Sowerby's art glass, which was one of the first of its kind to be produced in Britain from the early 1870s and onwards. It was indeed exhibited at Dresser's 'Art Furnishers' Alliance' showrooms in New Bond Street in London in 1882, and knowing that this company generally retailed art manufactures designed exclusively by Dresser it seems likely that this also was the case with Sowerby's art glass.²² (fig.118) Another glass firm the Tees Bottle Company of Middlesbrough is also recorded as suppliers of goods to The Art Furnishers' Alliance, and probably provided the bottles illustrated in Dresser's article as well as those incorporated in his electroplate cruet and bottle stands from the late 1870s and 1880s.²³ (fig.119) Dresser's glass production in the 1870s has remained somewhat of a mystery, but we know that he brought glass vessels from the retailers James Green & Nephew to the Tokyo National Museum in 1877. Unfortunately none of these samples are preserved in the museum,²⁴ and so perhaps the Sowerby Art glass will

prove to be the missing link. Barbara Morris has pointed out that Dresser's art glass principles coincided with the opinions of John Ruskin, Charles L. Eastlake and William Morris, and that The Pottery Gazette in 1882 held him responsible for the new fashion in glass making: 'The age of plain glass is gone or going, and good cut glass is fast coming in again, in spite of Dr. Dresser and Oscar Wilde' (Morris, 1978, p.179)

SILVER

Dresser's disregard for 'excessive finish' is most explicitly expressed in his doctrines concerning silver-ware, which as an expensive material accordingly necessitated economic production in order to avoid placing these products 'beyond the reach of those who might otherwise enjoy them'. We know that this idea was the source of inspiration for his works in electroplate, and that sugar bowls produced by Elkington & Co were strengthened by beads placed between the thin sheets of metal used by Dresser. (fig.46) The consideration of the utilitarian aspect of the object led Dresser to one of his most outstanding tenets:

To form a handle as a mere ornament is an absurdity, for the handle is part of the vessel structurally, while the ornamentation is an after and separated consideration. In order to fulfil its existence a vessel must be constructed, but when formed it need not of necessity be ornamented, ornamentation must ever be regarded as separate from construction. (p.105)

This view had been expressed in rudimentary form in The Art of Decorative Design, and it was perhaps the most original doctrine promoted by Dresser at the time. Evidently oriental and Japanese prototypes had provided the stimulus:

Modern European silver-smiths have fallen into the error of making their works of pictorial, rather than an ornamental character, - an error which the Arabians, Indians and Japanese never perpetrate, whose works in metal are unsurpassed by any, and equalled by indeed few. (p.105)

Dresser, as we have noted had praised the Japanese metalware exhibited in London in 1862 and in Paris in 1867, and clearly some of the smooth and

simple tea pots and sugar bowls illustrated in Principles were inspired by Japanese prototypes, (figs.120). If objects were to be decorated Dresser particularly recommended 'Syakfdo' (the Japanese technique of inlaying bronze in silver), and enamelling: 'The Japanese enamels have a lower tone of colour-effect than the Chinese, and the work is finer and the colours more mingled'. (p.146) His article contained numerous glowing references to Elkington & Co, and he praised their enamel products, - some of which probably were designed by Dresser himself. The inlaying of various metals in copper, however, was not used by Dresser until the early 1880s.

HARDWARE

The impetus of bringing art into the daily existence of the average person had inspired Dresser's principles concerning ceramics, glass and silver-ware, and he turned his consideration to 'Hardware' with an equal element of social concern, noting in his articles:

I am glad that we have now to deal with such metalworks as result from the use of inexpensive materials, for it is such that must be generally employed, while works formed of precious metals can be used only by comparatively few persons...I always, however, like to produce works in cheap materials, for then I know that I form what is capable of giving pleasure to the poor man - if appreciative - who may possess it, as well as the rich. (p.215)

We know that Dresser had admired the iron kettles exhibited by the Japanese at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867, but he seems to associate the production of cast and wrought iron primarily with the medieval period.

His recommendation of mixing other metals with iron in order to give a more colourful effect, however, may have been inspired by a similar Japanese technique 'Brass, copper and other metals may be associated with iron in the formation of any works. If well managed, brass and other bright metals may act as gems'.(p.281) The neo-gothic appearance of Dresser's designs for cast iron hall furniture produced by Coalbrookdale in the late 1860s prevail in his creations for the firm during the 1870s,

but a frieze of stylised sunflowers has been inserted in a hall table registered with the Patent Office 8 March 1870. The sunflowers by then had become associated with Japonism and the Aesthetic movement, and by the time of the International Exhibition in London in 1873 The House Furnisher and Decorator noted the change that had taken place in furniture-making: 'Details of the furniture of the Gothic character are being modified by Japanese forms'.²⁵ Several samples of iron-work were illustrated in Principles but only one of these was recognised as a Dresser design by The Furniture Gazette in 1874.²⁶ The gate by Hardman & Co, was of a similar neo-gothic character but incorporated nine different circular motifs some of which can be compared to Japanese crest patterns in Dresser's plates for Minton & Co, as well as to those used by Burges, Nesfield, Poynter and Talbert in their ornamentation. (fig.121) Evidently hybrid motifs of medieval and Japanese inspiration frequently existed simultaneously in decoration at the time, and it was this amalgamation which gave rise to the Anglo-Japanese style.

The conclusion to Dresser's articles, which was released when these appeared in book-form in 1873, emphasised the necessity of studying Oriental and particularly Japanese art:

In order that you acquire the power of perceiving art-merit as quickly as possible, you must study those works in which examples of bad taste are rarely met with, you must at first consider art-objects from India, Persia, China and Japan, as well as examples of ancient art from Egypt and Greece. But in selecting modern works from the East, choose those which are not altogether new if possible. During the last ten years the art-works of Japan have deteriorated to a lamentable extent. Contact with Europeans unfortunately brings about the deterioration of Eastern art: in order that the European demand be met with, quantity is produced and quality disregarded. (1873, p.161)

Evidently Dresser was aware of the negative effect of Westernisation in Japan, but he underlined that 'The commonest wares which we receive from Japan and India are never utterly bad in art. Inharmonious colouring do not appear to be produced by these nations.' (p.161)

Principles of Decorative Design were summed up in a fierce attack on the Italian and Renaissance art which dominated the Western art world:

In these styles, or dialects of a style if I may thus speak, there is so much that is false in structure, false in representation, untruthfull in expression, and pictorial rather than ornamental in effect, that a very complete acquaintance with ornamental art is necessary in order that all the defects of these styles be apparent, and in order that the student avoid falling into the error of regarding pictorial effect as the result of true style of ornamental art. (p.162)

DRESSER'S LECTURES IN THE EARLY 1870s

His lectures on 'Ornamentation Considered as High Art' and 'Hindrances to the Progress of Applied Art' for the Royal Society of Art 8 February 1871 and 10 March 1872 respectively, put forth a similar challenge to the traditions of the Renaissance and pictorial style of ornamentation. Claiming that ornamental art was high art on the level practised by the pictorial artists, Dresser offered a severe criticism of the South Kensington Institution, which under the influence of Ruskin had gone back to their drawing-school practices: 'If a young man wished to learn drawing, let him by all means go to a School of Design at South Kensington. But if he wanted to become an ornamentist, he would say as Mr Crace once said, let him study nature, and stop at home or go somewhere else.' (1871, p.225) This restraining tendency was, according to Dresser, reflected in the new decorations for the South Kensington Museum which were carried out as 'pictorially treated fragments' in the Roman and Renaissance style by Francis Wollaston Moody, (1824-86) a pupil of Alfred Stevens (1817-76). In contrast to this 'misapplied pictorial art' Dresser held up the 'gorgeous ornaments of India, Formosa, China and Japan', and specialists present at the lecture, such as Dresser's mentors, Richard Burchett, George Wallis and George August Sala, agreed that ornamentation was high art, but that the public, according to Sala 'still believed that nothing was true except for pictorial art'. (1871, p.221) Dresser in his reply to the discussion which

followed, however, offered substantial evidence to redress this attitude:

He might say without egotism, that he was more largely connected with the manufacturing art of this country than any other person. There was not a single branch of applied art that he had not some kind of supervision over; and every article that bore the impress of decorative art he had called upon, in his ordinary professional duties, to superintend or advise upon in some way or other. (1871, p.225)

Mr Moody and other members of the South Kensington Institution evidently felt compelled to defend themselves and numerous letters on this controversial topic were published in The Journal of the Royal Society of Art in 1871. Dresser, however continued to campaign against the officials at South Kensington whom he described in 1872 as 'Hindrances to the Progress of Applied Art'. According to Dresser another hindrance was the lack of status accorded to the designer in society and to the decorative arts in general. He claimed that this could only be redressed with the inauguration of a Royal Academy for decorative artists, which 'should have the power of conferring degrees equal with the membership and associateship of the Royal Academy, for without encouragement no art will prosper.' (1872, p.440) We know that Dresser had asked for the acknowledgement of the designers' rights already in 1865, and his views were acclaimed by the Chairman of the meeting Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt who suggested that the two schools of art should be united in one academy, and that his friend Owen Jones be appointed Professor of Applied Art. (p.443) Dresser accepted this idea with enthusiasm, and praised Jones as the leading spirit of the design-reform in Britain, an accolade once held by the South Kensington School and Museum itself. Evidently the central policy of this institution did not concur with that preached by Jones, Wyatt and Dresser.

PUBLICATIONS ON JAPAN AND THE FIRST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JAPONISM

Toshio Yokoyama in his thorough study of the available literature about Japan in Victorian Britain, has emphasised that Algernon B. Mitford 'was to take over the former authoritative position of Alcock in the mind

of British readers who were interested in Japan' (1983, p.163) Clearly this was recognised by the S. Ken. Museum, and it appears that Mitford, who had returned from diplomatic services in Japan in 1869, promptly began to disseminate factual information about the country. His series of articles published in The Cornhill Magazine and The Fortnightly Review between 1869 and 1872 contained many valuable descriptions of Japan. His publication Tales of Old Japan published in London in 1871 prompted a more diverse range of literature on the country which during the 1870s increasingly centred on the Old Japan. Mitford's book together with Baron Hübnér's Promenade autour du Monde (1873 and English edition 1874) contributed a more realistic picture of Japan and some enlightening entries on Japanese art.

It appears that Alcock's successor as ambassador to Japan, Sir Henry Parkes, took over the task of encouraging a scholarly study of the country and Japanese culture. In 1872 the year he arrived in Japan, Parkes formed 'The Asiatic Society of Japan', in which members of the British legation, such as Basil Hall Chamberlain, Ernest Satow, and William George Ashton, distinguished themselves. The British studies were outstanding compared to those undertaken by other nations, and they were the first to highlight the alarming disappearance of old Japan. Ashton writing in the Macmillans Magazine in 1872 noted that 'It seemed as if a sudden passion had seized upon the people to pull down and abolish everything that was old.'²⁸ Alcock expressed similar views in his article on 'Reforms in Japan' published in The Edinburgh Review (1872, p. 252) and Dresser, as we have seen, stressed the deterioration of Japanese art under Western influence in the conclusion to his Principles of Decorative Design in 1873. (p.161) These changes attracted considerable attention in the Western press, and strangely enough enforced the popular view of Japan as a mystical and singular country, despite the increasing availability of more accurate

information. The popularity of Japanese art in artistic circles, however, had replaced the former attitude of Philistine condescension with one of fascination and acceptance, which was to give way to a mania for all things Japanese by the early 1870s.

Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, Dresser's mentor and one of the greatest specialists on Oriental and Japanese art in Britain, continued his promotion in 1870 with an article on 'Orientalism in European Industry' published in Macmillan's Magazine:

The opening up of China and Japan, and the greater facilities for travel in India and Asia Minor, and indeed in the East generally, brought new materials of a most interesting kind to the market, new types of forms, and new processes of manufacture illustrated by Oriental products. (1870, p.551)

Jacob Falke, the famous director of the 'Österreichische Museum für Angewandte Kunst' in Vienna, released a similar article entitled 'Chinese and Japanese Art and its Importance for Modern Art-Industry' which in the same year was printed in a British journal The Workshop, 'The object of which was to point out a new source from whence might be derived new motives and what is much needed, the renovation of modern taste and modern Art-industry',²⁹

It was precisely this notion which had opened the eyes of Dresser, Bruges, Godwin, Nesfield and other Japan enthusiasts in the early 1860s. The acclaim of the well known art authorities, Wyatt and Falke, contributed much to the manifestation of Japonism in Europe during the 1870s. The Builder in 1870 signalled the new fashion, saying that 'Japan, so far as we can tell, has never been more vigorously alive than in her contemporary art. It is to Japan, therefore, that the philosophic student will look for valuable hints, and energetic stimulus, for the decorative artists of to-day'.³⁰ The designer Owen W. Davis writing in 1870 in The Building News on 'Japanese Ornament' noted that European dresses had been influenced by Japanese kimonos, and he sanctioned such inspiration:

May we venture to think that in this matter of dress, as well as in the more stable forms generally of decoration and design, the importation of a genuine Japanese artists might, should he be taken in hand by the right man infuse freshness and subtle combination of colour and design into our decorations as pleasing as it would be novel?³¹

The Art Journal in the same year promoted the importation of 'Inlaid Copper Ornaments' from Japan, of the kind that Dresser had praised, and encouraged all workers in metal to study these objects.³² In 1872 The Builder finally announced 'The Japanese Craze' which had taken hold of artists and collectors in Britain, saying that it would invoke a new sense of colour and particularly of the 'warm secondary tints of the cloisonné enamels' which Dresser had commented upon in his articles on 'Principles' in the same year. The Builder noted that these enamels were particularly suitable as models for 'the treatment both of stained glass and of mural and ceiling decorations',³³ much in the same way as was practised by Dresser in the Allangate Mansion interiors in 1873.

Japonism in France as we have noted had developed along the same lines as in Britain, and there was evidently much contact between artistic circles in Paris and London at the time. Philip Burty, for example was a close friend of James M. Whistler and his brother-in-law Francis Seymour Haden (1818-1910), and Burty as we have noted erroneously claimed to have coined the expression 'Japonisme' in 1872. It was Fantin-Latour and Whistler, however, who first used this term in 1869, and by the 1870s Japonism was an established phenomenon amongst artists and critics both in Paris and in London.

French travellers to Japan brought substantial art collections back to Paris, which were described in the published recollections and frequently exhibited. Aimé Humbert, who had lived in Japan from 1863-64, published the most encompassing view of the country in his Le Japon Illustré, (1870) which contained several illustrations of Japanese artefacts and notably a

colour chromolithograph of a curio shop in Yokoyama, copied from Felice Beato's Views of Japan released in 1868. Theodore Duret (1838-1907) and Enrico Cernuschi amassed considerable collections during their joint trip to Japan in 1871, which were exhibited at 'Le Palais de L'Industrie' in 1873 in conjunction with the first 'Congrès des Orientalists'. The porcelain expert Albert Jacquemart wrote enthusiastically about the collection in Le Gazette des Beaux-Arts in 1873-74, and he was particularly impressed with the appearance of domestic ceramics such as the wares from Awaji, Banko, Bizen, Kiushu, Owari, Satsuma, and Tamba:

He has comprehended that collecting should embrace all kinds of wares, from the refined pieces found in luxury shops and curio bazaars to the most ordinary contemporary household goods, that at times may appear coarse and simple but also can be found elaborately decorated. (1874, pp.527)

Evidently the arrival of contemporary Japanese ceramics, which Dresser had also praised in 1871, provided a new field for collectors and artists, and Jacquemart regretted that 'The confusing information on the origin and date of these specimens, necessitated serious research'. The Parisian dealers Philip Sichel and Samuel Bing (1838-1905) went to Japan in 1873 and 1875 respectively, and Bing following his return in 1875 opened his famous shop which became a kind of club for the Japan enthusiasts who congregated there. (Weisberg, 1969, p.119-125)

DRESSER AND JAPANESE ART EXHIBITED

A number of the French Japonophiles are recorded as having travelled to the International Exhibitions in London in 1871, 1872 and 1873, which were held in the Albert Hall pavillion in the Horticultural Society Gardens next to the S. Ken. Museum. Theodor Duret and the designer Emile Gallé (1845-1904) were there in 1871, (Morris 1986, p.170) and they may have become acquainted with Dresser or his designs which were exhibited.

These exhibitions presented substantial departments of Japanese art-objects, and again Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock were responsible for the

main exhibits. A cabinet with silver mounts and 'constructional unevenness', as well as Lady Alcock's collection of teapots were extensively described in the Official Catalogue of the 1871 exhibition. Significantly, a collection of 'a drab coloured, rough and unglazed earthenware' was on show in 1871³⁴ and evidently attracted the attention of Duret, Gallé and Dresser alike. In the same year Dresser himself had praised similar ceramic vessels in his own possession as displaying 'bold art-effects'. We have noted that Dresser had exhibited many of his designs at the 1871 exhibition, and it is tempting to suggest that he then met Emile Gallé, whose interest in botany and in Japanese art coincided with his own.

Sir Rutherford Alcock had returned to Britain in 1872 and he is recorded as having exhibited an extensive collection at the International Exhibition in London, which comprised porcelains, silks, lacquer screens, ivory netsukes, weapons and papers.³⁵ A pair of Japanese paper-curtains were particularly recommended by The Art Journal in 1872 which also noted that

Differing as before hinted, the special investigation of this particular branch of art industry, [is] illustrative of the increasing influence of Japanese art on the industry in England.³⁶

Japanese papers as promoted by Dresser already in 1863, indeed had become increasingly popular in Britain, and Alcock in 1873 was instrumental in founding 'The Japan Paper Making Company' which successfully traded in Japanese papers until its liquidation in 1879.³⁷

Alcock in 1872 had auctioned part of his Japan collection at Christie's, and this sale contained 145 specimens of porcelain, 77 metal objects, 31 enamel vessels, 10 ivory netsukes, and some bambo, soapstone and ivory figures. Dresser certainly followed this sale with great interest and may well have acquired objects from his friend's collection but again only the dealer's purchases have been annotated in the Christie archive.³⁸ Ornamental motifs frequently described in the catalogue such as butterflies, fishes, insects, masks, scrolls, lotus leaves, skeletons,

frogs, birds, and flowers, were utilised by Dresser in his designs at the time. The Alcock-collection exhibited in 1872 was offered to the South Kensington Museum and at least 47 samples of porcelain were procured.³⁹ Two spherical boxes located in the museum incorporate the broken diaper patterns which we have seen in Dresser's Minton-plates from 1871.(1872,480-81) Two samples of Japanese silks were acquired by the museum from Murray Marks in 1870, and one of these displays the circular motifs recommended by Dresser, (1448-49, 1870) A kimono bought on the advice of Matthew Digby Wyatt's in 1871 (228-1871) contains the wave-pattern which is reminiscent of Dresser's wave and crane pattern for Minton & Co executed in 1870. (fig.122A & B)

Evidently the motifs incorporated in Dresser's designs could be observed in public collections of the day, but the S. Ken. Museum as Dresser pointed out, was more eager to extend its Renaissance department during the early 1870s. A loan collection of Japanese fans, supplied by Algernon B. Mitford, however, was exhibited in the museum in 1870⁴⁰ and in 1872 they showed the comprehensive Japan collection of the Duke of Edinburgh, which contained some 900 objects brought back from the Duke's visit to Japan in the autumn of 1869. The catalogue listed, amongst other exhibits, three books of paintings and some lacquer furniture donated by the Mikado, and significantly a screen decorated with 'a procession of grasshoppers',⁴¹ which must have been similar to that incorporated in Dresser's Minton vase in 1867. The joint collectors George Audsley and Lord James Bowes who in 1875 dedicated their 'Keramic Art of Japan' to the Duke, mentioned that they had acquired several specimens of porcelain from the royal vendor.

The Art Journal noted that the Duke of Edinburgh's collection 'attracted such unusual throngs of visitors to the S. Ken. Museum, and have awakened a keen interest that shows no sign of abating'.⁴² Similarly, public enthusiasm welcomed the showing of Audsley & Bowes' collection in

Liverpool in the same year , and their Catalogue Raisonné which contained some 1100 entries, constituted a model catalogue, which was much praised in The Times of 28 December 1872 and in the main art periodicals. Dresser and other enthusiasts must have welcomed such a catalogue and particularly the exhibitors' publication, Keramic Art of Japan, released between 1875-79. This was the first of its kind in English and Audsley and Bowes certainly contributed substantially to the manifestation of the so-called 'Japanese Craze' in Britain in the 1870s. Audsley in particular gave a lecture 'On Japanese Art' at the Architectural Association in London in 1872, which was later printed in The Builder and edited in book form as Notes on Japanese Art in 1874. Their joint collection of Japanese enamels was exhibited in Liverpool in 1870 and at the S. Ken. Museum in 1874. (Bowes, 1870) The 192 pieces were praised by Thomas Archer in The Art Journal in 1874, and he mentioned that ironically one of the Japanese ambassadors had assured him that he had seen more fine Japanese cloisonné in England than in his own country. Archer, who was a great Japanophile, triumphantly noted that 'Fashion has declared for Japanese Art'.⁴³

Archer was in fact referring to the Iwakura Mission composed of Japanese ambassadors who had visited Edinburgh in 1872. They also met the authorities of the S.Ken.Museum in London on their tour of Britain and Europe. The mission was headed by Prince Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883) who had played a leading role in the coup d'etat of January 1868. This was headed by two other members of the mission from the Satsuma clan, Saigo Takamori (1827-1877) and Okubo Toshchimichi (1831-1878), who although undoubted patriots had favoured trade with the outside world and with the help of the Chosu clan had brought about the fall of the Tokugawa regime, and restored the Emperor Meiji as the supreme ruling power. The new government had openly condemned the Shogun's failure to solve the problem of Japan's changing relations with the West, and the Iwakura Mission was

sent to remedy this. Okubo emerged as the strongest personality in the new administration, and he was appointed as Home Minister on his return to the country in 1873. He was the first Japanese official whom Dresser visited on his tour of Japan in 1876 and the two friends may well have met with Philip Cunliffe Owen, director of the S.Ken.Museum when the Iwakura Mission visited in 1872. An important result of this meeting were the plans for a comprehensive Japanese stand at the International Exhibition in London in 1873, which Dresser and Cunliffe Owen were instrumental in organising. This is recorded in the Tokyo Exhibition Club's publication Kaigai Hakurankai Honpo Sando Shiryo,⁴⁴ and firm contacts were established with Japanese officials by early 1873, when The House-Furnisher and Decorator informed their readers that

'Dr. Dresser has a resident agent in Japan, a gentleman of artistic judgement and experience, who has already sent home some of the finest specimens of lacquer-ware ever seen in this country, and such as must excite the lively envy of all collectors and curators of the S.Ken.Museum and India Museum.'⁴⁴

The exhibition opened a few weeks after this was said and the objects were especially delivered by Sakata Haruo, a young official of The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. According to the Japanese 'Records of Government Officials', Sakata was subsequently appointed to act as an escort to Dresser when he visited Japan in 1876-77.⁴⁶ Sakata remained in London for a year, and he was probably engaged in the Japanese Embassy's campaign for the promotion of Japanese goods undertaken in 1873.⁴⁷

The Japan stand arranged by Dresser and Cunliffe Owen in 1873 was intended as an adjunct to the representation of Japan at the Vienna International Exhibition which opened in the Summer of 1873. The official guide to the London exhibition listed silks, leather papers, lacquer, porcelain and some coarser ceramics,⁴⁸ which had probably been sent upon Dresser's recommendation. Regrettably only limited information about this exhibition has survived, but it appears that it provided Dresser with the

contacts and impetus to suggest the establishment of a large warehouse for imported goods from Japan and the East. Retrospectively Dresser remembered having made this proposal to

Messrs. Charles Reynolds & Co, who have long been known as enterprising City Merchants and importers of fancy objects from every corner of Europe, and who have already brought to England much of the common manufactures of Japan, the establishment of a new business in a separate warehouse, and the importing not only of cheap objects from the far East, but also of the rarest and most beautiful works.⁴⁹

Londos & Co was founded in 1873 with Dresser as their art adviser, and the company soon expanded from occupying one house to filling three houses at the London Wall. Londos & Co continued in business until at least 1883 when they were referred to as 'the first and largest importer of Japanese art in Britain.'⁵⁰ The company established branches in Japan, China, Persia, Morocco and Paris, and it was to further this policy that Dresser in 1873 is recorded as having sent his assistants Caspar Clarke and William Churcher on an expedition to Spain, Morocco, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Persia, Burma, Siam, and China. The House Furnisher & Decorator highly recommended this venture and praised Dresser's eagerness in his 'Pursuit of Beauty',⁵¹ which hinted at the motto heading his stationery at the time as well as Londos & Co's subsequent advertising material.(fig.123) This became one of the greatest slogans of the Aesthetic movement, and it was adopted by Louis Comfort Tiffany whom Dresser befriended in 1876.⁵² A letter from Caspar Clarke to Dresser dated Teheran 22 April 1875, testified to the fact that the expedition arrived in Persia, but whether it reached Burma, Siam and China is not known.⁵³

DRESSER AND JAPAN AT THE VIENNA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN 1873

Dresser appears to have been at the peak of his energetic activities in 1873, and after organising the Japan stand in London early in the year he proceeded to the International Exhibition in Vienna during the Summer.

He is recorded as having exhibited a number of designs at the Minton & Co. stand, whose Japanese inspired products were greatly praised in Thomas Archer's report (1873, pp.127-137) The Practical Magazine stressed that:

It is the admiration of all English who have seen it, and who know the excellent productions of this firm, and is of great surprise and wonder to foreigners.⁵⁴

Archer enthused over the general 'infusion of Japanese art which is steadily entering into European designs' (p.175) and the American critic William P. Blake devoted a whole chapter in his report to 'The Influence of Japanese Art' saying that:

The great influx of Japanese forms in such quaint and novel variety, since the modern opening of that country to trade, has had a great influence upon the style of decoration now in vogue. It is the new field for the decorative artists of Europe and close attention and study have been given to the spirit of Japanese art. (Blake 1875, p.14)

Even the Japanese in their report were aware of the Japanese influenced products and remarked upon 'the beautiful Minton pottery and porcelain in the style of Imari porcelain'.⁵⁵ Clearly they had seen Minton's cloisonné ware, and probably the samples executed after Dresser's designs which contained a variety of motifs from the Imari patterns he had admired since childhood.

The Minton Estimate Book for the Vienna Exhibition listed a number of Dresser cloisonné designs marked V(Vienna) in numerical order. At least six of his vases from the 1860s were on display with new decorations, production-numbers 1341, 1347, 1348, 1379, 1470, and 1518. All in the Japanese cloisonné style with turquoise or pompadour ground colour.⁵⁶

A new vase inspired by Dresser's pilgrim bottle 1303 had been introduced as no.1614 by Minton's in 1871 with Dresser's butterfly, beetle and leaf pattern. This was exhibited in Vienna to match with vase no.1644 a gourd-shape which had originally been made in October 1870 and was decorated with an unique relief beetle in January 1873. (figs.124 & 125) We have noted that the beetle and insect decorations by this time had

become one of Dresser's favourite motifs, and that he had mentioned beetle ornaments already in his Japanese Ornamentation in 1863. He had then also referred to some cloisonné vases exhibited by Remi Schmidt & Co in 1862 decorated with relief flowers. The use of relief decoration was an especially popular device with the Japanese. The same company is recorded as having offered for sale a Japanese bronze bowl 'with grotesque figures in relief' at Christie's in 1862,⁵⁷ and Rutherford Alcock's sale in 1872 also contained a 'basket-pattern vase, chased with insects on stand formed as branches of a tree'.⁵⁸ A similar bronze vase with insects in relief had been acquired by the S.Ken.Museum from Madame Desoy's shop in Paris in 1864, and a subsequent acquisition from Samuel Bing in 1875 is decorated with a large grasshopper in relief.(figs.35 & 126) Evidently Dresser would have ample possibility of studying Japanese collections from which he drew inspiration. Dresser's ewer and basin pattern of butterflies, beetles and leaves (G 383) was also represented in Vienna, and in addition two new vase shapes 1717 and 1718 of which there are models in the drawings of Dresser's Japanese porcelain and in Minton's Dresser-file, respectively.(figs.127A & B, 128)

The Vienna exhibition samples in fact represent only a small part of the Dresser designs for Minton & Co commissioned during the first half of the 1870s. Several of these deserve further attention as examples of Japonism, notably a pattern with 'tomtits and bullrushes' which was first introduced on tiles 28 February 1870 and subsequently used on a seau no.1601 in February 1874.(fig.129) The flower holder number 1607 is identical to the sugar bowl made by Dresser for Elkington & Co in 1865 (fig.43), and similar tripod legs were incorporated in the dejeuner set, production shape 1716, which probably was designed by Dresser and decorated with stylised flowers and sprigs in the cloisonné manner. (figs.130 & 131A) Three more vases based on Japanese prototypes and with recognisable Dresser

decorations were executed 1873-75; shape 1664 based on the frontispiece of J. Marryat's History of Pottery and Porcelain, (fig.132A) shape no.1697 based on^a Hizen vase illustrated in Audsley & Bowes' Keramic Art of Japan, and decorated with flower compartments similar to drawings in Dresser's sketchbooks. (figs.133A) Vase no.1799 was another version of the pilgrim-shape and incorporated a Dresser butterfly and diaper border on turquoise ground executed in January 1875. (fig.132B)

The Dresser borders designed in the 1860s continued to adorn a number of ewers and basins during the 1870s (pattern nos.G774, G1003, G1405) and his butterflies, beetles and leaf border on a pompadour ground was produced in 1875. (G2007) Patterns from Dresser's crest motif sheet embellished a tea-set made in January 1872 and a matchpot no.1861. (figs.134A & B) A new pattern for tea ware was entered in June 1875, G 1911, and it incorporated Dresser's compartments of stylised flowers combined with diaper patterns. (figs.131B) Tea ware pattern G 2183 entered in December 1875 displays the so-called 'Dresser-sprigs' and butterflies, and this became particularly popular and was reproduced in cheaper versions. (fig.135) Dresser's patterns for Josiah Wedgwood & Co.were probably of a similar kind but none of the 'Dresser borders' entered in their pattern-books from the time, nor their majolica jardinières with 'Derby sprigs' in panels by Dresser have been traced.⁵⁹

In 1874, The Furniture Gazette engaged Dresser as a free-lance writer and he was asked to report on the Vienna International Exhibition in two series of articles entitled collectively 'Eastern Art and Its Influence on European Manufacture' and 'A Retrospective Glance at the Vienna Exhibition'. The latter essay presents a precis of the former, and we shall concentrate on 'Eastern Art and Its Influence on European Manufacture', which initially was given as a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on 4 February 1874. This lecture considered 'especially Japanese influences' according to a

letter to the society from Dresser.⁶⁰

The first two articles dealt with the Japanese and Chinese cloisonné enamels which, according to Dresser had 'lead to the establishment of new industries in Europe, and to the increased wealth of Westerly nations.' (p.11) He pointed to the exhibits of Elkington & Co, Minton & Co, Royal Worcester Porcelain Co, Barbedienne & Co and Christofle & Co as examples of this 'new art', and particularly praised the latter's products:

Not only have the enamel wares of the East been carefully studied before the works displayed in Vienna by MM. Christofle & Co, were produced, but the lacquer work and the china of Japan must also have been considered, till the spirit of Japanese art was understood. Being understood, the "feeling" or "spirit" of Japanese work was embodied in new forms, and the result has been the production of works of great beauty and with newness of character. (p.111)

We know that Dresser in 1863 was one of the first artists in Europe who had emphasised the necessity of comprehending the aesthetic criteria of Japanese art. It was his concern with the 'feeling' and 'spirit' of the decorative arts which in turn led him to develop an interest in design of an abstract nature devoid of imitative pastiches:

If we will study the spirit, the feeling, and the poetry of the various forms of oriental ornament, and borrow from the East such ideas, such manufactures, and such decorative principles as are accordant with Western wants and feelings, the familiarity which we have gained during recent years with the beautiful works of the Orient can only prove conducive to national progress. (p.111)

Dresser's third article discussed the inadequate capacity for assimilating such lessons, and he particularly regretted the lack of constructional and utilitarian features in British design, stating that 'The consideration of structure precedes that of beauty'. (p.136) Accordingly this was most perfectly demonstrated in the Japanese tea kettles admired by Dresser in Vienna, and two of these served as examples. One was formed as a 'flattened spheroid, and this resembles in shape a common cheese' and covered with 'little rounded eminences', - and the other had a sheet of metal spreading like a 'petticoat' around its lower body. These

constructional peculiarities according to Dresser increased the heating surface and thus its boiling capacity, and he regretted that 'while the kettle is an object of use in every house in the land, we have to go to Japan to learn how to make one as it should be'. (p.136)

Turning from considerations of utility to those concerning beauty, Dresser in his fourth article noted that many of the beautifying ornaments of Eastern nations resulted from 'the expression of a poetic thought or a beautiful idea'. (p.159) The poetical faculty of fine art had been recognised by the romantics in Europe, but its presence in decorative art had not been acknowledged to the same extent, and Dresser's treatment of the subject was unique in the history of Western thought. He had considered the mental origins of ornamental art in his publications of 1862 and had also touched upon this aspect in his Japanese Ornamentation articles of 1863, but it was only after meeting Japanese experts that he conceived the idea of the inherent poetic expression contained in Japanese artefacts. This was particularly recognised in a Japanese kimono acquired by Dresser from the Vienna exhibition stand, whose irregular, but 'flat' colourful pattern of flowers and butterflies on a gold ground conveyed the poetical feeling of Summer. (p.159) (fig.136A) Another sample was a porcelain bowl with a pattern of waves and cranes, much in the manner of Dresser's creation for Minton & Co. in 1870, which expressed the poetical conceit of cranes protecting themselves from the danger of a storm. Two Japanese kettles of bronze were decorated with ornaments which treated the poetical concept of boiling water, by showing clouds and a dragon bathing in the element. (p.159) (fig.136B) These ideas are closely related to the influence of religion upon art, which had been topical in the School of Design and was discussed by Owen Jones ³ in his *Lectures on Architecture* as early as 1835. (Darby, 1974, p.9-10) Dresser concluded his article with a thorough examination of the religious significance of fire worship and its ornamental attributes

such as the nimbus and the flame ornaments, which he believed to be a common device in all religions including Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

It was this idea which provided Dresser with an important stimulus for his journey to Japan, and he concluded:

The Persians, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and many other peoples have taught religion by ornament - have conveyed the idea of the glory of the monarch by the decoration of palaces, and have kept the people in awe by art magnificence, where the sword might have failed were there no pageantry or art to subdue. (p.160)

Dresser seems to have pioneered the thought of the poetical expression in art industry, which during the 1880s and 1890s was recognised in Europe and notably in France. Edmond de Goncourt in his La Maison d'un Artiste published in 1881 linked this to 'la victoire du Japonisme qui apportait une coloration, une fantaisie poétique et un système décoratoire nouveaux'. (Sutton, 1984, p.64) Viollet Le Duc's highly influential 'Comment on devient Dessinateur' accordingly stated that Hokusai 'translates the dominant impression with a feeling of extreme delicacy. Thus, like nature herself he makes poetry without knowing it.' (1885, p.23) Marius Vachon finally sanctioned the concept of the role of the poetical in art industry in a chapter on 'La Poésie de l'Industrie' published in his important book Pour la defense de Nos Industries d'Art. (1894, p.245)

Evidently Dresser's philosophy was ahead of its time, and his final article on 'Eastern Art and Its Influence on European Manufactures' went on to assert that:

The Eastern objects but especially those from Japan, Persia, China and India, are as works of art industry, far superior to similar works by ourselves in almost every department of industry, far superior to similar in a great measure, to have excellent qualities just in proportions as they reveal Oriental characteristics. (p.183)

Amongst examples of such European manufacture he referred to the carpets of P. Haas & Co of Vienna and Templeton of Glasgow, as well as the porcelain of Minton & Co, Royal Worcester, Theodore Deck, Eugène Collinot and the

Parviellé pottery of Paris, and the enamels and damascene works by Christofle and by Barbidienné of Paris. Believing that similar lessons could be learnt by other manufacturers Dresser announced the establishment of a new importing company:

Our opportunities of studying Japanese objects of high art quality will soon be greatly increased, but pray let us make use of them. The Japanese, being convinced that their character as manufacturing people was suffering from the fact that only the commonest wares were exported from their country, have arranged for the preparation of a number of objects of superior quality, to which they will affix a stamp indicative of their excellence. These articles will be exported to England and other countries, and through the kind assistance of Mr. Philip Cunliffe Owen these have been secured for the Alexandra Palace Company, who have arranged to become the sole consignees of these better goods in England. These Japanese objects will be shown and offered for sale at a Japanese village in the Alexandra Park, and this village, which Sir Edward Lee and myself had the honour of suggesting that the company should prepare, is now in course of erection by Japanese workmen at Muswell Hill. (p.184)

In looking at the kind of artefacts which were exhibited by the Japanese in Vienna we may get an impression of the objects that were brought to the Alexandra Palace Park in 1874. The Japanese Commissioners headed by the president Okuma Shigenobu, (1838-1922) minister of Finance and Vice-President Sano Tsunetami (1822-1902), Ambassador to Austria and Italy, were represented by several famous artists who are also recorded as having exhibited their designs:- Fujiyama Tanehiro (glass), Date Yanosuke (textiles), Nakamura Kiichior (dyeing), Notomi Kaijiro (pottery), Kawahara Chujiro (pottery), Tanzan Rokuro (plaster work) Saito Shozaburo (paint-coating) and Hirayama Eizo (pattern-design). (Uyeno, 1958, p.111) The potter's art was particularly well represented according to the critics Thomas Archer and William P. Blake who wrote the British and American Commissioners' reports respectively. Blake underlined that 'Japan entered fully into the spirit of the great Exhibition, and made the most systematic and comprehensive display of the varied industries of the country yet seen in Europe', and he drew attention to the undecorated and coarser ceramics as well as the Satsuma ware which as he put it was 'a surprise to

connoisseurs at the Paris Exhibition in 1867. It was admired at the exhibition in 1871 (London), and appeared in still greater variety at Vienna.' (Blake, 1875, p.64) Archer, however, was more critical and noted the deterioration of the Satsuma ware, which was represented by larger vases made for the European market. (Archer, 1873, p.152) The shapes and patterns of these vases which incorporated peacocks and pheasants amongst chrysanthemums, irises, peonies and cherry-blossom made a lasting impression on Western designers who in the latter 1870s & 1880s made pottery of a similar kind. Dresser's Linthorpe Art Pottery, produced from 1879 onwards, was frequently based on Satsuma prototypes. (figs.137 & 138)

Archer's report in addition commented favourable on a whole range of Japanese ceramics which coincided with the wares collected by Dresser during his stay in Japan in 1876-77: The egg-yellow, dark green or purple glazed Awaji ware, which became particularly popular in the West, the blue and white as well as red and gold Seto ware, - the richly enamelled Banko pottery resembling some of Dresser's creations for Minton & Co, and Awata ware from Kyoto, which consisted of Satsuma copies but also of fine ceramics in the tradition of the famous Ninsei. The Arita ware according to Archer was represented with some large plates over a yard in diameter 'exquisitely painted in Nanking blue under the glaze', of a kind that was acquired by the S.Ken.Museum, and he enthused over the finely red and gold painted Kaga and Nagasaki porcelain which was so favoured in Europe. When comparing the Japan stand with the collection of Audsley and Bowes in 1874, Archer however, realised that most of the objects were of contemporary origin and inferior to those in private collections formed before this time.⁶¹

Dresser in retrospect recalled having been greatly impressed with the metal objects shown by the Japanese in Vienna (1882, p.418), and The Builder critic indeed referred to a number of 'metal vases and teapots of

interesting character, but notably vases which consist of belts or various metals...and square kettles and round kettles and polyhedric kettles', some of which were described as having exposed rivets and joints in the manner of much of Dresser's later designs for metal vessels.⁶² A tea-set created by Dresser for Elkington & Co in December 1873 and a jardinière produced by Benham and Froud in about 1880 were clearly inspired by these Japanese vases and kettles, and his highly original tea-kettles executed by James Dixon & Son in 1879 reflect the square, round and polyhedric shapes of the Japanese. (figs.139, 140, 141, 142) Significantly, the anonymous writer in The Builder, elicited a number of Dresser's 'Principles', and 'the simplicity and justness' of structure in the Japanese furniture exhibited in Vienna in 1873, was praised in Dresser's terms:

Most of these cabinets consists of only straight pieces of wood,
- a treatment by which maximum amount of strength is gained with
the least expenditure of material. (1873, p.641)

This description concurs with the principles and designs recommended for furniture-making by Dresser, and certainly some of the lacquer furniture boxes and other objects were acquired by him for the Alexandra Palace Company in 1873. Some of the thousands of dyers' stencils known as 'katagami' were probably also sent over, and these patterns had a profound effect on British wallpapers and textiles. The Japanese silks as we have noted had been particularly praised by Dresser and the famous German art historian Friederich Pecht expressed similar views:

Japanese decorations owes its wonderful fascination to its own peculiar system of large forms and colour patches, which are often broken up into innumerable small ones, or to large forms assembled out of small ornamental motifs. One also sees beautifully printed patterns with gold decoration, which also obey the basic principle of systematic irregularity. Naturally there is repetition every so often. But this is handled with such ravishing charm that I have never before been so tempted to buy. One takes one's leave of these enchanting magnificent fabrics only to find that they are lodged in one's memory as an ideal. (Pecht, 1873, p.298)

These Japanese textiles evidently impressed themselves similarly upon

Dresser's memory for he produced a range of silk-damasks for J.W. & C. Ward in 1873-75, created in the Japanese manner of 'large forms and colour patches, which are broken up into innumerable small ones and large forms assembled out of small ornamental motifs'. Dresser, as we know had recognised the 'broken diapers, irregular powderings and strange key patterns' in his articles on Japanese Ornamentation in 1863, and he had himself produced some plates for Minton & Co. in 1871 in this style. This kind of broken patchwork or applique pattern was frequently met with in the decorative repertoire of the Japanese and was known as the 'Kirihane' when used in laquer works, 'Komai' when adapted to metal work, and 'Surihaku' or 'Katamigaware' technique when utilised in textile manufacture. Similar layered or applique ornaments were also applied to Japanese papers and porcelain, samples of which were exhibited in London as early as in 1862. (figs.143 & 144)

Perhaps this stylised netlike juxtaposition of overlapping and balanced compositions contributed the most important stimulus to the current dispute about the methodology appropriate to ornamental design. Dresser and other designers recognised their abstract potential and ornamental vigour, as well as their dual composition of ground and superimposed patterns, which was to become a recurring device amongst Western designers and painters around the turn of the century. Dresser was far ahead of his time in assimilating structural qualities from these patterns, and one of his first designs was a rich blue and gold silk damask for J.W. & C. Ward registered with the Patent Office Design Registry 18 April 1873, which incorporated Japanese diaper patterns juxtaposed with stylised flowers. Two similar patterns are preserved amongst the nine Dresser textiles donated by J.W. & C. Ward to the V & A in 1953. The location of some of these samples in the Patent Office Design Registry indicate a dating of around 1875. The 'broken diapers, irregular

powderings and strange key patterns' with superimposed flower-medallions convey a tense, rhythmical composition, which became a hallmark of Dresser's own. (figs. 145A, B & C) We know that Godwin, Day, Talbert and other contemporary designers created similar textiles and wallpapers, but none of these display the vigorous sweep and supreme compositional balance which marked Dresser's designs.

This is equally apparent in some of the more naturalistic patterns created by Dresser for the same company in 1875. (fig. 146) The 'autumn grass' and bamboo-pattern was adapted to blue and white Minton & Co plates in the same year. (fig. 147) These were probably produced by Minton's Art Pottery Studio, and four more patterns in the Dresser-file at Minton are in the same Japanese manner, and may be compared to Japanese enamel plates acquired by the S. Ken. Museum from Samuel Bing in 1875. (figs. 148A & B, & 149)

THE ALEXANDRA PALACE COMPANY

Evidently Dresser received a marked stimulus from a number of the Japanese artefacts exhibited in Vienna in 1873, and we may conclude that these kind of objects were acquired for the Alexandra Palace Company at the post exhibition sale. Dresser and Philip Cunliffe Owen in conjunction with the Director of the company, Sir Edward Lee certainly obtained the most favourable trade contract with the Japanese Commissioners at the close of the exhibition, and were able to transfer the entire Japanese temple garden and 'village' to the Alexandra Park at Muswell Hill in London.

The newly founded Kiritsu Kosho Kaisha 'Company for the Establishment of Industry and Commerce' under the direction of Matsuo Gisuké and Wakai Kanezaburo, were responsible for delivering goods to the Alexandra Palace Company, and a factory employing some of the most important Meiji artists was founded in Japan. The Kiritsu Kosho Company came to dominate the Japanese export trade and established branches in New York in 1877 and in

Paris in 1878, remaining in business until 1891. (Uyeno, 1958, p.114)

The 'Japanese Village' as Dresser called it had been one of the greatest attractions in Vienna, and illustrations of the Vienna Exhibition and the Alexandra Palace Park in The Illustrated London News provide a good impression of its 'Kaguro-do' and 'Tenschochaidjingou' buildings, garden, bridge, lanterns and 'Sakaki' masts. (fig.150) The Alexandra Palace Guide published in 1875 also presented Dresser's commercial intentions:

The Japanese village being the identical one which delighted the visitors of the Vienna Exhibition, has been re-erected by Japanese work-men. It includes a residence, a temple and a bazaar. In the bazaar, as well as in a special department in the Palace, Japanese productions of the highest and rarest, as well as of the most ordinary kinds, are on sale. To ensure their genuineness, the Japanese goods will be stamped. It is the more essential that this point should be dwelt on, because the taste of Japanese work has been somewhat deteriorated by the introduction of goods of inferior workmanship, manufactured expressly for the England market. From the Alexandra Palace such trash will be banished, and the lovers of Japanese art cannot fail to be gratified. Viewed from the Western end of the Palace, the Japanese Village has a very pretty appearance.⁶³ (fig.150)

Clearly this venture, which presented the British public with their first view of Japanese architecture, was based on commercial as well as ideological principles. Dresser in fact wished to redress the lamentable deterioration of Japanese art through the importation of high quality goods to England. He received much praise for his efforts in The Times and the art periodicals of the day, and it appears that he also supplied designs for an additional twenty models of oriental houses, which were in situ by 1879, when the guide-book mentioned a Moorish villa, an Egyptian residence and a Chinese teashop. His student Henry Tooth (1842-1918), a stage-designer from the Isle of Wight, is recorded as having assisted him in 1873,⁶⁴ and he probably continued working with Dresser until 1879 when he became Manager of the Linthorpe Art Pottery founded by Dresser and John Harrison. Tooth and Dresser had first met at the Isle of Wight in 1870, when Dresser by chance visited the newly erected Town Hall at Sandown which

Tooth was decorating. (R. Lee, 1934, p.39)

The Alexandra Palace according to the guide-book also contained stands occupied by companies known to have been in contact with Dresser in the 1870s: Elkington & Co, Minton & Co, Jackson & Graham, George Chubb & Sons, Benham and Froud, Edwin Streeter and Arthur Liberty & Co.⁶⁵ We know that Dresser had supplied a design for a carpet to Jackson & Graham in 1858, but he is not mentioned in connection with the firm until 1877 when he organised their 'Japanese Exhibition'.⁶⁶ He designed locks for Chubb & Co's stand at the Paris Expo Universelle in 1878, and the New Bond Street jeweller Edwin Streeter in 1878 exhibited his 'Japanese Nobleman's room'.⁶⁷ Arthur Liberty is also recorded to have been engaged in 'fitting up a Japanese house' at the Alexandra Palace Park, and this must refer to the house which Dresser brought from Vienna. Perhaps 1873 is the first possible dating we may ascribe to contact between Dresser and Liberty, who was amongst the greatest commercial promoters of Japanese art at the time. Later they were recorded as friends and business associates - at least by 1882 when Dresser's daughter Nellie remembered her father having supplied designs for Liberty fabrics.⁶⁸ (Aburgham, 1975, p.22) The 'Japanese Village' invoked an immediate and lasting stimulus to the Japan cult in Britain and the buildings in the Alexander Palace Park remained in situ until at least 1880. They continued to attract a throng of visitors, who in 1875, for instance, amounted to 130,785 people.⁶⁹ The 'Japanese Village' certainly represented the culminating point of the Japan cult which emerged in the mid 1870s, and every interior with pretensions to fashion by then contained some Japanese or Japan-inspired art-objects. One leader of fashion, Ellen Terry, remembered moving house with her husband Edward Godwin in 1874, and described how their Bloomsbury interiors were fitted up in the Anglo-Japanese style, even the children's nursery walls being covered with Japanese prints and the daughter being dressed in a

kimono, a present from Whistler. (Terry, London 1908, p.50) It was at this time that a certain Japanese influence entered the children's books written and illustrated by Walter Crane (1845-1915) and Kate Greenaway. (1846-1901)

Dresser and other progressive designers and artists in Britain lost one of their most notable sources of inspiration, when Owen Jones died in 1874. It was decided to honour him with a memorial exhibition in conjunction with the International Exhibition in London in that year and Dresser, on whose shoulders this mantle had fallen, was asked to give the memorial lecture. He praised his mentor as 'the greatest ornamentist in modern times', and stressed that Jones

'first taught him to think - and what was ornament unless it embodied mine - and he owed all that he then was to the manner in which Jones led him to think on a course of five lectures delivered some twentyfive years ago'. (Dresser, 1874, p.159)

These lectures represented Jones propositions on design and provided Dresser with the basis to develop his own principles. Both of which were amongst the most influential released in Britain at the time.

Dresser praised the numerous designs for room decorations lent by Jackson & Graham and by Jeffrey & Co, and he enthused over the ceilings and carpets designed by Jones for Alfred Morrison's Carlton House, the Viceroy's Palace in Cairo, Messrs Osler & Co.'s showrooms in Oxford Street, and the Oriental Courts in the S.Ken.Museum. We have already noted the inspiration Dresser derived from these creations, but he was less impressed with Jones's silk-damasks and furniture designs. The latter in particular was heavily criticised for lack of structural soundness: 'An over-elaborate inlay, the furniture appearing to have been designed for the inlay, and not first constructed, and then the constructed wood decorated'. (op.cit. p.159)

Dresser continued to pay tribute to Owen Jones in many of his articles published in the Furniture Gazette in 1874. These revolved around topics that had been initially analysed by Jones and subsequently featured in

Dresser's Principles of Decorative Design. With the exception of the reviews of the Vienna Exhibition these articles dealt with 'Good Taste in House Furnishings', 'Materials and Workmanship', 'The Grotesque', 'On Colour', 'The Expression of Egyptian Ornament' and 'Fitness and Beauty'. In the spirit of Owen Jones, Dresser also encouraged the use of newly discovered and inexpensive materials, when he adjudicated at the Whitby Institution of Jet-Manufactures Exhibition at Whitby in 1874. On this occasion he lectured 'On the True Principles of Art as Applied to the Manufacture of Jet Ornaments' and thus stimulated the use of inexpensive materials that modern science had made available. (Whitby Times 23 October 1874) Dresser felt that the excessive production of mourning ornaments produced in this material might effectively be replaced by creations inspired by 'comical little Japanese figures', (probably netsukes) and he particularly praised the jet ornaments already produced in the Japanese style.

The Japan cult had by then embraced ordinary household goods and the use of less expensive materials, which made them accessible to a wider range of the British people. Further impetus was derived from the Japan stand at the International Exhibition in London in 1874. The exhibits seem to primarily have comprised Kyoto porcelain, leather-papers, plaster work, stencils, clothing and architectural models sent over by the Japanese.⁷⁰ Two porcelain plates by a contemporary, Taizan of Kyoto, whom Dresser was to visit in 1877, were acquired by Audsley and Bowes from the exhibition, and they display the peculiar return of Japonism patterns to Japan. (fig.151) Dresser as we know had warned against such decadent and uncritical Western influence upon Japanese art and Sir Rutherford Alcock's articles on 'Japanese Art' in The Art Journal (1875-78) expressed alarm by 'the aptitude they have shown to assimilate and imitate European arts and manners in the present day'. (1875, p.205)

At least one farsighted Japanese was aware of these retarding

tendencies to Japanese produce. Fukuzawa Yukichi, (1834-1901) one of the most outstanding educational spirits of the Meiji Japan who was sympathetic to Western contacts which he had himself promoted whilst visiting America in 1860 and London in 1862. He founded the Keio University following Western models and in 1875 published the influential An Outline of Civilization, which aimed to analyse the spiritual development of the nation as a whole under Western influence. Fukuzawa insisted that Japan must understand the spirit of modern civilization before imitating its external forms, and refining Western products and methods in a Japanese style. Dresser had come to a similar conclusion, without knowing Fukuzawa's book, and one of the main objectives of his tour of Japan undertaken between 1876-77, was to bring this alarming matter to the attention of Japanese politicians, manufacturers and artists.

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CHAPTER VI

DRESSER'S 'STUDIES IN DESIGN' (1875-1876) ANDHIS TOUR OF AMERICA AND JAPAN 1876-1877

According to the preface of Dresser's Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufacturers, the aim of his Japan tour was threefold; to instruct the Japanese in modern manufacturing methods which would facilitate mass production but incorporate traditional Japanese aesthetics, to bring the S. Ken. Museum's donation of British manufactures to the Tokyo National Museum, and finally to continue his private collection and studies regarding Japanese architecture and art industries.

Dresser stressed that his personal interest was based upon the observation of religious influences on Japanese architecture and manufactures. This attitude was unique in the context of the history of art, as formal studies of Buddhist and Shinto art were not undertaken until after his death at the beginning of this century. Dresser's pursuits were modest compared to modern research projects, but he was responsible for the first serious attempt to explain Japanese art on its own terms, as seen in relation to religious, climatic, and social structures within its native context. He had concerned himself with this subject already in 1863, when, as we have noted, he attempted to demonstrate 'the mental significance' of such Japanese ornaments as the dragon, the cloud, and the eclipse of the moon etc. Before other Japonists, Dresser had contemplated the religious symbolism inherent in Japanese art, which he had discovered in samples exhibited at the International Exhibition in London in 1862. His Development of the International Exhibition, etc. accordingly raised the necessity of seeing architecture and ornament as an expression of the people's faith. (p.60) These considerations had also been prevalent in the lectures of his tutors Owen Jones and Gottfried Semper at the School of Design in 1852.¹

Dresser's Studies in Design published prior to his departure for Japan via America in October 1876, emphasised similar views, stating that artistic inspiration from Oriental prototypes could only be obtained when he 'entered into the spirit of the Oriental' and studied 'the religion, mode of government, climate, and habits of the people; for it is only by understanding their faith and usages that I can comprehend the spirit of their ornament and become for a time one of them in feeling.' (p.3)

STUDIES IN DESIGN

Dresser's Studies in Design published in instalments between 1875-1876 is relevant to our understanding of the motives which lay behind his tour of Japan. A number of the colour-plates in this book are influenced by Japanese models. Dresser emphasised that 'the students would do well to study native Japanese drawings of flowers, which now can be got at many fancy warehouses' (p.6) and that

'before the ornamentist can produce work of the highest character, -- work by which a maximum of knowledge and learning are revealed -- he must have understanding of Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Arabian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Medieval ornament at least. (p.7)

These were the styles which had influenced Dresser's own productions since his days at the School of Design and his chapter 'On the Necessity of Newness of Style in Ornament' reiterated the message of eclecticism and 'sifting' of historic pastiches which were to give birth to a new and original style. Subsequently such a revolutionary and much anticipated creation would be dependent upon the artist's capacity to see abstract qualities such as beauty, power, truth and repose in his own expression, which Dresser exemplified by samples 'On the Treatment of the Grotesque'. We have noted that the notion of the grotesque probably originated with his observation of such effects in Japanese ornamentation and some of the most original plates in Studies may be associated with Japanese prototypes. The birds, animals and beasts in these plates, (II, IV, VII, XIV), some of

which occur in procession or twined together in scrolls, similar to the Japanese ornaments which Dresser had already praised in 1863. These may be compared to the Japanese textiles donated by Queen Victoria to the S. Ken. Museum in 1865 and also to the animal friezes created by Dresser for Minton porcelain. (figs.152A & B, 153A & B)

The grotesque display of Japanese ducks called 'Kinmodsui', was applied to a plate created by William Brownfield & Co in 1875, but whether this was in fact executed by Dresser or was copied from his publication has not been determined. The 'Alas Poor Yorick' design subsequently embellished a Japanese fan sold at the Art Furnishers Alliance around 1880-83. Clearly Dresser's discovery of the grotesque was closely linked with his Japan inspired designs. (figs.154A & B, 155A & B) Plate XVII, described to be Japanese, was successfully adapted to a garden chair designed by Dresser for Minton & Co. in 1876. (fig.156A & B)

Studies in Design also contained a number of suggestions for patterns suitable for adaptation for interior decoration, and several of these are in the Japanese manner. The star-formed patterns on blue ground, in plates XXI, XXX, and XLIX, had been recommended by Dresser in his Principles of Decorative Design as being in 'much favour with the Japanese'. (fig.90) The blue and cream fret pattern in plate LX was derived from the Japanese frets which Dresser had included in Japanese Ornamentation in 1863, and two similar dado patterns in plates XII and LVIII were based on similar Japanese diaper and fret patterns. (figs.157A & B) Dresser's publications aimed to present solutions to the problem combining suitable patterns for the whole interior, with the directive which he had set himself of 'assisting to bring about a better style of decoration for our houses'. He continued recommending the dado, filling, frieze and border scheme which had first been suggested in his Principles, and thus provided the Victorians with a bold and novel alternative to their white-washed ceilings

and naturalistic wallpapers. Dresser, stressed, however, that this decoration could only be recommended when few or no pictures were to be hung on the walls, and that plain-coloured walls evenly patterned with stylised floral ornaments were otherwise to be preferred. Plates XX, XXIV, XXXVII, LIV display a number of this type of ornament which demonstrates Dresser's artistic botany at its best. It conveys the conventionality, angularity and crispness of touch which he had observed in Japanese ornaments. The subdued colour-scheme in 'greenery-yallery' and tertiary shades is also reminiscent of his concept of the unobtrusiveness of Japanese wallpapers, and this type of colouring dominated the artistic interiors advocated by Dresser and other Victorian writers. (figs.158) In a chapter 'On the Necessity for Harmony between all the parts of the Room' Dresser recommended blue ceilings, citrine or low-toned yellow-orange walls, maroon or red-purple dado, bronze-green doors and black architraves. The rooms as they opened upon each other should harmonise as, for example, would the colour scheme of olive hue, russet hue and citrine colour. Similar tenets for artistic interiors were released in Edward Godwin's Art-Furniture (1877), Lucy Orrinsmith's The Drawing-Room, its Decoration and Furniture (1877), Mrs Haweis' The Art of Beauty (1878), Mrs M.J. Loftie's The Dining Room (1878) and Harriet P. Spofford's Art Decoration applied to Furniture (1878). The art-decoration movement which had begun with Dresser, Eastlake, Godwin, Morris, Talbert and Whistler in the 1860s thus extended its influence to include the interiors of the house of the common person.

Dresser and other writers led the fashion for art-furniture, art-decoration, industrial art and household art. Their phraseology included aesthetic, beautiful, useful, and a great deal of medievalism and Japonism, which countermanded the crude Victorian taste for the poorly executed products of the industrial revolution. Dresser as previously stated was

one of the first artistic leaders advocating 'aesthetic interiors', which displayed the kind of decorations referred to above, as well as miscellaneous Japanese collections including pots, colourful metal wares, fans, peacock feathers and sunflowers on shelves 'arranged after the Japanese fashion, long and short, high and low, so as to give lightness and variety', according to Mrs. Loftie. (1878, p.4)

Dresser's sumptuously illustrated Studies echoed several of the doctrines which he had presented in previous publications and the summary anticipated the widespread popularity of art-decoration:

I look to decorators becoming the great teachers of art in the country. If we, as ornamentists, get knowledge, and explain to our clients why we propose treating their rooms in a peculiar manner, they will readily consent to the production of artistic rooms; and when once they have lived in an artistic house, they will never again like the white ceilings and merely papered wall, for their tastes will have improved. (p.39)

He mentioned that Jeffrey & Co had released a series of wallpapers to meet the requirements set forth in his book, and at least one of these, called 'Persian' was illustrated in The Building News in 1874. (fig.159) The Jeffrey & Co. Logbook from the year listed no less than twelve different designs from Dresser's pen named Egypt, Ark, Locust, Persian, Volga, East Gulf, Cyprus, Crown, Raven, Cedar, Caspian and Moslem. (Arthur Sanderson & Sons Archives) Only the Persian has been identified but it is worthy of note that the majority of these designs bear Eastern names and that the Locust, which Dresser associated with Japanese art and reproduced on a Minton & Co vase in 1871, also inspired one of his wallpaper designs.

Dresser contributed to the elevation of interior decoration to the status of 'art', but the ability to create an artistic room was limited to a select few. The love of English Medieval and Japanese art eventually inspired the common man to create more 'artful' interiors, but they were hardly aesthetic and satirists such as George du Marier (1834-1896) in Punch spoke scathingly of the movement. Clarence Cook's book, What Shall

We Do With Our Walls (New York 1880), finally questioned the oppressive burden of imbuing ordinary homes with the refinement of art.

DRESSER AT THE PHILADELPHIA CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION IN 1876

Dresser took his message across the Atlantic when en route to Japan in the autumn of 1876 he visited the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and lectured on 'Art Industries, Art Museums, and Art-Schools' at the newly founded Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. The recent catalogue of the exhibition In Pursuit of Beauty, Americans and the Aesthetic Movement at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, has highlighted Dresser's importance for the movement, and that his visits to America in 1876 and on his return journey in 1877, acted 'as a catalyst for the influence of Japanese art on American manufacturers and designers.'²

Dresser's lectures, which were published in The Penn Monthly in 1877, dealt extensively with the influence of Japanese art on European design. He paid particular attention to the poetical expression of Japanese art, which he demonstrated showing the kimono he had bought at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873. He pointed out that

The almond, which they so often depict, is the symbol of beauty, the tortoise of strength, the stork of longevity, hence, wherever these objects occur in their decoration, they have a poetic significance. (p.215)

His lecture on 'Art Museums' reiterated the criticism of the S. Ken. Museum which he had expressed in 1871-72. He again publicly regretted that the director had not continued his former policy of making extensive purchases of the Oriental and Japanese objects that had exerted such a marked influence on English art-industries. (p.125) The hint was readily accepted by the Americans, particularly by Charles Louis Tiffany (1812-1902) and his son Louis Comfort (1848-1933), whom Dresser befriended in 1876.

Charles Louis Tiffany had founded a silversmith's and 'curioso-company' in 1837, and their chief designer Edward C. Moore (1827-1891) had designed

some objects in the Japanese style in 1871. David Hanks has pointed out that Dresser should be credited for the increase in their production of such ware and for the introduction of new manufacturing methods in 1877-78:

Dresser's role in the evolution of the company's involvement with the Japanese style is apparent in the extensive collection he established for them, publicly auctioned 18 June 1877; he may also be credited with the employment of Japanese craftsmen at Tiffany.³

Newspaper-cuttings, letters and a handwritten list of this collection in the Tiffany & Co. Archive provides evidence for the fact that Dresser was commissioned to bring back a substantial collection of Japanese artefacts amounting to several thousand objects, and that some of these were annotated 'Bought for Patterns' by Tiffany's.⁴ It was at this time that young Louis Comfort Tiffany, who was educated as a painter, turned his talents to designing and in 1878 he joined with Candace Wheeler (1827-1923), Samuel Colman, and Lockwood de Forest (1850-1932) in founding the Associated Artists Co; which produced designs for whole interiors including embroidered hangings, tiles, stained-glass and wallpapers in the style advocated by Dresser.

According to an article on 'Dr. Dresser in America' which appeared in The Furniture Gazette on 9 December 1876, he also made contacts with American wallpaper manufacturers and in particular supplied thirteen new designs to the Philadelphia firm Wilson & Fennimore. These creations consisted of ' dado, rail, filling frieze and ceiling papers',⁵ and they were registered with the U.S. Patent Office by this company under Dresser's name on 15 May 1877.⁶ Several of the designs are based on Japanese diaper patterns, and one in particular on the broken appliqué patterns with flowers superimposed in the Japanese style.(fig.160) Catherine Lynn has recently emphasised that Dresser's impact on the design and use of wallpapers in America rivalled only that of William Morris, and that his designs were sold by a Pittsburgh decorating firm in 1877 and subsequently figured in an

exhibition of English wallpapers organised by the firm John J. McGrath in Chicago in 1879.⁷ Constance C. Harrison in her Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes noted that much of the improvement of American wallpapers originated from the fact that those 'of Dresser and Morris, are familiar in our houses'. (1881, p.143) Equally, the American carpet industry received their most influential European models from Dresser's and Morris's creations. Dresser in 1876 had published a volume on Carpets in G.E. Bevan's series on British Manufacturing Industries (Vol.VI) in which he called the American taste in carpets the worst in the world, and American trade journals soon began using this criticism as a goad to improve American carpets. The Carpet Trade Review for instance commented vividly on Dresser's designs and principles during the period 1877 to 1885, and his name was even adopted as a descriptive adjective 'Dresseresque' in their columns in 1880.⁸ Undoubtedly Dresser, together with Oscar Wilde who toured the U.S.A. in 1882, was one of the most influential European artists to visit America in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and we shall deal with more specific proofs of this influence when considering his second American visit on his return journey from Japan in 1877.

Dresser's participation as a designer at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 has remained obscure, but companies known to have engaged Dresser as a designer at the time, such as Elkington & Co, Jeffrey & Co., and Minton & Co., exhibited Japan-inspired products that may have emanated from Dresser's studio. Elkington & Co. exhibited 'cloisonné near to the exquisite beauty of the old Japanese' according to The Times⁹ and Minton & Co.'s cloisonné and majolica wares made a tremendous impact upon American artists and manufacturers. Some of the many designs provided by Dresser for the company at this time were certainly on view. His decorative designs appear on a number of Minton pots produced in 1875-1876, notably a seau no.1919, which on 11 April 1876 was decorated with 'Dresser ornaments

with bird in grey and white enamel on each side'.¹⁰ Another version with Dresser's 'gilt cloisonné, butterfly and key patches, rosettes, diaper at each end, birds on branches on turquoise ground' was executed on 29 December 1875.¹¹ (fig.161A & B) These patterns reflect the design for tiles with 'Dresser's birds and bullrushes' launched by Minton in 1870 (fig.129) and they display motifs in the Japanese style that had been frequently used by Dresser. The shape of the seau and stand is reminiscent of Chinese and Japanese prototypes, as are a range of vases designed by Dresser for Minton & Co. in the spring of 1876; production nos. 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905 and 1907. (fig.162) Similar shapes were later created for his Linthorpe pottery, and shape nos. 1904, 1905 and 1905 were clearly derived from his previous pilgrim bottles, 1303, 1664 and 1799. The highly popular model 1907 was inspired by a drawing of a Japanese flask, dating from AD 730, which probably originated from Dresser's pen and which has been preserved in the Royal Doulton-Minton Archive.¹² This was decorated in the cloisonné style with a star ornament from Dresser's Principles (fig.56) in May 1876, and may well have been exhibited in America where artists soon afterwards began to produce similar shapes.(figs.163A & B) Vases 1904 and 1905 were probably inspired by a Japanese bronze vase in the S. Ken. Museum, and a decoration with butterflies in the Japanese style for these vases has been preserved in the Dresser-file at Minton's.(figs.164A & B) Vases 1902 and 1907 are described as having received patterns of 'Birds on branches' in 1876, and these were probably similar to those in seau 1919, but the designs have not been traced.¹³ Such a pattern, however, was introduced for tea-ware in November 1877 and two more Dresser designs for tea ware in the Japanese cloisonné style was created by Minton & Co in April 1876,¹⁴ (figs.165A & B) and these were certainly exhibited in Philadelphia in 1876, when the British critic Roger Soden-Smith placed Minton's production on an equal footing with that of the Japanese manufacturer Fukihara:

Fukihara and Minton having run, so to speak, directly in competition, save in their designs, in the decoration of vases with cloisonné enamel...The Japanese now, like Minton's substitute porcelain for metallic body, and paint on it with opaque enamels. (1876, p.31)

Japonism creations predominated at the Philadelphia Exhibition, and helped consolidating the Aesthetic Movement in America. Perhaps the most influential British exhibits were those of Thomas Jeckyll's Anglo-Japanese cast-iron 'sunflower' pavilion and andirons produced by Barnard, Bishop & Barnard for the exhibition, (fig.37) and Edward Godwin's and John Moyer Smith's Anglo-Japanese furniture exhibited by the makers Collinson & Lock. (Aslin 1969, pp.94) The Art Journal in the same year had noted that:

At the present moment, the enormous influx of Japanese wares is scarcely so remarkable, as the evident fact, that the aesthetic mind of that surprising people is beginning to pervade almost every ornamental manufacture in Europe, from the patterns of textile fabric to the illustrations of books, and it is not too much to say, that we may trace their preponderating influence, even in the exhibits of the Royal Academy.¹⁵

The article on 'Importations from Japan' in the same magazine, praised Dresser's artistic directorship of Linds & Co., whose 'gigantic' holding was described to excite the mind;

to wonder by the enormous variety of the works shown, inducing conviction that the artisans of Japan have attained a degree of refinement, of perfection of finish, and of knowledge to form and colour, that our British workmen have vainly striven to reach.¹⁶

Dresser's importance for the dissemination of Japanese art and the Japonism style was equally prominent in Britain as in the U.S.A. in 1876, and a number of contemporary artists followed his example. Japanese enterprise by then had become aware of the commercial potential of native goods, and continued stimulating the Western market and artistic milieu. The Japan stand at the Philadelphia exhibition in particular made a decisive impact on Dresser and other artists. This was housed in a V-shaped Japanese building with a triangular garden forecourt and it was unanimously praised by the critics as one of the most brilliant displays at the exhibition.

The Lippincott's Magazine provided a vivid description of its reception:

We have been accustomed to relegate Japanese art to the domain of the hopelessly grotesque. The best we have generally been able to say for it was that the caricature was intentional, and the only puzzle was why it should be indiscriminately applied to all and every subject. Such prepossessions disappear as we stand before the fountain that occupies the vestibule of the Japanese sections, inlaid with silver, covered with raised figures, and more crowded with embellishment than a Gothic shrine. Beyond this is literally a forest of bronze, with interlacing stems, leafage and feathered, scaled and furry inhabitants. Penetrate it, and you find that like other forests it separates into individual members, vases and various hue and shading representing the tree. The most striking of them, like many of its fellows, has left its native soil for ever. It goes to an English purchaser, as others do to American amateurs and museums and schools of art. Think of such concession from the conceit of Western civilization. It is content, at first to summon, to accept instruction in one of the highest walks of industrial art from what it has been wont to style the effete and mouldy civilizations of the extreme East.¹⁷

Evidently condescension had turned to unrestrained admiration and acceptance of Japanese art by the time the Centennial Exhibition was opened. The Western world was confronted with the grandest selection of Japanese household ceramics, bronzes and paintings ever exhibited.(fig.166)

Publications such as James J. Jarves A Glimpse at the Art of Japan and William E. Griffis The Mikado's Empire published in the exhibition year contributed fundamentally to the growing popularity of Japanese art in the U.S.A.

The increasing interest in Japanese earthenware as opposed to the previous fascination with porcelain, was one of the most notable changes of the critics' preoccupations, and the British reporter Roger Soden-Smith enthused about the coarser ceramics exhibited:

Where no evil influence of bad European taste has been felt, the production of these factories afford examples of ornament that in quaintness of fancy, skilful balance of parts and gorgeous effects of colour could not easily be surpassed. (1876, p.278)

He named wares from Awata, Awaji, Banko, Raku, Tamba and Takatori, and he particularly admired the mixed colours of 'drap, dark-brown, reddish and white' in the Banko ware exhibited. We have noted that Dresser had praised

these types of ceramics already in 1871, and that they evidently inspired his later Linthorpe Pottery.

The Official Report of the American juror Francis A. Walker, described in detail the ceramics and artists represented in Philadelphia. He was especially intrigued by the collection of 'Ancient pottery and porcelain, earthenware and stonewares, bottles of coarse grey stone and earthenware, said to be twelve hundred years old' exhibited by the Kiritsu Kosho Company. (1877, pp.65-80) Dresser, as we have seen, had established trading contact with this company at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873, and they clearly formed a vital conduit for the dissemination of Japanese art in the West.

The general growth in production from the Japanese potteries during the Meiji period was more apparent than ever at the Centennial Exhibition. Walker's list of famous potters is extensive: Kato Gosuke, Kawamoto Masukichi and Kawamoto Hansuke of Seto, Makudzu Kozan of Ota, Kishiu Sampei of Awaji, Mori Yogozaemon, Nakayama Magochi and Shitomi Shohei of Ise, and the Kyoto potters Kanzan Denschichi, Kinkozan Sobei, Seifu Yohei, Tanzan Seikai, and father and son Zengoro (Wazen and Tokizen). The Meiji Government had encouraged the establishment of new kilns in order to provide work for the number of artisans who were unemployed following the revolution. This in turn stimulated the nationwide expansion of ceramics production for domestic consumption which gradually found its way to the West. The need for information on these new products was increasingly felt, and Shioda Makato's Catalogue of Japanese Ceramics at the Philadelphia Exhibition finally provided a new model for Western collectors. Audsley and Bowes for instance found that their Keramic Art of Japan had to be entirely revised and supplemented by what they named 'the undecorated wares' and a new edition was published in 1881. Augustus Franks' Catalogue of Japanese Pottery in the South Kensington Museum (London 1880) certainly

relied heavily upon that of Shioda, and Dresser is recorded as having amassed pottery during his tour of Japan which corresponded to those listed by Shioda. Dresser became a friend of Shioda Makato, who in 1878 sent him a gift of some 50 modern Japanese plaster-works,¹⁸ and he certainly consulted his catalogue both at the exhibition and during his visit to Japan. We shall return to Dresser's collecting strategies, and finally note that a representative collection of Japanese pottery from the Centennial Exhibition was donated to the S. Ken. Museum in exchange for a collection of British contemporary manufactures brought to the Tokyo National Museum by Dresser. (Franks, 1880, preface)

DRESSER IN JAPAN

Dresser's tour to Japan afforded him a splendid opportunity for a first hand study of the Japanese art which he had admired since his childhood. His unique observations were published in 1882 in Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures, from which most of the following information has been drawn. Important quotations will be included from Ishida Tametake's Dresser Hokoku (Dresser Report) published by the Japanese Government as a blue guide for manufacturers in 1877. Contemporary manuscripts relating to his visit preserved in the National Archive and in the National Museum in Tokyo, as well as in the Kyoto Prefectural Library and the Public Record Office in London, have also been consulted.

Dresser travelled from San Francisco in the steamship 'City of Tokyo' on the 5 December 1876 in the company of two of the Japanese Commissioners sent to the Centennial Exhibition, Sekisawa Akiko and General Saigo Yorimichi. They arrived in Yokoyama twenty one days later on the 26 December 1876, and Dresser settled into the Grand Hotel, where he remained for about a month before commencing his tour of the interior of the country. During his stay in Yokoyama and Tokyo, Dresser met with some of the most distinguished politicians of the Meiji Government, such as the Prime Minister Sanjo

Saneyoshi and his deputy Iwakura Tomomi, as well as Sano Tsunetami and his successor as director of the museum Machida Nishinari, and the Minister of Home Affairs, Okubo Toshimichi, who was 'the leading spirit of Japan', according to Dresser. (1882, p.40) Dresser, following his arrival, also became friendly with the British ambassador Sir Henry Parkes and the first and second secretaries of the legation, August Mounsey and James Saumarez. A letter from Parkes to Okubo Toshimichi dated 5 January 1877 invited him to receive the donation from the S. Ken. Museum,¹⁹ and it was personally presented by Dresser on 11 January. It was agreed that the collection should first be shown in the Imperial Palace in Tokyo for the inspection of the Emperor and Government Officials before being transferred to the National Museum in Ueno Park. Their conversation according to Dresser 'turned chiefly on the native manufacture and the means by which it may be increased'. (1882, p.40) Okubo also asked Dresser to act as an adviser to the Government in these matters and offered to reimburse all his expenses and make arrangements for travel permission and entry to the Imperial Collections in Kyoto and in Nara. This honour had previously only been granted to ambassadors and official visitors, for tensions within the population had determined the government to keep foreigners confined to the boundaries of the treaty ports. British subjects however, were looked upon with more friendly eyes, and Japanese politicians looked to Imperial Britain as the national model. During the first years of the Meiji period, relations between the two countries had become that of instructor and emulator, and British diplomats, seamen, merchants, engineers, and scientists made substantial contributions to the development of modern Japan. After participating in the various International exhibitions, Japan had become aware of a trading potential with the West, and Okubo welcomed Dresser as an expert on these matters. Okubo's instructions to government officials around the country were indeed cordial:

Dr. Dresser will instruct you in museological methods, and examine Japanese art-manufactures while conducting a tour of the country. Particular attention will be paid to products that are popular in Europe and he will provide information on means by which modern techniques can be utilised and thus enlarge our production and commerce with England. His official status is that of guest of the nation and adviser to the government, and he will be accompanied by two officers who are to report on the trip. All facilities should be provided him and courtesy and respect bestowed upon him.²⁰

Sir Harry Parkes in his report on Dresser's visit noted, that Okubo's instructions had been followed

During his stay in Yedo much attention was shown Dr. Dresser by the Japanese authorities, and in the tour of inspection which he is now making in the manufacturing districts of this country, the Government has given him the assistance of two Japanese officers and offered to bear the whole expense of his journey in Japan.²¹

Perhaps the most outstanding honour bestowed on Dresser was his audience with the Emperor Meiji on 19 January 1877, when the Emperor uttered these friendly words:

We shall long preserve in our memory the remembrance of a collection of articles manufactured in England and other countries, having been made at the South Kensington Museum in your country, and presented thereby to the Japanese Museum, and also of your kindness in coming to Japan to display to the eyes of our people the nature and appearance of articles manufactured in Europe; and to point out to their minds the road leading to advance and improvements of arts. We trust that your visit to Japan may be free from accident, and a pleasant one.

Dresser in thanking the government for its hospitality also took the opportunity of raising the subject of the deterioration of Japanese artefacts with the Emperor:

I humbly beg that your Majesty may be pleased to order the adoption of such means as will preserve to your Majesty's people their national arts in a form unpolluted by European influences, for the ornamentists of our western countries feel that it is their privilege humbly to follow the great artists of your Majesty's dominions. (Dresser, 1882, pp.50-51)

It would appear that the donation presented to the Japanese Government had opened doors which previously had been solely restricted to foreign ambassadors, and Okubo's report underlined the importance of the 315 objects brought by Dresser. The majority of these were supplied by Dresser's

employees, and knowing that he was responsible for the selection it seems natural that these were taken from his own designs. Okubo listed 60 samples of wallpapers from Jeffrey & Co., lace from Ward & Cope, carpets from Brinton & Lewis, terracotta from Watcombe Terracotta Co., porcelain from Minton & Co. and from Doulton & Co., glass from Green and Nephews (retailers), as well as a miscellaneous collection from Londos & Co., for whom Dresser was a representative in Japan. The wallpapers, carpets, glass and lace have disappeared from the storerooms of the National Museum, but the Minton cloisonné ware with decorations in the Japanese style and a Watcombe plate with similar patterns remain intact.²² (figs.167 & 168)

Before commencing his tour of the country Dresser had received guided tours by General Saigo to the Hamagoten Summer palace, the mint, the arsenal, the university, and to the temples of Shiba and Ueno, whose compartmented ceilings particularly intrigued him.(fig.169) August Mounsey took him on a pilgrimage to Kamakura and the Great Buddha, and Sano Tsumetami introduced him to five of the greatest pictorial artists in Japan. None of these artists were named, but Dresser is recorded as having received gifts of drawings as presents. Japanese paintings in his collection which are now in the British Museum and in the V & A may well have originated from this occasion.(fig.170)

On 25 January 1877, Dresser left Yokohama by boat for Kobe, accompanied by James Saumarez and his Japanese escorts Sakata Haruo and Ishida Tametake (1837-1878) who were both officials of the Home Office. Dresser as we have noted had met Sakata in London in 1873 and he may have met Ishida who participated in the international exhibitions in Vienna in 1873 and in Philadelphia in 1876. Ishida took a particular interest in the development of Japanese arts and crafts, but his brilliant career was cut short by an early death.²³ The epitaph on his grave in the Kenshōgi temple in Tokyo mentions his tour with Dresser as a highlight of his life,

and Dresser remembered him fondly in his book.(1882, p.63) On board the ship to Kyoto Dresser had the opportunity of meeting another well-known figure of the Meiji era, Samejima Hisanobu (1847-1880) who had studied in England in 1865 and served as minister to France in 1873-74 and 1878-1880. Samejima, according to Dresser, was extremely well informed and they had several long discussions on the future of Japanese trade with the West. It was probably upon Samejima's recommendation that Dresser established trading contacts whilst staying in the minister's home town of Kobe. These contacts in turn led to the establishing of the company Dresser & Holme in Kobe in 1878. Samejima and Dresser remained friends and subsequently met in Paris during the international fair in 1878. (Dresser, 1882, p.65)

On arriving at Kobe, Dresser was able to observe the festivities which greeted the Emperor, who was travelling to open the first railway connecting Osaka, Nara, Kyoto. Dresser, who had already met the 'man who is still in the eyes of his subjects the son of the Gods and the Emperor of Heaven', was more eager to proceed to the manufacturing districts and left for the island of Awaji in the Kobe bay.

The Awaji pottery which had been exhibited in abundance in Vienna and in Philadelphia had become very popular in the West, and Dresser was able to inspect no less than fifteen potteries during his visit including the kiln founded by Mimpei Kishiu (1796-1871) in about 1830. This famous kiln was continued by Mipei Rikita and Mimpei Sampei whose products Dresser described as 'small bowls, trays, caddy-spoons and cups, which have an excellent finish. They are usually plain yellow, brick-orange, full green, or warm purple in colour. (1882, pp.72 & 391) Similar samples were indeed acquired both for Tiffany & Co. and for Dresser's own collection, and the colour-scheme as well as the shapes certainly influenced Dresser's Linthorpe Pottery.(figs.171, 172 & 173)

Dresser returned to Kobe the following day and on 31 January he left

on an excursion to the Sanda pottery district north of the town. Sanda pottery had been exhibited in Philadelphia, and the S. Ken. Museum on this occasion had acquired two samples. (Franks 1880, pp.363-64) Dresser purchased at least two pieces for his own collection, one of which was by Konishi Tobei.²⁴

In Sanda Dresser stayed in an old-fashioned Japanese hotel, - a 'Ryokan' - which he admired and described at length in his book. This is important since descriptions of rural architecture of this kind were rare in Western books about Japan. (1882, pp.76-80) Dresser continued to Arima, which was a centre of basket work and the bamboo industry, where he noted that 'it was not until I pointed out to the Japanese that the better kinds would find a ready sale in Europe, that they were introduced to England.' (p.82) This was mentioned in Ishida Tametake's Dresser Hokoku (Chapter 12), and Arima-work did become popular in Europe in the latter 1870s and 1880s. Dresser who possessed baskets and bamboo-work from several Oriental countries stressed that none were comparable to those he had acquired in Arima, and one sample served as a model for one of his Linthorpe pottery creations. (1882, p.455) (figs.174 & 175)

The next destination was Nara, the ancient capital of the country, where he had arranged to meet the director of the National Museum, Machida Nishinari who had obtained the Emperor's permission to show Dresser the collections in the Imperial storehouse, the famous 'Shosoin'. This housed state-gifts to the Imperial family from the period prior to 758 when the storehouse was sealed. Some of these objects had been shown in an exhibition in 1875, but Dresser was certainly the first foreigner who was allowed to handle and inspect these national relics. This was thoroughly described by Dresser, and he acquired much of the information on which he based his observations from conversations with Machida Nishinari:

I examined the collections as carefully as possible under the

circumstances for Mr. Machinda, who is in charge of them, dared not leave us, and I was afraid of tiring him out. There is no museum of antiquities in the world, so far as I know, half as instructive to the European as this rare collection at Nara. Where else could we see fabrics printed, embroidered, and felted, and although more than a thousand years old, almost as fresh as on the day when they first left their makers' hands in India, Persia, Central Asia, China and Japan? Where else could we see these strange connecting links between the arts of Egypt, India, China, and Japan, that we find here? (1882, p.101)

Dresser was particularly interested in the metal-objects in the Shosoin, and he notably praised a thousand-year-old saddle decorated with a peacock in repoussé brass and a brass tray with a stag in high relief, which in turn influenced his own repoussé and inlay work for Benham & Froud introduced in 1878 on his return to Britain. An inlaid tray by Dresser for this company also featured a peacock, and this kind of Japanese metal-marquetry was particularly recommended by Dresser as suitable export ware. (Ishida 1877, p.223) (fig.176)

Dresser highly admired a Japanese water-bottle with the spout rising to the orifice of the vessel and covered with a flat lid, and this evidently inspired his similar creations for electroplate decanters produced by Elkington & Co., Hukin & Heath, James Dixon & Sons, and in copper for Benham & Froud in the latter 1870s and 1880s. (fig.177 & 223) A number of undecorated metal-objects in the Shosoin can also be compared to designs provided by Dresser for these companies on his return to England, when he appears to have been particularly active as a designer of metal-objects. The most striking example being his innovative tureen and ladle produced by Hukin & Heath in 1880 (figs.178 & 179) 'A glass ewer with a well-formed lip, and somewhat elaborate handle of very pale blue-green colour, and rather rough texture', (1882, p.91) was praised by Dresser, and this and other glass vases in the Shosoin recorded as being of Persian origin and some thousand years old, are remarkably similar in texture, shape and colour to some of Dresser's bold designs for Clutha Glass from the period 1880-1892. (figs.180 & 117) Among the ceramic objects in the Shosoin,

Dresser remembered 'an earthen bowl, the top of which is green and the sides striated, the stripes being due to the running down of the marginal green glaze' (p.100) and similar objects in the collection with both green and yellow glazes intermingled evidently inspired some of Dresser's use of running glazes for Linthorpe Pottery. (figs. 181 & 182)

The fragile textiles preserved in the Shosoin were also examined by Dresser, and a Japanese sample illustrated in their present catalogue in fact corresponds to a pattern included in Dresser's Modern Ornamentation. (figs.183A & B) Evidently the influence of what he was able to study in Nara had a profound effect on Dresser's own creative output.

In the preface to his Japan Dresser had stressed that he would like to explain how the architecture resulted from climatic and religious influences, and how the ornaments with which domestic objects were figured, and the very finish of the objects themselves, are traceable to religious teachings.

Such observations were unique in a Western context, for Shinto and Buddhist art was not thoroughly studied in Europe until the beginning of this century. Dresser certainly profited greatly from the guidance of Machida who accompanied him on his visit to the many temples in Nara and in engaging in 'many conversations with Japanese of the Shinto faith respecting their religion'. (1882, p.229)

Machida also took Dresser to a Shinto dance ceremony where he was particularly intrigued by a wine heater which was used to serve sake, and which probably influenced similar heating vessels he subsequently created for Hukin & Heath in 1878. (figs. 184 & 185) In this vessel one can recognise 'The breath of treatment, a simplicity of execution, and a boldness of design', which according to Dresser's book characterised the best of Japanese metalwork (p.426) and in turn gave impetus to his own rigorous design formulae.

Dresser thoroughly studied the hammered iron work in nails, locks and

hinges to be seen in the temples he visited in Nara, and Machida presented him with a selection of ornamented nails. These and other metalwork studied in Nara are illustrated in Dresser's book where he noted that

In Nara the old metalwork would supply the art student with material for study, and examples to copy for weeks: and in no town in the world that I know of can so much that is interesting in this way be found. (p.114)

The famous Nara fans and netsukes were also collected by Dresser during his visit, some of which were in the form of deer, crayfish, snails and insects. A sample displaying a cluster of butterflies, beetles, moths and dragonflies was illustrated in Dresser's book and described as representing 'the thought of summer', much in the same way as the pattern of the kimono he had bought in Vienna in 1873. (fig.186) These motifs as we have noted had been frequently used in his designs for Minton & Co. porcelain, and this particular netsuke probably inspired his 'Summer' pattern executed both at Minton's and at the Lintorpe Art Pottery. (fig.173) Referring to his favourite motif, the grotesque, Dresser described a netsuke which was 'a hideous beast like mask' and 'the ideal beast', the King of Fauna, which was a spotted lion and whose quality lay in the 'decorative, ferocious and grotesque'. Dresser's own cranes, beetles and other animal-grotesques as we have noted may be described in a similar manner.

Leaving the beautiful city of Nara on 4 February, Dresser headed for another ancient Imperial capital Kyoto. On route he stopped at an inn by the road, and was struck by the beauty of the openwork lattice grill pattern running around the top of the interior walls, called 'Ramma'. (1882, p.118) Samples of such lattice-panels were exhibited by Dresser at The Architectural Association on his return to London in 1878, and he enthusiastically recommended these as replacements for the usual ventilating and decorative panels in architecture and furniture alike.²⁵ He incorporated both of these as door-panels and openwork along the top-edge of his furniture creations, and a sample illustrated in The

Furniture Gazette of which he was art editor in 1880, is particularly handsome. (1881, pl. CXVII) This cabinet was almost certainly designed for the Art Furnishers Alliance in 1880, and the irregular balancing of shelves as well as lattice and decorated panels may be compared to illustrations of Japanese prototypes illustrated by Dresser in Japan (1882, fig.106) (figs. 187 & 188) Dresser certainly set the pattern for the use of Japanese lattice panels in Western interiors, and they were used in Godwin's Anglo-Japanese furniture and as structural patterns for painters such as Whistler, Manet, Gauguin and Vuillard. These experiments in turn influenced the architecture of the international Art Nouveau and Modern Movements. (Wickman, 1981, pp.233 & 362)

Arriving in Kyoto on 5 February Dresser observed the opening ceremony of the railway, and then proceeded to Osaka, where he stayed at the Jiyutei Hotel for ten days. In the Osaka area, he inspected factories for the production of lattice woodwork, cabinet work, carved lacquer work, and hardware. His comments were minutely recorded by Ishida in his Dresser Hokoku and chapter 21 in particular encouraged the exportation of Japanese hardware to Europe. Their popularity had already marked the creations of Dresser and Thomas Jeckyll, and such influences became increasingly felt in the West during the latter 1870s and the 1880s.

Dresser proceeded to the province of Kishiu on 14 February 1877, and in Sakai he examined the manufacture of carpets, which he severely criticised as bad copies of Western models. This was stressed in Ishida's report Chapter 18. In Kishiu Dresser based himself in Wakayama where he stayed for four days, making excursions to the manufacturing areas and to Mount Koya which was the burial place of the Mikados. He visited the small town Kuroye (sic. Kuroe) where some lacquer work was made, and he paid particular attention to the centre for Kishiu ceramics located just outside Wakayama. The original Kishiu ware according to Dresser displayed an

intense cobalt blue, turquoise or purple, or sometimes utilised mixture of the three. Most of the samples exported to Europe however, had been produced by the potters Miyai Sajaro and Hoinouchi Sozaburo of Kobe, who had revived the old techniques. (p.389) Kishiu ware of a three-glazed (blue, purple, yellow) mottled kind had been exhibited in Philadelphia in 1876 and samples were acquired by the S. Ken. Museum. (Shioda 1877, p.55. Franks 1880, pp.289-1877) Dresser brought back some purple blue samples and the Kishui ware certainly influenced mottled and mixed glazes created for the Linthorpe Art Pottery. (fig.189)

The Governor of Wakayama invited Dresser to stay as his guest and he brought samples of the manufacturing industries to his hotel: 'Amongst these were cotton flannels, bedtickings, a kind of arrowroot, Japanese isinglass, preserved oranges and tanned ox hides'. (p.127) A similar service was provided by the Governor of Sakai when Dresser passed by on his return to Osaka: 'There are cotton fabrics, silk crepes, earthen vessels, glass beads, with other things, but nothing that strikes me as specially suited to European wants'. (p.136) Dresser however, acquired some yellow or ochre coloured ceramics in Sakai which he brought back to England.

In Sakai he learned about the outbreak of the Satsuma rebellion, which was headed by General Saigo Tamamori, against his brother, Saigo Yorimichi, who led the Royal troops. Dresser was friendly with the latter, who was victorious and he later recommended August Mounsey's book on The Satsuma Rebellion (London 1879) as providing a good account of the incident.

On 22 February Dresser again reached Kyoto where he stayed for ten days as a guest of the governor Makimura Masano,²⁶ who introduced him to Kawase Hideharu the Minister of Commerce. Together they paid a visit to the 'House of Commerce' in 29 February, where specimens of Kyoto manufacture were exhibited for their inspection:

I examined the works of several artists, certain kinds of lacquer

ware, sachi cups formed of orange rinds, many fabrics; and in a building close by I saw looms weaving figured silks, rich damasks, and clothes of various descriptions. (p.151)

Dresser praised these as 'the most artistic fabrics that the world makes' and he noted the gorgeous effect produced by polychromatic colouring and the frequent use of gold thread which in fact was shredded gilt paper. This became known as 'Japanese Gold' in Europe and was incorporated in numerous textiles and embroideries produced by Western artists. Another technique mentioned by Dresser and which also became fashionable in the West in the 1880s was the gradual shading of the groundcolour from light to darker or from one colour to another.

A number of Japanese fabrics figured in the loom were illustrated in Dresser's Japan and he enthused over the richness and variety of the patterns:

One consists of a dragon, clouds and flowers, drawn to a somewhat large scale, and coloured in a rich and neutral manner; some have patterns formed wholly of scroll-work: others have scroll-work grounds with circular floral ornaments placed upon them. Some have the ground covered with fan-shaped panels, in which landscapes are wrought, and others have patterns of a wholly geometrical character. Then there are patterns formed of clouds bats, of cobwebs, of fungi, of water, of feathers, of fire-flies, of sea-monsters, of broken diapers, irregular powderings, strange key patterns, rosettes, plaids, waved lines, and other elements too numerous to mention, even rain being used in some of their designs. (pp.440-441)

We have observed that several of the motifs mentioned here had been recognised by Dresser already in his articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' in 1863, and that these in turn inspired his own designs. The rich patterns and colours of the Japanese textiles provided Dresser with an entirely new way of pattern-making which was to stimulate an almost abstract freedom of creative expression:

Japanese art seems to laugh at the canons by which the European designer is bound, and to hold our method in derision. Clearly, without law and without order, patterns can be constructed which are quite as acceptable as those which other nations with fixed rules have produced. (p.441)

Another important source of inspiration for Dresser were the so called

translucent or window enamels, which he came across in a bazaar in Tokyo, and later claimed to have introduced to the Western market. (p.152)

Ishida's report indeed encouraged the export of these enamels (chapter 45), and their patterns and colours created a new style in European enamel making as well as in stained-glass which subsequently underwent a revival.

During his stay in Kyoto Dresser had the privilege of inspecting the Imperial collections with Kawase Hideharu and Makimura Masano, and he was highly impressed with the lacquer works including the old 'vellum' and 'purple' lacquer which were especially admired. The secret of their production, according to Dresser, had been lost but he added that

Since my return from Japan I have given much thought to the lacquer industries, and I have been enabled to send out material which has again brought about the production of purple lacquer; thus a lost art has been revived. (p.154)

The Meiji era indeed was a critical period for the production of lacquer art in Japan, and the problem of how to fully dissolve the purple pigment into the resin was only solved in the late 1870s. Dresser was probably instrumental in introducing this process and he himself possessed three samples of purple lacquer which were auctioned at Christie's in 1905.²⁷

Dresser during his days in Japan became an expert on lacquer-ware and his chapter on the subject in Japan was received by contemporary critics as the most scholarly treatise hitherto published.²⁸ This is astonishing since Japanese lacquer had remained one of the most sought after Oriental objects in Europe from the time Westerners had arrived in Japan. Dresser, however, was the first Western author who had been able to examine the ancient pieces in the Imperial collections and their chronological display helped him to establish an order amongst the confusing plethora of unscholarly information on Japanese lacquer:

Ranged side by side, we have specimens of lacquer-work over five hundred years old, which are of peculiarly artistic and interesting character, others four hundred, others three hundred, and specimens made only immediately before the revolution in 1868. Those that are five hundred years old, or more, are

chiefly works with black grounds, and low-toned polychromatic ornaments in dull red, burnt sienna, raw sienna, and sage green colours; and with a "broken" gold outline. After carefully considering these works for some time I find it possible to distinguish between the lacquer-work of certain great periods. (p.154)

Dresser dealt at length with the various lacquer techniques, and certain samples in his own collection were cited as quality pieces of the oldest kind, claimed no longer to be found on the European market. Many of the old pieces had in fact found their way back to purchasers in Japan. (p.348) Amongst his own samples Dresser referred to 4 boxes the first of which was decorated with a Ho-Ho bird surrounded by leaves, clouds, conventional pomegranates and coral-like scrolls filled with diaper patterns, - the second which incorporated hirikami-e, kirikane and mother of pearl technique and displayed a pattern of clouds and stripes knotted together superimposed with waves, crests, diapers and flowers, - the third with crests and diapers only - and the fourth produced at Wajima under the Prince of Kaga's school, was decorated with 'graceful grass called susuki, a plant much admired by the educated Japanese, and one of the celebrated autumn flowers'. (p.352)

Amongst famous lacquer artists Dresser mentioned Ritsuo (1663-1747) who invented the relief lacquer technique, and his successors Sibata Zeshin (1807-1891) and Ikeda Zeshin (sometimes Taishin) (1825-1903) and Shunsui (Ganshosai) of Kyoto, all of whom had exported lacquer to Britain according to Dresser. Michael Tomkinson who was one of the greatest British collectors of lacquer at the time, indeed possessed several samples by Ritsuo and Zeshin, and these samples were subsequently bequeathed to the S. Ken. Museum. A Zeshin tray in this collection for example displays the raised lacquer technique which Dresser had recommended in 1874 as a model for the jet makers at Whitby. This kind of lacquer work probably also served as an example for some of his relief decorations for Linthorpe Art Pottery. (Tomkinson, 1898) (figs. 190 & 191)

Dresser spent several days studying the Kyoto kilns and he dealt with a range of producers and artists in detail in his book. Their work had been shown at the international exhibitions in Vienna in 1873 and in Philadelphia in 1876, and could also be found in European collections, such as those amassed by Audsley and Bowes, Tomkinson, the S. Ken. Museum and Dresser himself. Amongst the most celebrated designers, according to Dresser, were Kenzan Denhichi (mid-nineteenth century) who had exhibited some cloisonné porcelain in Philadelphia and who also worked in the Ninsei technique, Takahashi Dohachi (1783-1855) who made Shonzui style porcelain as well as pottery of Raku, Shigaraki and Iga type, Mashimizu Zoroku (1822-1877) whose pottery, according to Dresser, had 'a rough effect' with incised lines, filled with white slip, covering their surface,' (p.376) Rokubei Kiyomizu III (?-1883) whose wares Dresser described as 'exceedingly crude ware which he covers with an opaque white glaze, on which he gets rich granite-like effect of colour - greens, reds, and black being mingled together' (p.376), Sawamura Tosa whose production consisted of 'a crude heavy ware' which frequently was decorated with 'curious rough leaves of the Buddhist lotus', and 'well-modelled crabs' (p.376), and finally Eiraku (sic. Yeiraku) Zengoro whose production was described as porcelain 'with a rich red surface formed of oxide of iron, on which gold devices are drawn'. (p.393)

Other Kyoto potters mentioned by Dresser were Kiokutei Seichi's 'eccentric though interesting ware', Seifu Yohei III (1851-1914), who produced blue and white, cloisonné, and ceramics with relief decorations, and the Awata ware manufacturers, Kinkozan Sobei (mid nineteenth century) and Taizan Seikai, who were based in Kyoto and produced a yellowish buff-coloured earthenware decorated in Satsuma style, for which it often was mistaken and imported in large quantities to America and Europe. (p.384) (figs. 192 & 151)

Several of these were collected by Dresser and the drawings he made of his collection preserved in the V & A testify to their importance as study objects. Evidently most of Dresser's production for Minton & Co and for Linthorpe Pottery was based on an extensive study of porcelain and ceramics undertaken in Japan. Dresser appears to have collected Kyoto pottery which corresponds to that amassed by the French collectors Emile Guimet (1836-1918) and Felix Regamy (1844-1907), who visited the governor Makimura Masano some weeks after Dresser's departure. The Guimet collection, which has been preserved in the Guimet Museum in Paris, was one of the largest of its kind and it was exhibited at the 'Expo Universelle' in Paris in 1878, where Dresser and other Japan enthusiasts had the opportunity of examining it. (Guimet, 1878 & 1880, and Lacambre 1983, p.39)

Evidently Dresser, like Guimet and Regamey, profited from the local expertise offered by the governor of Kyoto, and Dresser received additional guidance from Machida Nishinari and Kawase Hideharu during his stay in Kyoto. These connoisseurs supported Dresser's efforts to instil respect for old traditions and aesthetics threatened by Western influence, and Kawase became the moving spirit behind the slogan 'Back to Japanese Art'. He maintained his friendly contact with Dresser and visited him in London in 1880. (1882, p.353) Kawase, Makimura and other leaders of the Meiji government had instituted a revived interest in the national religion, Shintoism, whose position as the official state religion was again confirmed in 1889. Dresser's interest in Shinto and Buddhism was certainly stimulated during his stay in Kyoto, and this was perhaps mainly due to the talks he had held with the priest Akamatsu Renjo (1841-1919) of the Nishi-Honganji Temple. Akamatsu, following the government's order, had been to England in 1872 to study Christianity and returned with the conviction that Japan's own religions were superior. He took an active part in separating Shintoism from Buddhism in the 1880s and he was known as a speaker of unparalleled

eloquence.(1882, p.144) Much of the information in Dresser's chapter, 'Religion and Architecture', probably originated from his studies in Kyoto, where he visited more temples than anywhere else. He mentions Nishi-Honganji, Kiyomizu-Dera, Sanjusangen-do, Tofuku-ji, Chion-in and Toji, whose pagoda he thoroughly examined and he claimed to have found the secret of its construction.(pp.142 & 237) The coffered ceilings of Nishi-Honganji and Chion-in temples attracted the same attention as those in Shiba and Ueno in Tokyo, and it is worth noting that Dresser himself had created a similar ceiling at Allangate Mansion in 1873-75.

Dresser's ten days in Kyoto had been of utmost importance to his studies, which were summed up in these words:

In the way of manufactures, I have seen in Kyoto the making of much pottery, bronze-making, lacquer, and cloisonné porcelain. I have also seen the weaving of fabrics, the printing of crapes, the working of embroidery, and many other industries: and I am now getting a considerable insight into the means by which Japanese achieve results. Having spent as much time as I can for one town, we pack up and start for Otsu on Lake Biwa. (pp.159-156)

At Lake Biwa he inspected the manufacture of Awata ceramics and silver teapots, and then continued onto Ishib where he spent two nights before leaving for Kamijiyama in Isé province on 7 March 1877. Dresser was travelling to the famous Shinto shrines in Isé and the sea rocks at Futamiguara where pilgrims worship the most holy symbol of Shintoism, the sun. Frogs of earthenware were offered here to the sun, and Dresser brought a few of these back to England, where they served as models for a Linthorpe Pottery bowl supported by crawling frogs.(fig.193) Dresser's observation of architecture, rites and symbols at the Shinto temple in Kamijiyama evidently helped to enlarge his knowledge of these topics which he then thoroughly discussed in his book. (1882, pp.165-70)

Dresser then continued to Yokkaichi, the centre of Banko pottery, where he acquired samples of his ware both for his own collection and for Tiffany's. Considerable quantities of Banko ware had been exhibited in

Vienna in 1873 and in Philadelphia in 1876, and at least ten samples had been acquired by the S. Ken. Museum. (Franks 1880, pp.82-84, 315-322. 1877) Dresser illustrated a Banko teapot painted with storks by Yamanaka Chiwzayemon in his book, (1882, fig.59) but the older Banko ware, according to Dresser, was undecorated however, and the clay had a soft grey, red-brown of yellow hue, of which a marbled combination had been invented during the Meiji period.(p.374)

The next stop was Nagoya which according to Dresser was

The chief seat of the cloisonné manufacture, both on metal and on porcelain with interstices filled with lacquer. Earthenware cabinets, much bronze ware, that curious porcelain which has an iron-like surface and a gold pattern resembling Damascened metal-work, and that soft baked crackle-ware which is covered externally with chequered lacquer, are made here. Nagoya also stands in the centre of the great Owari pottery district. (p.176)

Dresser stayed three days in Nagoya as a guest of the governor, and Ishida's Dresser Hokoku devoted two chapters to his observations. He paid a visit to Nagoya castle where he particularly admired the elaborate carved wood-panels - 'rammas' by the sixteenth century artist Hidari Zingoro, and the impressive towers of the castle, which reminded him of the Japanese palace in Dresden. (p.182) This is a fascinating comment on early Japonism in Europe, but the hypothesis has not yet been proved. A tower-like facade created by Dresser for Bushloe House in 1880, however, displays distinct similarities with the Nagoya towers, and the fir branch frieze above the windows bear a remarkable resemblance to 'a fir-tree in the panels' admired by Dresser in Nagoya castle. (figs.194 & 195) The Bushloe House facade also incorporated stained-glass windows with Japanese motifs and bracketting which is reminiscent of the Japanese bracketting examined by Dresser in his book. The arrangement of the brick-facade, Japanese details and elongated windows is similar to that created by Edward Godwin for Whistler's 'White House' in 1878 (Aslin, 1969, p.51) and must be counted one of the first examples of Japonism in Western architecture, anticipating

Voysey, Mackintosh and Frank Lloyd Wright by at least ten years.

Visiting the Owari potteries now called Mino potteries, Dresser inspected the blue and white ware of Seto and Mino, which had virtually dominated the market in Europe. Dresser, however wanted a 'dethronement' of this ware and suggested instead an increase of 'the production of things quaint in character and novel in effect'. (p.396) These suggestions were taken down in Ishida's report, which devoted two chapters to Dresser's visit to these potteries. (63 & 64) He praised the works of potters such as Kato Mokuzayemon, Kato Shigeshuro, Kawamoto Masukichi and Kawamoto Hansuke of Seto and Kato Shinbei, Kato Kohei, Kato Heichibei and Kato Gosuké of Mino. (p.395) A blue and white tray by Kato Gosuké received much attention and appears to have been decorated with various diaper patterns in eight compartments divided by lines radiating from the centre of the plate. This artist was well represented at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 and samples were acquired by the S. Ken. Museum. (Walker, 1877, p.77) Coarser samples of domestic ware from these kilns had also been acquired by the museum on this occasion, and Dresser in fact examined similar samples, such as the Seto yellow lustre-ware and cloisonné ware, as well as the imitations of Satsuma and Banko pottery. A common saki bottle, dishes in the form of Nelubium leaves and samples 'rather like mottled soap, being brown, grey and white mingled together in a tortuous and striated manner' appealed particularly to Dresser's taste, and it was this kind of ceramic that inspired his Linthorpe Art Pottery production. (figs.196A & B, 197A & B, 198) Notably an 'Owari' vase acquired by Dresser for Tiffany & Co, painted 'with fantastic frog scenes' could well have provided a prototype for the Linthorpe frog vase previously referred to.²⁹ (fig.193)

Returning to Tokyo, Dresser continued along the Tokaido main road, and first stopped at Arimatsu where he examined the sophisticated tie-dye patterns on crape produced there. These were considered 'amongst the most

beautiful and dainty of fabrics' but he felt that the laborious process required could not be recommended to British manufacturers unless some machine could be invented to eliminate the time-consuming hand knotting. (pp.185 & 446-49)

Dresser reached Yokoyama 21 March 1877 via the towns of Okazaki, Hozojimura, Sidsuoka and Hakone, where he had stayed over night to admire the famous view of Mount Fuji, and on the 25 March he went to Tokyo for two days to visit the National Museum at Ueno Park. He was to arrange the gift from the S. Ken. Museum in the form of an exhibition and on this occasion Augustus Mounsey from the British Legation introduced him to the famous antiquarian Ninagawa Noritane (1835-1882), who according to Dresser was in the process of publishing a work on Japanese pottery, called Koko Zusetu which appeared in 1878. It was warmly received as the first book of its kind in Japan. Ninagawa had catalogued the collections in the Shosoin in Nara with Machida Nishinari in 1872, and when he died in 1882 he was referred to as 'the greatest authority of his time upon all subjects connected with the ceramic arts of Japan'.³⁰ Dresser certainly asked Ninagawa's advice on a number of topics and he recalled that they had examined some 'rude pottery from early tombs...a piece of green ware nine hundred years old, which he says was the first glazed ware in Japan', 'some little brown jars such as are used at the tea-ceremony' and some 'rough black Korean earthenware, which has a pattern scratched upon it, which he pronounced was to be 1500 years old.' (p.195) Some of these museum pieces certainly influenced Dresser's creations for Linthorpe Art Pottery, but we can only guess what Dresser was able to see with Ninagawa. He met another famous educator of the Meiji era in the evening of the same day, Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1924), Vice Minister and later Minister of Finance, and the father of the modern Japanese economy. Dresser and Matsukata discussed measures that should be taken to facilitate greater Anglo-Japanese

commerce, and they renewed their acquaintance at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1878, when Dresser noted that he had 'the pleasure of showing him some of the most important manufactures of England.' (p.196) Dresser by then had established the company Dresser & Holme with Charles Holme (1848-1923) subsequently the founder of The Studio Magazine in 1893. They traded in Japanese and English art-manufacture in London, Yokoyama and Kobe. His son Louis became the manager of the Kobe branch in 1878³¹ where he settled and married a Japanese lady. They had a son Charles who became a naturalised Japanese and the Dresser family lived in Kobe until 1980.³² Dresser thus fulfilled one of the aims of his trip, and Ishida's report Dresser Hokoku devoted two chapters to his comments on trade relations between Japan and Britain.(1 & 2)

The last excursion undertaken in Japan by Dresser was to the temples in Nikko 28-29 March 1877. He was accompanied by James Saumarez from the British Embassy, and faced with the splendour of Nikko, Dresser declared 'I am getting weary of beauty'.(p.209) He commented enthusiastically about the pagoda which was one of his favourite studies, and on the temple carvings of diaper-patterns, 'greek key', Ho-ho birds, dragons, peonies, chrysanthemums, cherry blossom, fir-branches and cloud patterns, all rendered with 'a crispness and decision about the carving which is almost masterly, while both carving and diaperwork are aglow with colours mingled in the most harmonious manner'.(p.208) The coffered ceiling in the Taiyuin temple also attracted his particular attention, and evidently brought to mind his own ceiling in the Japanese style at the Allangate mansion:

The ceiling is divided into coffers, and every coffer has in its centre a carved group of flowers or ornaments in the natural colour of the wood. For a dining-room or library I can imagine nothing more quiet or richer in effect than this beautiful room at Nikko.(p.210)

It was in the midst of the overwhelming splendour of Nikko that Dresser conceived an understanding of the basic duality inherent in Japanese art,

spanning the naturalistic and the conventionalised or abstracted:

Shinto enjoins the most perfect work, but employs neither colour nor carving in its temples: while Buddhism symbolised by carving and colour the power of the Buddhists' god over all created things, and the loving protection which all that lives enjoys at his hands. The very essence of Shintoism is simplicity, and of Buddhism the tender perception of and care of, all that lives.(p.210)

The perception of this duality as well as the hybrid forms of Japanese art, is unique amongst Western commentators and Dresser, actually criticised the contemporary experts on Shinto and Buddhism. References were made to William Griffis's The Mikado's Empire (New York 1876), to the Professor of Sinology at Oxford, Max Müller (1823-1900), and to Sir Harry Parkes and Ernest Satow, whose article on 'The Revival of Shintoism' had appeared in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan. (1874) These scholars had all endeavoured to explain the differences between the two religions in Japan, but none other than Dresser had contemplated the artistic expression of Shinto and Buddhism. The close connection between art and religion in the East was not properly understood until much later, and Dresser's sentiment anticipated the work of art-historians and ethnologists in the twentieth century.

One of Dresser's main purposes in undertaking his visit was to devote himself to such research, and he stressed that 'A study of the religion will enable us to comprehend the nature of many ornaments, as well as the reason of many striking architectural features'.(p.255) This notion was not especially original in itself, but the methodical approach in which this study was conducted, based upon the criteria discovered by contemporary linguistic scholars, represented an exciting departure:

By the agency of language something has been done in the way of tracing the wanderings of mankind and the affinities of races, but I am not aware that decorative forms have been used, to any material extent at arriving at similar knowledge, although to me they seem capable of yielding valuable aid in such inquiries.(p.321)

He acknowledged one source on the topic, Thomas Inman's (1820-1876) Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbols (London 1868) which touched upon the possibility of adapting linguistic systems to the history of art.

Pioneering this practice, Dresser evidently recognised similarities between his own classification of decorative art and that of the linguist's classifying strategies, which directly or indirectly had received its impetus from George Cuvier's chronicles of animal and plant forms. The chapter on 'Analogies and Symbols' in Dresser's Japan was written:

With the simple purpose of showing the probably origin of some of the features which characterise early Japanese art, and of pointing out to the student that research into the affinities and migrations of races may be aided by a consideration of ornament not less than by the study of a language. (p.344)

In dealing with the artistic expressions of Shinto and Buddhism, Dresser emphasised that Shintoism was based on three of the early objects of worship known to mankind, that of fire worship, hero worship, and phallic worship, and he saw the simplicity and conventionality of Shinto art as an expression of an indigenous preference which coincided with Buddhist ideals. Buddhism had made the Japanese receptive to a more sophisticated worship of nature which included artistic decorations of a more naturalistic and floreate kind. Shinto expressions, however, retained the old ideas of simplicity, utility and perfection of finish, which frequently included an emphasis on the rivets and joints which facilitated the dismantling of the objects during earthquakes. This constructional honesty eventually became an influence upon Dresser's own creations.

Japanese fine art, according to Dresser, was also derived from the Shinto performance of calligraphy which had merged with the naturalistic motifs of Buddhism:

We have seen that the drawings of good Japanese artists are simple in expression, crisp in character, and conventional in nature. But there is a quality which their works possess, that transcends all other merits, great though they be; this is the

expression of life with which they endow their delineations of plants, birds, insects, and fishes; and no other people can make drawings live as the Japanese. (p.318)

Dresser's own artistic motifs certainly aspired to the freedom and liveliness he admired in Japanese drawing, but even more so to the Shinto characteristics such as 'crispness of touch, or angularity', (p.286) (fig.199) which accorded more with the conventional ornamentation he advocated: 'Rounded lines, if used in a sketch, generally produce feebleness of effect; whereas angularity in drawing gives vigour and life'. (p.286) He had presented this notion already in his review of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1867, and thus induced a liking for angular, strong and crisp lines in British Japonism, which was diametrically opposed to the preoccupation with naturalistic, swooping and rounded lines favoured in French expressions of Japonism.

The last days of Dresser's stay in Japan were spent in Yokoyama and Tokyo, where he frequented the curio-shops and acquired the local Shiba ware (fig.200) (copied Satsuma pottery) and the Arita wares which included those produced in Imari, Nabeshima and Karatsu.

He also visited the kilns of the celebrated Makudzu ware made in Ota, a suburb of Tokyo, and met the potter Makudzu Kozan, who according to Dresser experimented with new effects:

In most of his trials he used modelled flowers upon his vases. When I visited the pottery at Ota he was busily engaged upon some fine works of this character, as well as with the formation of large pots with which to delude the American buyer. But it was at the last Paris Exhibition that we saw this great potter in his strength: and he certainly showed himself as one of the giant ceramic workers of the world.(p.287)

Makudzu ware indeed became increasingly popular in Europe after the Paris Expo Universelle in 1878, and it displayed the most innovative experiments of the Meiji period. Makudzu Kozan for instance launched a complicated method of firing fifteen colours in one process beneath the glaze, and Dresser's unique glazes for Linthorpe Pottery certainly derived many of

their secrets from his studies of the Makudzu techniques. Makudzu ware was imported to England by Dresser & Holme who advertised it in The Furniture Gazette in 1880. (figs.201 & 202)

Dresser spent his last day in Tokyo taking his friends Sano Tsunetami, Saigo Yorimichi, and Samejima Hisanobu, to inspect the donation of the S. Ken. Museum at the National Museum. In the evening of 31 March 1877 the Japanese Government gave a farewell party in the Hamagoten Palace, and he dined with Sano Tsunetami, Ishida Tametake, Sakata Haruo and Shioda Makato, before boarding the steamship 'Malacca' to return to America via Hong Kong. His closest friends Sakata, Saigo and James Saumarez waved him off, leaving Dresser with a 'Japanostalgia' which remained with him for the rest of his life.

Sir Harry Parkes' report to the Earl of Derby dated 2 April 1877 testifies to the success of Dresser's Japanese tour:

Dr Dresser informs me that during his tour in the interior, the entire expense of which has been defrayed by the Japanese Government, he has acquired much new information about the manufactures and manufacturing processes of this country and it is to be hoped that his visit will eventually result in advantage to the trade between England and Japan.³³

Ishida Tametake's Dresser Hokoku expressed similar views, and suggested innumerable improvements which were to increase trade between Japan and Britain. The report provided a kind of blue guide and was circulated in all of the main manufacturing districts. It certainly had a marked impact on the Japanese art industry, but this topic is outside the scope of our study, and it will suffice to quote Lady Thomas Brassey who travelled in Japan while Dresser was there: 'Dr. Dresser is here, collecting, lecturing, and trying to persuade the Japanese to adhere to their own forms and taste in art and decoration.' (1878, p.342) The Japan Mail expressed a similar opinion:

It will also permit the artists of this country to form very definite ideas of our own views on this special branch of art, and may present them with certain novelties of form or decoration

which they may incorporate without injury into their own works. But we believe that Mr. Dresser has the further and very weighty object in view of impressing upon the decorative artists of Japan the high importance of preserving intact those distinctive and peculiar merits in Japanese art of which we have just spoken. That these are now in great danger is certain.³⁴

Okubo Toshimichi in a letter to Dresser dated Tokyo 26 March 1877, indeed confirmed that the purpose of his visit had been fulfilled:

In January of last 10th year of Meiji, you have brought the articles sent to our Museum, and I am much obliged that you have taken the trouble to arrange them. After your returning home last April, the articles have been exhibited to all the people, and I have notified all through the country your valuable informations, regarding to the important points of industry which you have given to the officer who attended you during your visit to several industrial establishments. It must be for your kindness that I could make all industrial men to understand the points which ^{were} obscure heretofore, and I can assure you that in the future time they will make a progress and bring great interest upon the commerce.

During your visit you have requested our Museum to make the models of ornamental ceilings of several temples at Tokio, and now they have been finished. Although they are very trifling and not enough to compensate your last service, I present them to you, you will please accept them as the token of my highest regard. (Dresser: Japan, p.214-215) (fig.169)

The donation from the S. Ken. Museum certainly had an immediate effect on artistic leaders in Japan, and the objects were exhibited at the first National Exhibition at Ueno Park in Tokyo in August 1877.³⁶ Dresser had met the organisers of this exhibition and instructed them in museological methods, which were subsequently adapted to museums and exhibitions throughout the country. The Japanese exhibits however, had a huge effect upon viewers, similar to that which the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 had exerted upon the British public. The Japanese realised that their own arts were in a state of degradation, and Dresser's plea for a return to their own standards and traditions now gained momentum. The slogan 'Back to Japanese Art' was launched by his friends Kawase Hideji and Makimura Masano, who founded the art schools in Tokyo in 1878 and Kyoto in 1880. Kawase together with another of Dresser's friends Wakai Kanezaburo, also founded 'The Ryuchi Society for the preservation and appreciation of

Japanese Art' in 1879, and during their visit to see Dresser in London in 1880, Kawase confirmed Dresser's importance: 'This is simply a mark of respect to you, whose intelligent suggestions have done so much to promote the arts and manufactures of Japan'. (Dresser, 1882) On this occasion Dresser received two pieces of lacquer referred to in his book, - a 'togidashi-e' work in which gold and lead created a colourful contrast, and a 'kirikane' medicine case decorated with 'susaki grass and certain umbelliferous plants'. (p.353 & 360) Wakai as we have noted together with Matsuo Gisuke had founded the Kiritsu Kosho Company, with whom Dresser traded from 1873 onwards.

Dresser certainly received inspiration with which to develop his ideas from these leading figures of the Japanese art-milieu, and it was probably as a result of Kawase and Wakai's recommendations that he sent a personal donation of some of his creations to the National Museum in Tokyo in 1880. The accompanying letter as well as Machida Nishinari's letter of thanks have been preserved in the museum archives, and the latter testifies to the value of Dresser's work as an inspirational source for Japanese artists:

This new porcelain and cermaics has provided new ideas for Japanese potters, and your visit to the Orient contributed considerable stimulus for our eyes and minds. Japanese artists should be grateful to your suggestive remarks, and likewise the people of your own country, who thanks to you have been able to become acquainted with traditional products from Japan.³⁶

The donation comprised three Linthorpe vases and a bowl, and three sample books of textiles including 30 tablecloths, 8 bedspreads, 13 lace curtains and 37 cotton towels displaying 'flower and grass patterns all of his own design'.³⁷

Only the Linthorpe pottery still remains in the museum. The listing of the samplebooks provides evidence of Dresser's contact with Barlow & Jones for whom he designed bedspreads from about 1878 and his production of tablecloths and towels for Tootal's, Broadhurst, Lee & Co., of Bolton. Pevsner mentioned this company in his article about Dresser, (1937 p.185)

and a recent examination of their samplebooks from the 1870s and 1880s shows that they contain patterns in the Japanese style which are similar to the 'flower and grass patterns' incorporated in Dresser's Minton designs. A pattern sheet is also signed 'C.D.' and similar designs were evidently sent to the National Museum in Tokyo. (figs. 203A & B, 204) The Linthorpe pottery and these textiles provided a graphic proof of the interesting cross-cultural influences between Britain and Japan at the time. From observing Japanese pottery production of the Meiji period it becomes evident that numerous parallels may be drawn with Dresser's Linthorpe-ware, but whether the influence was transmitted from Japan to Britain or vice versa at certain times, is difficult to ascertain. (fig.205)

Dresser's encounters with Japanese artists, politicians and connoisseurs, had a catalytic effect which enabled him to reach a more profound understanding of Japan its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures as expressed in his book. This artistic process led to the creation of a new range of designs, which show further detachment from the prevailing traditions of western pattern, and which generated a style anticipatory of that of the Modern Movement. He had observed that the pull between the naturalistic and conventional in Western art was equally apparent in Buddhist and Shinto art, and that hybrid forms and abstractions had given rise to new forms. Dresser had advocated a similar development in European art since the early 1860s, but it was only after his return from Japan that his own designs achieved a confidence comparable to that of his Japanese models. He had finally come to embrace the Japanese constellation of light and shade, the treatment of lines and divisions of the surface, the delineation, abstraction and simplicity of ornamentation, the symbolic role of the grotesque, the economy of means and new poses for the materials, ceramic glazes and much more besides which enabled him to develop his own creative style.

He had of course touched on these topics prior to his departure, but it was only after his return that he realised their full potential and import. A greater liberation from historicist solutions, encouraging freer play with artistic forms in colours and textures is prevalent in Dresser's designs after his return from Japan. The diversity and extended use of materials in Japanese art had made a profound impression on him:

Nothing can be more stupid than our pig-headed persistence in old methods. Progress is no longer possible if we do only what our forefathers did; and the gulf which separates one manufacture from another must be crossed if we are to advance as we should. We have yet to learn the need of using all processes and all materials as to achieve the best possible results. In so doing we may meet with trade opposition and the difficulties which spring from prejudice and ignorance, but these must be encountered and over-come or our manufactures will ultimately be to a great extent replaced by those of Japan.(1882,p.446)

Dresser warned artists about the competitive nature of many Japanese goods which had achieved an increasing popularity, and he suggested that lessons should be learnt before it was too late. The free use of the material and blending of texture and visual effects was vital according to Dresser:

The Japanese differ from all other people in the extended use of material and in the mingling of a number of substances in the one object. The advantages which accrue from this use of varied materials, and from the mingling of different substances in the one object, is greater than we might at first suppose.(1882, p.455)

This concept, which probably was the most important formed by Dresser in Japan, enabled him to revolutionise his methods of treating various materials. From an ideological point of view, this led to a greater freedom from the limitations of historical styles, and clearly the greatest achievement of his tour was the embodiment of Japanese aesthetics in his own creations.

DRESSER IN NEW YORK

Dresser arrived in New York with the collection which he had amassed for Tiffany & Co. some twenty days after his departure from Japan, and a

scrapbook in the Tiffany Archive dated 1878 contains numerous newspaper cuttings about his remarkable collecting pursuits. The Graphic of 20 April 1877 noted that Dresser had arrived with as many as thirty cases filled with objects that were offered for sale at Tiffany's and described as:

Novel even to those who have long studied Japanese bric-a-brac. This novelty proceeds from the peculiar system of Dr. Dresser, who has made an especial point of collecting the common utensils, the coarser potteries, the conveniences of common life in Japan, well surmising that articles of this kind would bear as distinctly as any others the cachet of Oriental taste, and would be more fresh for connoisseurs and more suggestive to artisans than the now well-known fabrications of distinctly artistic intention.

Referring to Tiffany & Co. The Graphic added that:

A smart boy from the factory rapidly sketches in water colours the decorations of potteries bronzes, enamels and other objects to be sold, the originality of whose designs will ultimately be useful in the manufactures of the firm.

Dresser as we have noted had recommended these types of Japanese art manufactures already in 1871, and American collectors and artists were now being introduced to his taste, which according to The World helped create a 'new style':

Among the men who are the best known in Europe, since the present "renaissance" in Decorative Art, none perhaps, has been more thoroughly identified with the new ideas that have grown out of our acquaintance with the Japanese and Chinese methods of decorations, than Doctor Christopher Dresser. The active part he took in forming the invaluable collections of the South Kensington Museum, in London; the exquisite taste he displayed in the decoration of the Alexandra Palace, placed him in position, both as a "Connoisseur" and an "Art Decorator", which will identify his name with the most successful efforts made, to introduce this new style. His publications of portfolios of colored plates are the basis of many a successful decorator's and upholsterer's reputation, and, when he came to the exhibition in Philadelphia, his influence and erudition were much sought after in the higher artistic circles.

The World provided a detailed description of the Tiffany collection, and particularly praised the translucent enamel plaques and screen, which Dresser in his book is noted as having introduced to the West:

The articles in cloisonné enamel on copper are beautiful examples of the Japanese instinct for colour. This is especially noticeable in the plaques whose beasts, birds and flowers, framed

in their own colours make the most agreeable pictures. One of the notable things of the collection is a screen in cloisonné enamel, one of four taken from the Emperor's palace³⁹ in the war with Japan, which enriched so many art collections.

The catalogue of the collection listed it as a 'glass screen' and it evidently provided Louis Comfort Tiffany and his friend John La Farge (1835-1910) with the inspiration to create stained-glass screens and windows in the Japanese style in 1877-78. These both incorporated the popular Japanese trellis patterns with flowers and fruits interwoven, and a window in Tiffany's own flat decorated in the Japanese manner displays eggplants or persimmons on a trellis-screen. This is reminiscent of an enamel dish that belonged to Dresser and was described as being decorated with 'persimmon-fruit in gold on pink ground'.⁴⁰ (fig.206) Dresser's doctrines regarding stained glass had been advocated in the U.S.A. by the English immigrant Charles Booth (1844-1893), whose Modern Surface Ornament published in New York in 1877 adhered surprisingly closely to Dresser's ideas and in turn became a main source of inspiration for American designers. This is particularly apparent in Louis Comfort Tiffany's stained-glass, which during the 1880s and 1890s became the main media in which he chose to work. Tiffany had been co-founder of the Associated Artists Company in 1878 which before it was dissolved in 1883 had created some of the most famous Aesthetic and Anglo-Japanese interiors in America. Tiffany's own library and dining-room from about 1877-78 provided a model for these creations, and his collection of Japanese art brought over by Dresser, influenced several similar collections in the U.S.A.

Describing some of the lacquer objects in the Tiffany collection, The World noted that 'of lacquered goods the list would be interminable. From valuable old "gold lacquer" to the ordinary dishes used in Japan for serving fish, there is an endless variety.' Passing rapidly over the numerous pieces of earthenware and porcelain in the collection, The World enthused about the variety of jewellery and metal-objects displaying inlay

techniques and peculiar mixtures of metals such as the 'Shi-bu-ichi' (three in one) consisting of an alloy of copper and silver decorated with inlay in silver and gold.⁴¹ Tiffany & Co launched a substantial production of similar creations in 1877-1878, and their use of the technique was received as the most important innovation in Western metalworking and greatly admired at the Paris Expo Universelle in 1878. British assay laws prohibited combinations of these metals, but Dresser as we have noted on his return to Britain created some sophisticated alternative objects in copper, brass and lead, frequently with inlay in the Japanese style for Richard Perry & Son and for Benham & Froud. (figs.207 & 208) The World was surprised to find that the furniture brought over by Dresser provided a feasible alternative to the lacquer items usually imported from Japan:

Cabinets with no other ornaments than the veins of wood and the brass mountings, are quite new to us, and contrast favourably with the rich lacquered construction we are in the habit of seeing.⁴²

This induced a new appreciation of the materials used in furniture design which coincided with the furniture-making traditions of American farmers. In about 1880 Dresser himself created furniture of a similar kind with brass mountings for Chubb & Son. (fig.209)

Tiffany's Japanese collection was certainly one of the high lights of the exhibition season in New York in 1877, and Noha's Times and Messenger paid particular attention to the textiles brought over by Dresser, which were described as

A number of beautiful silk and satin bedquilts, richly embroidered in designs representing tropical birds, and bright-hued flowers, attract a large share of admiration.⁴³

Amongst the admirers of these brilliant silks and embroideries was most probably Louis Comfort Tiffany's associate Candace Wheeler who in 1876 had founded 'The Society of Decorative Art' which specialised in Japanese style embroideries which became tremendously popular in America.⁴⁴

Dresser remained in New York for several weeks whilst awaiting an additional cargo of Japanese art-objects which he had sent separately from Japan, and these were received by Tiffany & Co in late May 1877. The Japan craze by then had reached its peak in New York and it was decided to publically auction the entire collection which comprised some 4,000 objects on 18 June 1877 through Messrs. Leavitt Auctioneers.⁴⁵ Philadelphia Evening Bulletin noted that this unique collection 'overshadows the collection of the Metropolitan, from the fact that its display is more brilliant and varied, and hence more interesting to the modern eyes', and that 'it was the largest and most important collection of Japanese goods ever offered for sale in this country, and it will without doubt attract connoisseurs from all principal cities throughout the Union'.(fig.210) Significant for the attitude of American and European collectors was the notion that:

The Collection was formed more particularly to give us an idea of the various art objects, or rather artistic designs which have been introduced into the manufacture of the articles in use in a Japanese household - in low life and in the home of the wealthy classes. It is complete in all its parts, and is of great interest to all who have studied the manners and customs of the country.⁴⁶

Dresser's collecting strategies included a wide sector of Japanese art, and he may be counted as the first systematic Western collector of all forms of Japanese artefacts. Dresser as we have noted had studied the historical growth of forms from the primitive and utilitarian to those of style and sophistication and this system provided him with a desire to classify every item of Japanese manufacture which he encountered. He thus went beyond the average scale of the Japonists and, seeing Japanese art more within the context of the Japanese, he managed to embrace all kinds of art objects.

The American Japonists and associates Edward Sylvester Morse (1838-1925), Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) and William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926),

appear to have been the first Western collectors who embraced Dresser's attitude to collecting. Morse and Fenollosa in particular certainly had heard about the Tiffany Collection before leaving for Japan in 1877 and 1878, and Morse, on Bigelow's recommendation, in 1882 began collecting Japanese ceramics and tea-ware of the coarser kind admired by Dresser. Like Dresser, these collectors embraced all types of Japanese art, and they undertook similar researches on architecture, fine art, sculpture, ceramics and religion. Bigelow and Fenollosa even converted to Buddhism, and the latter during his long residence in Japan from 1878 until 1891 became a trained Kano painter and co-founder with Kawase Hideiji in 1884 of 'The Japanese Painting Appreciation Society'. Morse lectured in zoology at the Tokyo University from 1877 until 1880, and Fenollosa was appointed Professor of Economics at the same university in 1878. They have been reckoned the first systematic collectors of Japanese art in America and their collections were later to enrich the oriental holdings of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, where both Morse and Fenollosa were appointed curators on their return to the U.S.A. Morse's fame rests on his book Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings (Boston, 1886) which was the first scholarly publication about Japanese architecture to appear after Dresser's book of 1882. (Sutton, 1966, pp.148-57)

Recently Joe Earle of the V & A, has analysed the collecting attitudes amongst Japonists in the Victorian period, and concluded that the Americans on the whole demonstrated a much higher level of cultural involvement than their British counterparts. Earle, however, stressed that 'An outstanding exception to this pervasive cultural blindness was Dr. Christopher Dresser'. (Earle, 1986, p.866) The recent exhibiton In Pursuit of Beauty, Americans and the Aesthetic Movement has compared Dresser to his American counterparts in the collecting world, and has in addition pointed to his influence upon the architects Frank Furness and Louis Sullivan, the

furniture makers Daniel Pabst and the Herter brothers, the stained glass maker Charles Booth and the group of Associated Artists which included Tiffany, Coleman, De Forest and Wheeler. His impact can be traced in a number of textbooks on interior decoration and the popular magazine The Art Worker in 1878 recommended motifs that were in fact lifted directly from Dresser's publications. (fig.211) The celebrated publication, Artistic Houses, Being a Series of Interior Views of a number of the Most Beautiful and Celebrated Homes in the United States (1883-84), featured a Dresser wallpaper covering the ceiling of John T. Martin's picture gallery in Brooklyn,⁴⁷ and John D. Rockefeller around this time decorated his house with a Fred Walton & Co 'Lincrusta' pattern designed by Dresser. (fig.212) This pattern in the style of Japanese leather paper was produced to match a dado-paper of similar design, which occurred amongst the first range of Lincrusta launched in 1878.⁴⁸ An identical dado wallpaper marked 'Inv. Dr. Dresser' in the margin, has been preserved in the Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York, and this testifies to Dresser's great importance for the American wallpaper industry as emphasised in the exhibition catalogue referred to above.(figs. 213) The New York Times article 'Japan in New York, - The Dresser Collection' provides ample evidence of Dresser's popularity in America at the time and also provides a fascinating glimpse of his personality:

One of the most perfect specimens of art intellect which England shipped to the U.S. for the exhibition at Philadelphia was, without doubt Dr. Christopher Dresser. He styles himself "art adviser" and is well known to American designers and art manufacturerers by several publications...The Doctor as he is generally termed, is a full grown Cockney - black of beard, bright of eye, and who would talk a man into a state which American ingenuity illustrated some time ago by a skeleton in a deal box; but this is charming.⁴⁹

NOTES

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6. United States Patents and Trademarks Office, (Washington D.C.) nos. 9975-87.
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10. Royal Doulton-Minton Archive, MSS.1541, 04442.
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18. The Builder (1878) p.696.
19. P.R.O. Foreign Office Papers, F.O., 262-517.
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24. Christie Auction Catalogue (the Dresser-collection) 18 April 1905, lot.21.

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30. Daily News 'Obituary, 1 November 1882, p.7.
31. The Brotherton Library, Leeds University, MSS.1386, Dresser's letter to G.A. Sala, 28 Dec. 1877.
32. Suzuki Hiroyuki, 'Christopher Dresser and Japan' Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan, no.226 (1974) pp.85-94.
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34. The Japan Mail, 11 January 1877, p.16.
35. Tokyo Times, 22 September 1877, p.181.
36. Tokyo National Museum, Acquisition Catalogue vol.II, no.28.
37. Tokyo National Museum Catalogue (Tokyo 1897) nos.16-25.
38. Tiffany & Co Archive, The Graphic 20 April 1877.
39. Tiffany & Co Archive, The World 21 April 1877.
40. Christie's Auction Catalogue (the Dresser Collection) 18 April 1905, lot.79.
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43. Tiffany & Co Archive, Noha's Times and Messenger 29 April 1877.
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45. Messrs. Leavitt Auctioneers, Catalogue of The Dresser Collection of Japanese Curios and articles selected for Messrs. Tiffany & Co, 18 June 1877.
46. Tiffany & Co Archive, the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, 9 June 1877.

47. Artistic Houses, Being a Series of Interior Views of a number of the most beautiful and Celebrated Homes in the United States (1883) I, p.138.
48. Journal of Decorative Art, IV (1884) p.476.
49. The New York Times, 6 May 1877, p.10.

CHAPTER VII

DRESSER AND THE CULMINATION OF JAPONISM 1877-1884**DRESSER'S PROMOTION OF JAPANESE ART**

On his return to Britain in the Summer of 1877 Dresser continued his enthusiastic work for the promulgation and promotion of Japanese art, and he offered his services to famous dealers and manufacturers. A number of lectures were undertaken in order to reach a wider public, and leaders of fashion such as the critic George August Sala and the Prince and Princess of Wales supported his campaign.

In a letter to Sala dated 4 July 1877, Dresser asked his friend to help him advocate the fine old Japanese lacquer ware, and also invited him to attend the opening of Jackson & Graham's Japanese department, which he had organised and catalogued just after his return from Japan.¹ Dresser is not recorded on the company's designer staff, but he probably acted as a sporadic artistic advisor. The Art Journal spoke of their new 'Japanese Art Exhibition' as 'suggestive for British Art-Manufactures', and praised a 'minute brown lustre vase' as well as a bamboo cane decorated with a panel displaying an owl on a spray in front of the moon.² Dresser created similar brown lustre glazes for Linthorpe Pottery and owl-panels in stained-glass windows and furniture in 1879-1880. (figs. 214 & 215) The Art Journal also recommended the quality of the lacquer collection exhibited as well as some gourd-shaped saké bottles, a diamond-shaped cloisonné enamel kettle, bronze sculptures, and hexagonal iron boxes, that were probably all brought back from Japan by Dresser. Dresser subsequently adapted the diamond and hexagonal shapes to a number of electroplate silver designs created in the late 1870s and 1880s. (figs. 142 & 216)

Dresser had become one of the most active and well known exponents of Japonism in Britain, and he was supported by his friend Sir Rutherford Alcock, who in the continuation of his series on 'Japanese Art', stressed

that:

Of the Art manufactures of Japan there is much to be said, and more to be learned, perhaps, than even yet is understood, notwithstanding the decided advent of an era of japonisme, as the French have described the prevailing admiration for Japanese works. (1877, p.162)

The Cult of Japan, as it was more often called in Britain, was at its peak when these words were uttered, and Dresser in a letter to the Royal Society of Art dated 28 December 1877 proudly announced that the Prince and Princess of Wales had embraced the fashion: 'I was for two hours with the Prince and Princess of Wales one day last week explaining the nature of Japanese objects.'³

The royal couple's interest evidently contributed much to the disseminating of the Japan mania in Britain, and Dresser's previously quoted lecture on 'The Art Manufacture of Japan' given for the Royal Society of Art 30 January 1878, cordially welcomed this royal patronage:

This appreciation of the manufactures of Japan is common to all persons of cultivated taste. Artists love these works, and admire them with an earnestness akin to reverence, and I am happy to be able to tell you that their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, by the refinement of their perception, as fully appreciate the art qualities of Japanese objects, and as sincerely love their excellences as though they had spent their days in an artist's studio instead of amidst the alluring splendour of a palace. I only hope that their Royal Highnesses as fully feel, as I do, the value of their royal patronage. With it any art will progress: without it the most noble of crafts perish. The interest which is taken by their Royal Highnesses in the beautiful works from Japan will do more than I can tell you for the advancement of good taste in our midst. (JSA, 1878, p.169)

We know that Queen Victoria herself and the Duke of Edinburgh were keen collectors of Japanese art. Princess Louise created ceramics influenced by Japanese and Oriental prototypes, and she commissioned a studio in the Japanese style from Edward Godwin. His Catalogue of Art Furniture issued jointly with William Watt & Co. in 1877 indeed was dedicated to his Royal patroness. (Aslin, 1986, p.20) It was Godwin's catalogue to which we previously have alluded, and his article on the subject in The Architect of

the previous year (1876, p.5) which defined the theory and practice of the Aesthetic Movement in Britain.

Godwin, Whistler, Oscar Wilde and other prominent members of the movement claimed that beauty would change the life of all, but it rarely reached the poor and basically catered to the tastes of the leisured classes as a way of reinforcing their power. Instead of altering the balance of power in Britain, it reaffirmed the existing structure of society. Dresser, however, was opposed to the accumulation of wealth by a social elite, and since the 1860s had worked to grant both the artist and the workman a measure of prestige untainted by their social class. Inspired by foreign cultures such as the Japanese and also by contemporary scientific discoveries, he advocated an industrial production and creative use of new forms and textures, which was to liberate workmen, artists and the average man from the narrow socially referential functions of art.

We have already discussed the importance of the Japanese topics presented in Dresser's lecture on 'The Art Manufacture of Japan'. It is still worthy of note that he credited the export of Japanese art to England with the elevation of the national taste in art-manufacturers:

I firmly believe that the introduction of the works of Japanese handicraftsmen into England has done as much to improve our national taste as even our schools of art and public museums, great as is the good which they have achieved; for these Japanese objects have got into our homes, and amongst them we live. (JSA, 1878, p.169)

This appraisal is remarkable when bearing in mind that his former tutor and art director at the S. Ken. Museum, George Wallis, was present at the lecture. He must have been equally surprised with Dresser's final credit to Sir Rutherford Alcock:

No man has done more in forming my art character than you have done, for you first taught me to love and understand Japanese art, and I am the gainer by that love. (JSA, 1878, p.177)

In reviewing his first encounter with Japanese art which formulated his artistic sensibility, Dresser stated that this incident had been more

important to him than even his education at the School of Design. He must have realised however, that his knowledge of Japanese art by this time and surpassed that demonstrated by Alcock in his The Art and Art-Industries of Japan published in London in 1878. This book which aimed to analyse Japanese art in general terms, and contained long quotations from such specialists as John Leighton and Dresser, was far from correct in its art historic references. It is significant however, as the first British attempt at dealing with Japanese art as a fully fledged subject in book form, and it probably provided the impetus for Dresser's own book which dealt with a much wider spectrum of Japanese art and architecture.

Dresser's and Alcock's promotional efforts clearly fuelled the interest in Japanese art in Britain during the late 1870s, and The Furniture Gazette in October 1878 noted that:

Present indications would seem to point to the Japanese as the style of the coming season. Mr. Black in "Green Pastures and Piccadilly", foretold that everything will become Japanese. He has proved quite right. Everything is already Japanese. The most progressive tradesman in Regent Street sells Japanese bric-a-brac. All the curiosity shops display Japanese trinkets. Some decorators and art-furniture makers are not content unless their productions are as good imitations of Japanese work as can be found, and in Fleet Street a Japanese cabinet stands at this moment as the triumph of the School of Queen Anne.⁴

Unfortunately a revival of the Queen-Anne style had indeed come to bear a marked influence on the Anglo-Japanese style, and it was chiefly promoted by artists belonging to the Aesthetic movement such as Richard Norman Shaw and Edward Godwin. It caused considerable confusion in stylistic terms during the 1870s and Toshio Watanabe has pointed out that it had been introduced as early as in 1862 by Warrington Taylor as an alternative to the 'Continual massive' of the Neo Gothic. (1984, p.174) The Queen Anne style had been associated with Chinoiserie and Japanesery, and the revival of the style was soon adapted to the Anglo-Japanese manner. Dresser, however, objected strongly to this mingling of imitative stylistic effects

and publicly condemned this practice in an article entitled: 'Is the Rage for Queen Anne Over?' This was uttered in 1880 when the fashion was fading and he was able to criticise it as: 'being alike destitute of both art and constructive merits.' (1889, pp.17-19)

By the late 1870s designers following the eclectic ideas preached by Owen Jones and Dresser, frequently used hybrid styles with a number of Japanese effects, and the stylistic term used for such designs was 'Anglo-Japanese' or 'Modern English'. This often incorporated abstracted elements taken from the English Gothic, Elizabethan or Queen Ann styles flavoured with Japanese asymmetry, simplicity, lightness of scale, and a play with solid and void adapted from Japanese furniture and art-objects. Dresser, however, advocated a sifting of the inspirational sources of the design, in order to achieve a unique artistic creation, as is most emphatically expressed in his designs for electroplate and silver supplied to Elkington & Co, James Dixon & Son, and Hukin & Heath during the late 1870s and 1880s for example.

DRESSER'S DESIGNS 1877-1879

The technique of electroplating had been patented by Elkington & Co in 1840 and the process involved the coating of nickel or copper with silver by electrolysis. This scientific discovery appealed particularly to Dresser who in 1862 had advocated the use of such economical materials as well as mass production 'which all teach us the perfection of our machinery and the greatness of our mechanical skill'. (1862, p.169) Shirley Bury, in her article on 'The Silver Designs of Christopher Dresser', has pointed out that his metalwork showed 'a distinct bias towards the Japanese'. She stressed however, that 'This revealed itself, not in the individual motifs, but in the unexpected forms, which bore little relation to the current Western tradition of design.' (1962, p.767-68)

Dresser's Principles indeed emphasised the importance of function and

utility, and he condemned the Victorian love of elaborate and allegorical ornamentation, saying that this was: 'an error which the Arabians, Indians, and Japanese never perpetuate, whose works in metal are unsurpassed by any, and equalled by indeed few'. (1873, p.138) Evidently his keen studies of Japanese metal vessels reinforced this impression and stimulated the tremendous output of designs for metalware which he undertook upon his return to Britain. They reveal an almost aggressively industrial and smooth finish, frequently with angular and broken lines and with visible rivets and constructional details. These characteristics had been observed by Dresser in Japanese art manufactures, but his own creations are far removed from imitative reproductions and appear entirely unique in the contemporary context. They represent some of Dresser's most subtle and outstanding work and clearly reflect 'The breadth of treatment, a simplicity of execution, and boldness of design' which he observed in Japanese metalwork. (1882, p.426)

This certainly applies to some of the first designs for electroplate executed after his return from Japan, - two electroplated cruets with glass containers which according to Nikolaus Pevsner were designed for Hukin & Heath on 24 October 1877. (1937 p.186) (fig.119) The angular handles reflect those which Dresser had observed in Japan, and the equally angular substructure brings to mind Japanese railings and fences which Dresser commented upon in his book on Japan. (1882, p.168) It was in fact these cruets which had aroused Pevsner's interest in Dresser and the photograph and supplementary information he assembled were procured when he visited Dresser's daughters in 1936. These creations must have been some of the first designs supplied by him for Hukin & Heath who had registered their trademark in 1875 and continued to employ Dresser until about 1900. Jonathan Wilson Hukin left the firm in 1887, and John Thomas Heath then went into partnership with John J. Middleton becoming Heath and Middleton.

The company was dissolved in 1952, and unfortunately the design books were then burnt. (Bury, 1962, p.768) The two designs admired by Pevsner appear to have been put into production on the 31 July 1878 and 27 January 1879 respectively as a part of a whole range of novel creations provided by Dresser at the time. They may all have been forwarded as tracings as early as 24 October 1877, but they were registered with the Patent Office Design Registry between 10 April 1878 and 19 October 1879, and comprise additional cruets, condiment sets, four tea sets, bottle stands, tumblers, egg boilers, letter racks, sugar bowls, claret decanters, hot-water jugs and picnic sets. (figs.177, 185, 216 & 217)

According to The Art Journal which in 1879 announced the opening of Hukin & Heath's London showrooms in Charterhouse Street, Dresser had become art adviser to the firm at this time:

Their Art adviser and guide is Dr. Dresser, under whose educated taste and practical experience they have procured a large collection of singularly excellent Art works, vast improvements on the "have beens" of earlier times and fully meeting the requirements in the present state of Art progress. They have done this without increasing the cost of such articles, supplying ample evidence of the principle long ago advocated by The Art Journal, and in a measure adopted as its motto, that "beauty is cheaper than deformity." We have examined with very great satisfaction the articles to which we direct public attention, and it is our duty to accord to them a high praise, not only co-operate with the able and liberal manufacturers, but to encourage others to do likewise. So much is public taste advancing among all classes, poor as well as rich, that ere long "a thing of beauty" only will be found in all our factories and shops...They have acted under the advice of a competent Art teacher - there are few better - and they ought to, as they surely will, reap a productive harvest from the seed so skilfully planted and cultivated. The works of their own special trade are those we admire most; many of them are positive studies of grace combined with the useful - simplicity and purity in form with readiness of application to the purposes to which they are to be applied. Messrs. Hukin & Heath reproduce several of the Persian and Japanese Art works with accuracy unsurpassed - perfect copies indeed - by the electric process; such specimens, being selected for reproduction by Dr. Dresser, are of course always beautiful examples of Art.

Evidently these Dresser designs departed strongly from the elaborate Victorian pastiche of silversmithing. A marked Japanese influence is

apparent in the majority of the pieces, and particularly in the tea sets, whose shapes, spouts and angular handles reflect the Japanese kettles which he had admired since the time of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' 1867.

Ornamentation of two of these tea sets stemmed from Dresser's articles on 'Japanese Ornamentation' (fig.32) and from his illustrations of 'Japanese Ornaments' in The British Architect in 1879. (figs.218, 219, 220 & 221)

Dresser's undated sketch-books contain drawings for several of the Hukin & Heath designs and related creations, and the heating vessels may well have been inspired by those of the Japanese illustrated in his Japan. (figs.184 & 185) A remarkable feature of Dresser's Hukin & Heath designs is the fact that they are inscribed 'Designed by Dr. C. Dresser' beneath the company's trade mark. Dresser as we have noted had spoken out for the designers right to 'take place in society with the producer' and he was deservedly the first designer to earn this honour. A few of his designs for Richard Perry & Sons executed in 1876 are similarly marked, but it was the trip to Japan, which he remembered as having convinced him of the necessity of establishing the rights of designers:

It is important to remember that a Japanese potter, lacquer-worker, or other handicraftsman, may become as famous as a Landseer or a Turner, and that works bearing his signature will be as much sought after by the natives as those of any of our "great masters" are by us. (1882, p.412)

These wishes eventually materialised, and the immediate effect of Dresser's trip to Japan can also be observed in his first designs for Richard Perry & Sons and for Benham & Froud from 1877-78 and onwards. These are created of brass and copper and sometimes incorporate repoussé work and inlay of lead or electroplate silver in the Japanese style.(figs.222,223,224, 225 & 226)

We have noted that similar designs were provided by Dresser for Richard Perry & Sons already in 1876 and his creations for cast-iron produced by Coalbrookdale received public acclaim when they were reproduced in the company's sumptuous catalogue released in 1877.⁶

There can be no better indication of Dresser's Japonism during the late 1870s and 1880s than the paper hangings which he designed for William Woollams & Co. and for Jeffrey & Co. Woollams registered fourteen frieze-patterns in the Japanese style with the Patent Office in July 1877, and the majority of these may be compared to Dresser designs for J.W. & C. Ward as well as for Minton & Co's cloisonné-ware from the time. The framing scrolls and panels are reminiscent of a Dresser wall paper in the V & A Museum.(figs.227 & 228) Significantly these panels and the frieze patterns brings to mind the Japanese frieze panels or 'rammas' which he admired in Japan. The design displaying birds and daffodils juxtaposed with fret patterns is similar to the Jeffrey & Co. paper hanging which he executed in 1877.(figs.229 & 230)

By this time, the Japanese style of interiors, according to Lucy Orrinsmith, had come into vogue, to remain a dominant motif for at least the subsequent decade:

A Japanese effect in a drawingroom may be produced at but slight expense, by the dado being composed of fine yellowish matting, headed by a surbase of ebony, or ebonized oak, or walnut or stained wood, the wall above distempered a pure pale Japanese green or grey, divided into compartments by mouldings, which should match the surbase. These compartments might be decorated delicately and slightly after the old Japanese models, or each compartment filled with genuine paintings from Japan or the finest matting which may now be purchased at various shops devoted to foreign decorative art. Where there are but few ornaments or pictures they have an interesting and charming effect. In this case as much Eastern furniture as possible would be desirable.(1877,p.20)

THE 'PARIS EXPO UNIVERSELLE' IN 1878

The Prince of Wales's Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition in 1878 was in fact similarly decorated by Gillow and Co with Japanese lattice panels, stained glass windows and an embroidered frieze in the Japanese style and Anglo-Japanese furniture by Edward Godwin painted in shades of yellow by James M. Whistler. The style was referred to as 'Anglo-Japanese' or

'Modern English', and other well-known artists such as Lewis F. Day, H.W. Batley, Thomas Jeckyll, Bruce J. Talbert and Christopher Dresser contributed much to its fame at the exhibition.⁷ The Anglo-Japanese style earned Britain the reputation of being the leading artistic nation represented at the exhibition, even surpassing the French, whose dominance they had striven to overcome since the Great Exhibition of 1851. Retrospectively, The Furniture Gazette wrote in 1880 that

Things have so far changed that England now stands in front rank of European countries as regards many branches of her art manufactures, as the last Paris Exhibition clearly showed.⁸

Lewis F. Day in his articles on 'Victorian Progress in Applied Design' recalled that:

In the matter of originality that is to say, we have made very marked progress during the last five-and-twenty years: so much that at the last Paris Exhibition in 1878 the "English style" made quite a sensation and was even imitated by the Parisian designers. (1887, p.186)

This somewhat pompous self acclaim was in fact supported by such well known continental critics as Jean Lahore in France and Julius Lessing and Carl Graff in Germany. Lahore's famous publication L'Art Nouveau. Son Histoire praised the English style at the Paris exhibition as 'one of the precursors of Art Nouveau', (1901, note 36) and Julius Lessing in his Bericht von der Pariser Weltausstellung 1878 referred to it as the most genuinely novel style exhibited. This appraisal was quoted by Carl Graff in his article 'Der Anglo-Japanische Stil des 19 Jahrhunderts', which heralded the English contribution as 'the style of our time':

At the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 we were stunned by the wonderful originality which characterised the whole British department, and that we again readily can use the term novel. (1885, p.40)

Commenting on the confusing connotation of Queen Anne, Graff held that this had no relevance that the correct name was 'Anglo-Japanese' which indeed became a household term in the 1870s and 1880s. 'Modern English' and 'Liberty Style', however, were increasingly used to define the style

towards the end of the century when English influence was prominent on the continent and in the U.S.A.

Dresser was a vital contributor to the success of the Anglo-Japanese or Modern English style, and talking about the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1878, where he acted as a juror for paper hangings, he recalled that:

Eleven manufacturers, engaged in eleven different branches of manufacture, showed objects of my designs at the last Paris Exhibition, and ten of these got gold medals, and the other silver.(1885,p.3)

Alphabetically, these companies were Allan, Cockshut & Co.(wallpapers), Barlow & Jones (quilts), Brinton & Lewis (carpets), William Cooke & Co. (wallpapers), Chubb & Co, (locks & hinges), Coalbrookdale Ironcompany, Elkington & Co. (silver & enamel), Jeffrey & Co. (wallpaper) Minton & Co. (porcelain) Frederick Walton & Co. (lincrusta), and William Woollams & Co. (wallpaper). The wallpaper manufacturers mentioned all exhibited their respective specialities such as lincrusta, embossed, friezes and dado-schemes, and thus qualified as representatives of different branches of the arts in Dresser's classification.

Allan, Cockshut & Co, had been founded in 1812 but Dresser is not recorded as having worked on their design staff until the Paris exhibition when their papers according to Alan Sugden had been a 'centre of novelty' and had earnt the company a gold medal. (Sugden, 1925, pp.194-197) Barlow & Jones received similar honours for their quilts and bedspreads, and one of these was illustrated in The Art Journal and described as

a great novelty in the art of weaving at the exhibition. The pattern (designed by Dr. Dresser) is produced by raised loops on a plain ground. These quilts are made in several designs and colours. The same cloth is also made available for dressing-table covers. (fig.231)

This pattern was perhaps inspired by Japanese crest-patterns, and the raised loops of Chinese carpets may also be related. According to The Illustrated Paris Universal Exhibitor, the same company exhibited some

unique appliqué work, which probably aimed to supplant the Japanese appliqué patterns that had become fashionable.

Messrs. Barlow & Jones have also produced curtains and coverlets in satin appliqué work and embroidery from charming designs by Dr. Dresser, using for their material unbleached cotton, which presents all the advantages of cheapness and durability, with solid and graceful appearance.

Dresser's designs for Brinton & Lewis carpets were accordingly praised as

the result of artistic taste, and appreciation of the commercial value of art on the part of the manufacture, and great skill, combined with practical knowledge of materials and dyes, on the part of the designer, Dr. Dresser.¹⁰

The Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal described these eight samples as being;

bright grass-green with yellow star-flowers, - geometric pattern of leaves, - multicoloured with brilliant gems of red, blue, yellow etc., - triangular patterns, - a green and blue carpet, - a green and yellow carpet with a wreath of flowers for border on a dull white ground, - a carpet in Japanese style, with circles of drab and green, forming a trellis on blue, with over running tendrils and flowers, - and finally one with "a bunch of yellowish-white flowers on pale green, and a border of yellow flags on blue".¹¹

The carpet in the Japanese style brings to mind the William Woollams paper with sweet peas and tendrils, (fig.228) and we shall see that other tendril patterns were produced by Dresser. The American Carpet Trade Review additionally mentioned another Brinton & Lewis carpet of Dresser's design as being a 'Wilton in Dresser's own geranium leaf pattern' and that 'the influence of Morris and Dresser has gone everywhere short of the Bannock region.'¹² Clearly his carpets at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' made an important impact on the carpet industry, but unfortunately none of the samples have been preserved. William Cooke & Co. as we have stated, registered a number of frieze patterns with the Patent Office at the time of the 'Paris Expo Universelle' and one of these incorporates a design of cranes which is remarkably similar to Dresser's pattern 'Quick March' supplied to Minton & Co. around 1880. (figs.232 & 233) Chubb & Co. received a silver medal for their lock and ornamental metal-ware exhibited in Paris,

and The British Mercantile Gazette in 1878 described one of these as having been designed by Dresser. (1878, p.234) Coalbrookdale & Co. exhibited 'Fire irons etc. fitted to show tiles' and a number of these with Dresser tiles illustrated in their 1877 catalogue were most certainly on display. Elkington & Co was the only British silversmith represented in Paris, but their exhibits have not been traced and we can only assume that they contained some of Dresser's creations. Jeffrey & Co.'s dado, filling and frieze papers were highly praised by the critics, who mentioned Walter Crane, Bruce J. Talbert and Dresser as being members of the design team. Dresser's Jeffrey designs for the Paris Exhibition, have been preserved in the V & A and they have recently been identified with the help of the Jeffrey & Co. log books from the Arthur Sanderson & Co. archives, and one is an oak leaf pattern with festoons and scrolls much in the manner of a design executed by Dresser for J.W. & C. Ward's silk damasks in 1875. (fig.234) The other sample incorporate wisteria branches, pomegranates and honeysuckle in the Japanese style. (fig. 235) Dresser was particularly active as a designer for Jeffrey & Co. at this time, and he also designed their stationery which has been preserved in the V & A. (fig.236)

Minton & Co. won the Grand Prix at the exhibition for their porcelain products and the majority of these were painted in the cloisonné or enamel manner pioneered by Dresser in the 1860s. This ware had become increasingly popular as the Japan cult progressed, and shapes previously introduced by Dresser were still in production at Minton & Co. His vase shape no. 1664 and seau shape no. 1919 executed earlier in the 1870s were included in the Minton Estimate book for the Paris Exhibition and respectively decorated with:- 'Bird, Plants and Flies in blue on each side, Broad gold band sanded subjects with Dresser's border on band' and 'Birds, plants in blue band round centre, Dresser's border' (Ms.1480, X129 & X130) These creations are identical to the Dresser patterns introduced

at Minton's in 1875. (figs. 132A & 161) This also appears to hold true for the ewer & basin and teaplate decoration with 'Dresser borders' that frequently occurred on this type of ware, and which were introduced in 1867.

Frederick Walton, the well-known inventor of Linoleum, launched a new product at the 'Paris Expo Universelle' in 1878, which he named Linoleum Muralis and subsequently Lincrusta Walton. This wall covering achieved considerable popularity and like linoleum it consisted chiefly of oxidised linseed oil which was pressed into imbossed patterns.¹³ Nikolaus Pevsner in his article about Dresser mentioned that he had examined linoleum designs in Dresser's account books for 1874. (1937, p.185) These were probably made for Frederick Walton, whose Linoleum Muralis in 1878 included Dresser patterns. We have already noted that one of these was subsequently illustrated in The Journal of Decorative Art in 1884 and that an identical wallpaper marked 'Inv. Dr. Dresser' has been preserved at the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York. (figs.212 & 213) It is a typical example of Dresser's social convictions that he should be involved in the first production of linoleum decorations, which according to the same Journal, 'placed within the reach of a great bulk of the middle and upper classes, a material peerless as a sanitary agent, and of a beauty that need fear no rival'.¹⁴ A similar embossed flock paper hanging was presented as a new patent by William Woollams & Co. at the Paris Exhibition, and the pattern which incorporated branches with stylised and overlapping circular motifs in the Japanese manner, was certainly by Dresser who is recorded amongst the firm's designers at the time.(fig.237)

Dresser's importance as a leader of taste in 1878 was measured by the British Mercantile Gazette, which stressed that the new interior fashion had rendered 'every homestead as artistic in the truest sense of the word as the most energetic and ardent teachers, such as Mr. Ruskin, Dr. Dresser and August Pugin, could wish'.¹⁵ We have also noted his influence on the

art milieu in America, and that Tiffany & Co.'s silver in the Japanese style at the Paris exhibition resulted from the Japanese collection which Dresser had amassed for the company in Japan. Tiffany's novel production attracted universal acclaim and Dresser expressed his enthusiasm in a letter to Messrs Tiffany & Co. dated London 25 July 1878:

I cannot refrain from expressing to you the pleasure that I have derived from the contemplation of your exhibit in the present Paris Exhibition. No silversmith, that I know, has made the progress in art as applied to their industry in the last few years, that you have indeed, the rapidity of your advancement has astonished many of my art friends as well as myself. After much consideration, I cannot help thinking that, judged by the exhibits in Paris - you occupy the proud position of being the first silversmiths of the world.¹⁶

Admiring as he did the textured surfaces of the Japanese metalwork, Dresser avoided all but the simplest forms and decorations in his own work.

English assay-laws prevented the amalgamation of base metals with gold and silver, but Dresser's creations in brass and copper from the 1880s instead incorporated inlay of lead and electroplate silver in the Japanese manner.

A copper screen encrusted with silver, iron, and gold was shown by Zaito Zembi in Paris in 1878¹⁷ and this may well have served as a model for Dresser's similarly encrusted trays and plaques for Richard Perry & Sons and for Benham & Frood.

Japonism reached a climax at the Paris Expo Universelle in 1878, and the extensive representation of Japan which included a farm-house and a small garden was thoroughly augmented by a catalogue compiled and published by the Japanese. This contained information on a number of subjects and offered a more realistic picture of Japan and Japanese art. Several critics described the dramatic effect of the Japan stand, which proved that imitative Western products were markedly inferior. Julius Lessing for example called for a more discriminating adaptation of Japanese ideals:

The only innovation is the inclusion of Japanese formal elements in French art. These charming, fantastic creations are the focus of attention. The artists set about making boxes or bowls using

Japanese shapes and decorating them with leaves and blooms in the inimitable manner of the Japanese. This would be all well and good were it not for the presence of the Japanese themselves at the exhibition, were it not for the fact that the simplest chiselled bronze by their ordinary nameless craftsmen is so much more beautiful, lively and inspired than the most expensive gold and silver pieces by the manufacturers of Paris and London. In all instances where the Europeans have stepped into the genres cultivated by the Japanese, the gulf between the good Japanese works and those of the Europeans is so striking that a comparison is hardly possible.¹⁸

Dresser as we know had warned against such imitative tendencies already in 1863, and his views finally gained weight during the Paris exhibition. The critics then became aware of the domestic ceramics and tea-ware which he had advocated as alternatives to the more gaudy examples of decorated Japanese art-manufactures. The Illustrated London News for instance remarked that 'We have still much to learn from Japanese art of the highest quality. Preconceived ideas of Japanese art have led us to accept anything but this uniform and quiet colouring'.¹⁹ The Industrial Art Magazine agreed stating 'The aim of Japanese art is to give great effect with few lines and little labour...' and that 'its influence on English decorative industry will survive and infuse fresh vigour into the taste of the rising generation.'²⁰

Dresser and other artists who visited the Japan stand in Paris in 1878, received fresh inspiration, and the Japanese themselves were instrumental in spreading more thorough information. Edmond de Goncourt recalled that he had attended a demonstration of sumi-ink and kakemono painting. Dresser as we know visited Samejima Hisanobu and Matsukata Masayoshi whom he had befriended in Japan. His friend Wakai Kanezaburo was responsible for organising the Japanese stand together with the famous dealer Tadamas Hayashi, and Dresser certainly profited from their commentary regarding the exhibits. Wakai as we know visited Dresser in London in 1880, and both Wakai and his associate Hayashi remained in close contact with scholars, dealers and collectors in France and England. (Sutton, 1984, pp.59-64)

Two French publications released in 1878 strengthened the Japan craze which raged in Paris; Emile Guimet and Felix Régamey's Promenades Japonaises and George Bousquet's Le Japon de nous jours. The authors had all been to Japan in 1877 and wrote perceptively about the Japanese art that they had examined and collected. In England, Lady Brassey's Voyage in the Sunbeam was published in London in the same year as the exhibition, and it contained some fascinating travellers comments on Japan which were adapted as school texts, in 1880. The author ventured into a discussion on Japanese art with total ignorance however, but she was assisted by various author colleagues notably Mrs. M.E. Haweis, Mrs. M.J. Loftie and Mrs. Harriet P. Spofford, who in 1878 recommended Japanese art and the Anglo-Japanese style in their publications on interior decoration. Mrs. Spofford's Art decoration applied to Furniture (New York 1878) in particular praised 'the best talent such as that of William Morris and Dr. Dresser' and illustrated the A. Kimbel & J. Cabus cabinet from the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 which displayed one of Dresser's creations for Elkington & Co. (p.83) (fig.46)

DRRESSER'S LECTURES AND THE DISSEMINATION OF JAPANESE ART

Numerous books and magazines referring to Dresser's principles and designs greatly facilitated their rapid transmission, but it was his own writings, lectures, designs and participation at exhibitions which laid the foundation of his popularity. He communicated his thoughts in a number of lectures in 1878, and in particular exhibited a Japanese Room which had been sent him as a present from Makimura Masano, the governor of Kyoto. It appears to have been similar to that which was exhibited in Paris in 1878, and was highly recommended in The Times: (fig.238)

Certainly when we see such specimens of carpentry and cabinet work as this "Japanese nobleman's room", which has been brought over by Dr. Dresser, and is now to be seen at Mr. Streeter's, the well known jeweller in Bond Street, there cannot be a question as to the superiority of the work over all European carpentry. The

small scale of a Japanese house and its rooms, the largest of which is a mere boudoir compared with our compartments, no doubt leads to that peculiar neatness and finish in the joinery of the woodwork, the framing, and the panels so tastefully ornamented with through cut tracery of flowers, birds, or geometrical ornament, which form the walls and the ceiling of this nobleman's room, the dimensions of which are only about 13 ft. square and 8 feet high.²¹

Such favourable comments certainly attracted a host of visitors to Dresser's Japanese room, which clearly embodied many of the qualities admired by the leaders of the Aesthetic Movement. It may well have influenced Edward Godwin's plans for Whistler's 'White House' and for Frank Miles's Chelsea house executed in the same year, and also perhaps the architecture of Richard Norman Shaw who in 1878 was fully engaged in supervising and designing the Bedord Park housing estate, the first suburban garden city in the history of modern architecture. Shaw thus created a setting for the Aesthetic Movement, and incorporated Queen Anne constructions mingled with Japanese features such as sunflowers, cranes, overlapping crest ornaments, and lattice panels in his architecture. (Aslin 1969, pp.49-51 & 84)

Dresser's connection with the jeweller Edwin W. Streeter remains obscure, but we have noted that the two may have met at the Alexandra Palace in 1873 where Streeter had a stand. Dresser is not known to have designed any jewellery but he probably acted as Streeter's agent in Japan, on a similar basis to that he performed for a number of other companies. The Times simultaneously noted that Streeter had engaged workmen in Japan to ornament his goods with enamel and inlay decorations in the Japanese style. Thus Streeter circumvented the British assay laws forbidding such decoration, and was able to fulfil his orders as genuinely Japanese products.

'Japanese Woodwork' was also exhibited by Dresser at the Architectural Association in June 1878, and since he was in Paris at the time he communicated a letter to the association describing the samples of wood lattice work, carved, lacquered, inlaid, and cloisonné panels, metal

hinges, lockplates, and finger plates & c. exhibited. He strongly recommended the adaptation of the lattice-panels:

as ventilating panels in room-doors; as enrichments in cabinets; for both dwarf-blinds in our windows - replacing the very modern cane-blinds - and for outside sunshutters, instead of Venetian shutters.

Panels of carved and perforated work were suggested by Dresser as articulating elements in dados, rails, and friezes, and the furniture of such rooms should accordingly be decorated with doors or panels of 'carved ivory, cloisonné enamel, iron inlaid with gold or silver, or of fine wood inlays' and with 'metalhinges, lock-plates, and finger-plates of iron inlaid with gold or silver'. (The Builder 1878, p.654)

We know that Godwin, Jeckyll, Talbert, Whistler and Dresser all created such interiors, but few of these have remained intact. The furniture however, shows evidence of the adaptation of Japanese panels and metal-hinges, and Dresser as we have noted created such Anglo-Japanese designs. A bedroom suite of his design was illustrated in the Furniture Gazette in 1879, which was probably manufactured by Chubb & Co.who around this time began to produce Dresser's furniture. The wardrobe displays two large rectangular door panels, incorporating respectively pots with bullrushes and Japonica flowers, whose broken lines reflect a characteristic which Dresser had noted in his Japan (1882, p.286) Four smaller panels above display well known Japanese motifs, including the butterfly, the rising sun, the owl and the humming bird. The chairs are of a slender character with a play of verticals and horizontals, solid and void that are reminiscent of Japanese etagères and lattice panels.(fig.214) The bedroom suite may well have been inspired by Japanese furniture observed by Dresser in Paris in 1878. However the Japanese furniture exhibited in London in the summer of 1878, would have proved more accessible for studying. This formed part of the 'Loan collection of

Furniture' organised by Dresser's friend George Wallis at the Bethnal Green Museum, which had opened as an East-End adjunct to the S. Ken. Museum in 1872. (Morris, 1986, p.64) The catalogue listed five Japanese cabinets from the S. Ken. Museum, whose decorative motifs are described as flowers, trees, and birds which may well have influenced Dresser.²²

The rectangular Japanese panels in Dresser's wardrobe may also have been inspired by the Japanese kakemono paintings exhibited at The Burlington Fine Art Club in December in 1878. This collection, amassed by Francis Dillon, who had resided for a year in Japan, offered the first overall view of Japanese painting to the English public. The exhibition also contained a smaller collection of bronzes, enamels, and jades contributed by Colin Minton Campbell, the director of Minton & Co, and by Thomas W. Cutler who in 1880 published A Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design. In addition a small collection of 24 netsukes was exhibited by the artist Francis Seymour Haden, the brother-in-law of James M. Whistler.²³ The Builder critic described the Japanese paintings which were exhibited as childlike, semibarbarous and unintellectual, thus compounding the ignorance of the subject which prevailed at the time. This was in contrast to their attitude to the art manufactures which were readily accepted and praised:

As a decorative art it has not been surpassed, perhaps hardly equalled anywhere or in any age. And it has, to a European generation which has necessarily lost all its spontaneity of feeling under its multiplicity of knowledge the exquisite charm of an art quite fresh and spontaneous in its feeling and manifestations, quite independent of the art or the associations of any age or country.²⁴

This implication conveys the secret of the Japan cult, which was clearly based on the desire to find fresh outlets from the constraints of Western art. The spontaneity of Japanese art was seen as a main source of inspiration for designers and artists searching for new ideals, which eventually gave way to an individualistic formal approach detectable for example in Dresser's designs.

Dresser continued to search beyond the borders of European conformism, and in September 1878 he canvassed for the adaptation of Japanese ceilings for Western architecture. His article on 'Works from Japan' described some ornamental nails and three model ceilings from the Tokugawa Shrine at Ueno Park in Tokyo, which had been sent to him as a gift from the Japanese Government. (1878, p.969) These ceilings were of the coffered type he had admired in Japan and incorporated in his Allangate Mansion interior from 1873-75, and they were acquired by the V & A from Dresser's estate in 1905. (fig.169) The ceilings remain as vivid examples of Dresser's promotion of Japanese architecture, and probably served as models for many Anglo-Japanese ceilings in the 1880s and 1890s.

Dresser's enthusiasm and interest in this topic is unique in a Western context, for it was not until the turn of the century that a marked Japanese influence became noticeable in Western architecture. Edward S. Morse's Japanese Homes and their Surroundings (Boston, 1886) was also a vital element in this process. It was precisely the lattice panels, ceilings, beam constructions, brackets and the simplicity of the Japanese interiors dealt with by Dresser and Morse, which influenced such well known architects as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Peter Behrens, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Charles and Henry Green, Louis Sullivan, Bruno Taut and Frank Lloyd Wright.

THE LINTHORPE ART POTTERY

In 1879 Dresser founded the Linthorpe Art Pottery in Middlesbrough on Tees, together with John Harrison (d. 1889) the owner of the Sun Brick Works. They had met when Dresser lectured on Japanese art in Middlesbrough in November in 1878. Concerned with the regional unemployment, Dresser suggested that the red brick clay of Harrison's estate would be more profitably adapted to the production of pottery. Dresser was engaged as art director and designer and the Linthorpe Art Pottery began producing in

1879. This successful venture which employed some 100 people, notably Dresser's assistant Henry Tooth as masterpotter, launched the first art pottery ceramics in Britain.²⁵

Its influence was also felt outside the country, notably in Japan according to Machida Nishinari. Robert Lee's article, 'Linthorpe Ware, a forgotten Yorkshire Pottery', endorsed this notion:

It is interesting to note that the Japanese were large buyers of the products of Linthorpe. The love of such productions is probably inborn in this Eastern nation, world-famous craftsmen in such manufactures, and it was natural that the officers of Japanese steamers, coming regularly into the Tees for cargo, bought and were commissioned to buy considerable quantities of Linthorpe Ware, which were taken back to Japan where, presumably much still remains. It has been stated, however, that some of these Japanese purchases of Linthorpe Ware have found their way back to Britain as Japanese Ware. One is not surprised that such expert judges as the Japs were keen buyers of these beautiful British products. (1934, pp.37-41)

We know that the similarities were in many ways striking and that the contemporary Makudzu Kozan in particular inserted a marked influence on Dresser's Linthorpe ware. Inspiration was also derived from Rhodian, Phoenician, Persian, Peruvian and Chinese pottery, but Dresser's fascination with Japanese pottery and its glazes played a crucial role in the formation of the Linthorpe art pottery according to the Pottery Gazette's retrospective article:

At the time Linthorpe Pottery was established the influence of Japan on English decorative art was very great. Dr. Dresser having constituted himself the high priest of the cult, it is to be expected that where he has any influence, Japanese style and decorations would play a considerable part. This was the case of Linthorpe Pottery...

Recommending the beauty and originality of the Linthorpe glazes, the Pottery Gazette, emphasised their basis in Japanese prototypes:

The mottle effect glaze was a recovery and improvement of an old Japanese colour effect that had been lost. The "yellow mottle" was such a perfect reproduction of a lost Japanese effect...A Japanese jar was under observation when the peculiar blending of two colours on a background was noticed.²⁶ (figs.197A & B, 239, 240, 241)

The Pottery Gazette also revealed one of its technical secrets, saying that a 'spray producer' was employed and that the spraying method thus for the first time was adapted to pottery production in Britain. Clearly some of the most sophisticated manufacturing methods were used at Linthorpe, and Robert Lee recalled that the glaze materials were similar to those used for stained glass painting, and that flint or granite was ground for a week before it was ready for the glazing trough. Cornish clay was then added and the colours were allowed to mingle in unusual haphazard running patterns during the final firing. Moulds, according to Lee, were used but the finishing touch was done on the potter's wheel before being fired in the gas ovens, which were claimed to be some of the first to be used in Britain.²⁷

Linthorpe art pottery was produced in two classes, the glazed ware and the incised, perforated, raised and painted pots. The latter frequently incorporated Japanese motifs such as lotus, iris, and lily flowers which were formed in the biscuit stage and resembled Makudzu Kozan's technique, which Dresser described in Japan. (p.387) The majority of the impasto wares were based on Japanese models, and a contemporary trade brochure stressed that the productions of the Linthorpe Art Pottery were modelled on Oriental lines, particularly the fret patterns, ornaments and flowers in the Japanese style.(figs.241, 242, 243 & 244) Contemporary photographs of the studio indeed show that the walls were hung with Japanese prints and kakemonos. (Le Vine, 1970, p.13) During the two-three first years of the pottery the greater part of the shapes were supplied by Dresser, and most of these are marked with his facsimile signature and 'LINTHORPE' together with the production number. Occasionally the initials of Henry Tooth and decorators such as Fred Brown, William A Burns, W. Davidson, Sheldon Longbottom, Thomas Hudson, A.P. Shorter and Lucy Worth are affixed, but liable to cause confusion is the fact that some of the pots are unmarked

and that Dresser shapes continued in the production even after he and Tooth left in 1882 and until the factory closed, following John Harrison's death in 1889. According to Le Vine, Dresser's signature was last time affixed to production number 1700, a fluted plate in the Japanese style, but dresser shapes were produced until the final firing number 4196.(p.14) (fig.245) To further complicate matters, Henry Tooth continued reproducing Dresser's shapes when he went into partnership with William Ault (1841-1929) in 1882. Tooth subsequently founded the Bretby Art Pottery at Burton-on-Trent in 1883, and his pottery, which was retailed by Liberty & Co., bears a striking resemblance to Dresser's Linthorpe ware. (fig.246)

William Ault in turn founded his own pottery in 1887 and was a keen buyer of Linthorpe moulds when these were offered at auction in July 1890. Some of these were inscribed with Dresser's signature and were reproduced by Ault, who in 1894 also engaged Dresser formally as a designer. The Cabinet Maker noted that 'In many of the forms there is evidence for Dr. Dresser's great knowledge of and predilection for Oriental Models'.²⁸ The Bretby and Ault potteries were acclaimed by contemporary critics and received medals at the international exhibitions, but they could not compete with the high quality of the Linthorpe Art Pottery.(figs.247 & 248)

MESSRS. DRESSER AND HOLME IN JAPAN AND ENGLAND

Dresser marketed the Linthorpe Art Pottery in his new trade venture, Messrs. Dresser and Holme, which had been first established in Japan in 1878. The company opened its London premises 21 June 1879 and Dresser had gone into partnership with the Bradford businessman Charles Holme who subsequently wrote perceptively about Japanese tea ware in 1892, and who in 1893 founded The Studio Magazine.²⁹ The new import and export company evidently intended to compete with other dealers catering for the demand for Japanese products such as Arthur Liberty, Murray Marks, Londos & Co. and the Alexandra Palace Co. The opening according to The Furniture Gazette,

was attended by Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock and Sir Louis and Lady Pelly as well as by members of the Japanese Legation, who agreed that:

The result of Dr. Dresser's travels and labours has been that, although there are several emporiums of Japanese ware in this country, we are justified in saying that the collection we had the pleasure of inspecting is by far the most extensive, the most interesting, and the most valuable of its kind in the kingdom. From the moment we entered the hall we seemed to have left England and to have been transported to Japan, so completely orientalised was everything around us.³⁰

The showrooms are recorded as having contained some very fine cloisonné enamels both opaque and translucent, Satsuma imitations from Shiba, Hizen porcelain, Makudzu pottery, ivory carvings, lacquer objects, silverworks, bronze and iron kettles, lattice panels, screens and his own Linthorpe ware. (fig.244, 249, 250 & 251) The latter certainly introduced a colourful effect, and the Furniture Gazette noted the appearance of some 150 pots in plain colours, and in particular a Japanese double-gourd shape (fig.252 & 253) of 'a glorious orange-red colour, in a low-toned yellow, green and brown mottle, the colour having in some cases the striking resemblance to onyx or agate'. The anonymous critic concluded that:

Many of the larger vases and jars are resplendent in all the radiance of the chromatic scale, and the different tints are so well blended that they seem actually to melt in each other, all jarring contrasts and inconsistencies being thus happily avoided. the styles of ornament adopted, whether incised, relieved, or fretwork, contribute also not a little to the general effect, in the majority of cases the flowers and other decorative forms are conventional in style, while in some few instances whimsical and grotesque shapes impart to them a Japanese character.³¹
(figs.254, 255A & B)

DRESSER'S PRODUCTION 1879-1880

The Japanese influence combined with a new and bold aesthetic quality is apparent in Dresser's creations from the year 1879, and particularly in a series of wall papers produced by Jeffrey & Co, named 'Indian', 'Daffodil', 'Flame', 'Fire' and 'Nemo'. The patterns of 'Flame' and 'Fire' probably originated from his investigations of the practice of fire worship

in Japan, and a fire surround with andirons in the Japanese style produced by Coalbrookdale in 1879 reveal similar flame-patterns and sunflowers. This unique creation was certainly designed by Dresser. (figs.256 & 257) The Jeffrey wall papers are all in the subdued and tertiary range of colours which he admired in Japanese wall papers, and 'Indian' in particular incorporates pinks reminiscent of his Japanese kimono, and the Japanese painting of pinks reproduced in his Japanese Ornaments in The British Architect in 1879. (figs.258 & 259) 'Daffodil' displays sprigs of daffodils and chrysanthemum flowers in the Japanese manner, but none of these designs are as strikingly Japanese as his silver and electroplate designs for James Dixon & Co in 1879. (fig.260)

Dresser probably began designing for this company in 1879, but the costing book of that year, which contained Dresser's designs, has disappeared. Fortunately, drawings of these pieces were sent to the V & A in 1952, and Shirley Burry undertook a detailed study of Dresser's creations in 1962. Richard Dennis and John Jesse photographed the Dresser creations in the Dixon costing book for their Dresser exhibition in 1972, and these remain our main source of reference.(fig.142) The designs comprise three tea sets, six tea kettles, and one decanter with production numbers running from 2272 to 2281 and six sugar bowls numbered from 131 to 136. The coffee and tea set were produced in silver but the rest of the designs were manufactured in electroplate, with ebony handles and ivory rings as an insulation between the body and the handle. This detail had been incorporated in a teaset in the Japanese style designed by Dresser for Hukin & Heath in the same year, and such utilitarian details were frequently stressed in his creations.(figs.261)

Perhaps even more remarkable for their period, these designs reflect characteristics of Dresser's previous creations for Elkington and Co. and for Hukin & Heath. Their almost aggressively geometric forms and smooth

finish, as well as angular handles and straight legs, are similar and sketches for the bulbous and the conical tea sets may be found in Dresser's sketch book in the Ipswich museum. (p.34) The striking simplicity and boldness of design utilised in the production of the other tea-kettles and sugar bowls, however have no precedents in prior drawings or designs but they can be readily associated with Japanese metal work imported by Dresser & Holme at the time and with those acquired by the S. Ken. Museum during the 1860s and 1870s (figs.249, 250 & 262) including kettle no.2277, named 'English Japanese' in Dixon's catalogue of 1883, (fig.263) and the wheel-formed kettle on six short feet which probably derived its peculiarity from a Japanese tea-pot sold at Sotheby & Co in July 1879. The Times described it as 'a remarkable wheel-formed teapot, with curiously ornamented handle and spout.'³² (fig.264) The sugar bowls accordingly bring to mind certain Japanese tea vessels and no.131 in particular display a Japanese ornamental pattern.(fig.142) Shirley Bury who recorded 37 Dresser designs in the Dixon books for the years 1879-1882, was particularly impressed with the production processes of these designs, and she noted that 'his large shapes were mostly intended to be spun, with additions in the form of handles and feet and so on, cast in standardised shapes'. (Bury, 1962, p.769)

Elkington & Co. produced a bulbous tea set 10 October 1879, which certainly was designed by Dresser, and incorporates the insulation detail used in the Dixon & Co. and the Hukin & Heath designs of the same year. The incised decoration of birds on branches in the Japanese style is reminiscent of an illustration in Dresser's Principles of Decorative Design, (fig. 101) and a matching tray was produced by Elkington & Co. in the same year. (figs.265 & 266) A number of similar trays in the Japanese manner were created by Elkington & Co. in 1880, and these may also have been designed by Dresser. The broken patterns and bird designs have a strong affinity with patterns incorporated in designs supplied by Dresser to Minton & Co.,

Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee, and to the Bushloe House stained-glass in 1880. A striking tea-set decorated with Japanese diaper patterns was launched by Elkington & Co. in 1881, and these patterns match those praised and illustrated by Dresser. (figs.267 & 268) The introduction of naturalistic Japanese motifs in Dresser's designs reflect an increasing interest in such patterns in the 1880s, which was catered for by Walter Crane, Edward Godwin and Lewis F. Day. The latter in 1879 stressed that the Japanese artists 'seem to have had full liberty in the rendering of the prescribed birds, beasts, or flowers, and to have delighted in his freedom.'³³ Japanese naturalism certainly helped to inspire the naturalistic tendencies in Western art which during the 1880s gained momentum. This allowed for permissible influences in acceptable Western terms, but Dresser underlined that the artists should 'try to acquire the Japanese power of delineating natural forms with simplicity', (1882, p.319) which indeed characterise his more naturalistic motifs.

Ironically, it was Dresser's penchant for such stylised Japanese motifs and not his preference for unadorned shapes that influenced contemporary British designers. The ornamented pieces produced by Elkington and by Hukin & Heath provided models for other silversmiths who plagiarised the style throughout the 1880s and 1890s, but it was only towards the turn of the century that compareably unadorned and simple shapes came into vogue under the influence of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) and Charles Robert Ashbee. (1863-1937)

THE DEMAND FOR FACTUAL INFORMATION ON JAPAN AND ITS ART PRODUCTS

With the increasing popularity of Japanese art in Europe during the 1880s, undercurrents of condescension and disdain in the available literature on the topic was to be replaced with a more rational interpretation. Writers became more interested in concrete descriptions of artistic and political developments in Japan, and this tendency was

encouraged by the foundation of the Nippon Institute under the auspice of the Royal Society of Arts in 1879. The committee consisted of such famous Japan enthusiasts as Sir Rutherford Alcock, Thomas W. Cutler, Frank Dillon, Augustus W. Franks, John Leighton, Edward J. Reed, and Charles Pfoundes as Secretary, with the aims according to the prospectus:

To bring into communication students, inquirers, and admirers of the art, literature, language, folk-lore, &c of Japan, to collect, record and disseminate authentic and interesting information relative to Japan; to encourage the foreigners resident in Japan, and Japanese especially, to collect such material.³⁴

Charles Pfoundes, a sailor who had spent some time in Japan lectured on 'Japan, its Arts and Manufacture' at the inaugural meeting of the Institute in 1879, and subsequently on 'Art in Japan' 7 April 1880. Pfoundes performed with great enthusiasm but with rather limited knowledge, as he admitted himself, and his most important notion was that; 'When the hitherto hidden movements of art-thought of the Japanese is understood, their work will assuredly be better appreciated than it has yet been.'³⁵ It was with this point in view that two other members of the Institute published on the topic in 1880, Augustus Franks's 'Japanese Pottery' in the South Kensington Museum Handbooks, which provided the first scholarly English catalogue on the subject, and Thomas W. Cutler's Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design. Franks's contribution was undoubtedly of genuine value, but Cutler's frequently convey a deplorable condescension and lack of knowledge, stating for example that 'their art has that comparatively childlike character which aims at the pretty and fanciful, rather than at intelligent expression.' (1880, p.86) Cutler, however, made the first systematic attempt to look for an aesthetic principle in the style of design in Japan, but it was not until Dresser published his Japan in 1882 that this was more successfully communicated in Western literature. Three other publications released at the time attempted to offer a

realistic picture of modern Japan derived from personal experiences:

Isabella Bird's Unbeaten Tracks in Japan (1880), Augustus H. Mounsey's The Satsuma Rebellion (1879) and Edward J. Reed's Japan, its History, Traditions and Religions (1880). These sociological works were recommended by Sir Rutherford Alcock in a lengthy article on 'Old and New Japan' published in The Contemporary Review in 1880, but he regretted on the whole that 'Apart from mere gossiping books of travel, recording at best the first impressions of hurried visitors chiefly eager to see as much as possible in the shortest possible time, there are not many serious works to be consulted.' (p.848)

The same lack of seriousness may be observed in the general attitude of Japanese art at the time, and curiously this probably contributed to the advent of Japonism, which in many ways was based on the fascination of a past and distant culture. Factual information about Japanese art was not essential for the adoption of its forms and patterns. On the contrary, the inaccessability and mysticism perceived in Japanese art speeded its appropriation in the West, which at the time accepted art for art's sake without thought for its original or native culture. Dresser and several others warned against this unconscious adaptation of artistic symbols and charactersitics, and instead he asserted that designers should search for the 'Truth, Power, and Knowledge' inherent in every man. In contrast to the aesthetes, Dresser focused on scientific aspects of art and the practical features of artistic work and style, whether English, Indian, Persian or Japanese. He always stressed the didactic value of his designs and writings, and throughout his life continued to train others along the lines of the reformation launched at the School of Design in the 1850s and 1860s.

DRESSER AND THE FURNITURE GAZETTE IN 1880

It was probably this crusading attitude which led him to accept the editorship of The Furniture Gazette in 1880, a post which he held for a

year. This offered him a splendid opportunity of reaching the readers of one of the most popular Victorian art journals, and he republished the series of propositions that first appeared in The Art of Decorative Design, (1880 XIII p.90-92) as well as the doctrines concerning 'Ceiling Ornament' and interior decoration which appeared in a series of six articles entitled 'Art in our Homes'. (1880 XIII) These were also propagated in America in the same year, when The New York Amateur quoted his doctrines on ceiling decorations:

Dr Dresser, the most practical, perhaps, of contemporaneous writers on decorative art, is a strong advocate of ceiling ornamentation. Indeed he goes so far as to say: "If one part of a room only can be decorated, let that part be the ceiling".³⁶

A number of Dresser's prior designs for ceiling patterns, wall decorations and furniture were illustrated in The Furniture Gazette during his editorial year. Most of the furniture however, he informed had been made before 1873,³⁷ and The Cabinet Maker in 1880 pointed out that they conflicted with the doctrines laid down by Dresser in his article on 'Art Furniture' in 1870, and hence were certainly designed before this time.³⁸ None of the pieces seem to be influenced by Japanese models, however, but the few contemporary pieces shown, which were produced by Chubb & Co, reveal a greater stylistic influence. Dresser stated that he was only able to design furniture for one firm, with whom he was currently engaged, and this must have been Chubb & Co.³⁹ (figs.269 & 21) Amongst other designs of Dresser's featured were the Minton & Co frog, crane and dog friezes, a so called 'flat treatment of landscape' which was inspired by W.R.O. Peabody's poetry and by Japanese depictions of Mount Fuji (fig. 270), and finally a range of advertisements for Chubb & Co locks, Japanese artefacts from Dresser & Holme, and for Linthorpe Art Pottery, some of which were in the Japanese style. (figs. 249, 250 & 251 & 254-255) A dado pattern from Bushloe House in Wigston Magna, Leicestershire, which Dresser decorated at

the time was also included in The Furniture Gazette in 1880, and provides an impression of this long since destroyed interior.

BUSHLOE HOUSE 1879-1880

Bushloe House has been decorated throughout in a similar spirit to the ornament shown, and much of the furniture has been specially designed for this mansion.⁴⁰ (fig.271)

The house belonged to Dresser's, solicitor Hirman B. Owston (1830-1905), and it is now used as the office of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. We have already referred to the tower-like facade with elongated windows, pronounced bracketing, fir-tree frieze and stained glass in the Anglo-Japanese style, which Dresser added to the old house in 1879-1880, but of the interiors only the entrance hall remains intact. This displays a stencilled dado and frieze in the Egyptian style, (fig.272) surmounted by a heavy wooden roof with stained-glass windows. Evidently, the house was decorated in the eclectic style favoured by Dresser, and the library probably in Persian style, judging from the Furniture Gazette illustration. Two other rooms incorporated stained glass windows in the Japanese manner similar to those created by Dresser for Allangate Mansion, and these interiors were probably in the Anglo-Japanese style. The stylised borders around the more naturalistic central panels of these windows are much like the ones at Allangate, and the butterflies and birds amongst the branches as well as the water-fowl and fish panels bring to mind themes favoured by Dresser in his creations for Minton & Co and for Josiah Wedgwood & Sons. (figs. 273-78) The three windows in the staircase room display similar borders and panels of birds amongst flowers and branches, (figs. 215 & 279) and the panel with two birds in particular was also adapted for textiles produced by Tootall, Broadhurst & Lee in 1880. (fig. 204) The designs reveal a certain tendency towards naturalism which is apparent in Dresser's patterns of the 1880s onwards, and notably in wallpapers created in 1880 for Potters of Darwen, Lightbown & Aspinall, and for John Line & Co. Alan

v. Sugden listed Dresser as a member of the designer staff of these companies, (1925, pp.217, 219, 224) and recognisable Dresser designs have recently come to light. (figs. 280, 281, 282A & B, 283A & B) They display his typical stylised patterns of birds and plants combined with frets and diapers in the style of Japanese appliqué or layered designs, but also a growing interest in the more naturalistic floral patterns of the Japanese. These had achieved particular popularity in Japan during the Meiji era, and were published in the famous 'Shoe' (pictures) collections of pattern reference books, under the name of 'Sarasa' (name of pattern), called 'sarastic floral patterns' in the West. These patternbooks reached Europe in the 1880s and inserted a marked influence on the entire pattern-making industry.⁴¹ The predilection for trailing floral patterns in the Japanese 'sarastic' style was also illustrated by Dresser in his Japan, (figs. 284 & 285) and formed the basis for a similar design for John Line & Co from about 1880 as well as his subsequent creation for Jean Züber & Cie of Rixheim (figs.286 & 287) The owl panel in the Bushloe House window is reminiscent of Dresser's cabinet created in 1879, and this piece of furniture was in fact probably made for the house. (figs. 215 & 239)

Some of Dresser's furniture from the house has emerged recently all of which is in the Anglo-Japanese ebonised style. Two wardrobes incorporating Japanese motifs of respectively owls and frogs painted in red and green lacquer technique, and the vigorous frog-motifs bring to mind the earthenware frogs brought back from Japan by Dresser and support his daughter's comment about him 'having a thing about frogs'. (figs.288 & 193) The furniture which has no registered maker's mark was probably produced by Chubb & Co. for whom Dresser was designing furniture.

THE ART FURNISHERS ALLIANCE 1880-1883

The owner of Bushloe House, Hiram B. Owston is listed as a shareholder

in the Art Furnishers Alliance Company which was founded by Dresser 15 June 1880, and the register of the company which was dated 10 February 1882 additionally mentioned several of Dresser's business associates including George H. Chubb, Edward Cope (lace manufacturer), John Harrison (of Linthorpe Art Pottery), Sir Edward Lee, director of Alexandra Palace Company, James Dixon & Sons, William Cooke (wall papers), Dresser & Holme, Arthur Liberty, Frederick Walton (muralis and linoleum), and the Tees Bottle Company of Middlesbrough.⁴²

Dresser, Chubb, Cope, Harrison and Lee were appointed as joint Directors with Dresser as Artistic Director and Sir Edward Lee as Managing Director. The company, according to its prospectus, was founded with the intention 'of supplying all kinds of artistic house furnishing material, including furniture, carpets, wall decorations, hangings, pottery, table glass, silversmith's wares, hardware, and whatever is necessary to our household requirements',⁴³ and these goods were mainly designed by Dresser and supplied by the manufacturers mentioned above as well as by John Brinton & Co, Benham & Froud, Hukin & Heath, Jeffrey & Co, Lightbown and Aspinall, Scott Cuthbertson, and Arthur Sanderson & Sons.⁴⁴ Dresser is recorded as having been active as a designer for all of these firms, but this is the first time that Lightbown & Aspinall and Arthur Sanderson & Sons have been connected with Dresser. Alan Sugden mentioned Dresser designs produced by Lightbown and Aspinall & Co (1925, p.217), and a letter from Sugden to Peter Floud of the V & A dated 22 March 1952 refers to Dresser's business engagements with his grandfather Henry Lightbown in the years 1893-1899:

That tranquil "counting house" with its smaller private office was always affected as if a cyclone had visited them. Even the most matter of fact ledger clerk was aware that a personality was present, one who could strike the humdrum everyday existence with the elixir of magic.

My grandfather, a small autocrat, preferred the conventional routine of buying designs to being told what he must buy and what

he could not have. Dresser never posted designs on approval, he attended to their disposal in person and was very particular who he supplied. I believe Potters and Lightbowns alone were so favoured outside London.

I particularly remember one of the last occasions when the great man had returned from one of his frequent visits abroad to find inspiration, this time from Egypt, when most of his subjects were based on the Scarab, treated decoratively and conventionally. Lightbowns were permitted to buy some half-dozen of these (at what my father felt was an outrageous price) and I can still dimly see the strange shapes they presented to the wall paper world of the day. I remember they were not successful in a commercial sense. My recollection of Dr. Dresser's appearance is not clear, but there was a₄₅ tail-coat, a jove-like manner, a voice of authority and an aura.

Unfortunately none of the designs mentioned here have come to light, but the letter reveals a fascinating picture of Dresser's personality, and testify to his contacts with Lightbown and Aspinall & Co. Unfortunately no such evidence can be traced in the Arthur Sanderson & Son archives. Their logbooks and records for the period are incomplete and only mention Dresser's designs between 1900 and 1904 but it seems likely that he began designing for the company during his engagement with the Art Furnishers Alliance between 1880 and 1883. Despite Dresser's artistic directorship and impressive range of directorial talent, the Alliance was a short lived venture which went into liquidation 11 June 1883, with legal proceedings ending 11 January 1886.⁴⁶

Other companies such as Morris, Marshall & Faulkner & Co. (Morris & Co. in 1875), Jackson & Graham, J.C. Crace & Co. and Gillow & Co. had attempted to bring harmony to British interiors, but The Furniture Gazette in their review of the Art Furnishers Alliance mentioned that such firms lacked 'a central controlling power at work whose influence and direction shall be supreme'. This guiding hand was provided by Dresser, whom they credited with the advancement in taste that had taken place over recent years:

In our houses we no longer give place to chairs with bowed legs and excessive upholstery, but seek for furniture of good construction and artistic shape, and further, we have found that

furniture can only look well when seen against a suitably decorated wall, and upon a carpet which yields pleasure by subdued harmonies of colour. Indeed, that furniture, the wall-decorations, and the carpet must join with the curtains and all that the room contains in producing a general and harmonious whole.⁴⁷

When the company opened its premises in New Bond Street in May 1881, The Artist and Journal of Home Culture, praised Dresser's efforts in similar terms:

The critical eye is that of Dr. C. Dresser, and without recognising the possibility, or desirability, of a pope in the matters of taste, we may unreservedly say that there is no one in whose knowledge and taste we would rather trust in regard to such matters.⁴⁸

The Cabinet Maker however was less impressed and thought that Dresser should keep to his Japan interests: 'Dr. Dresser we have heard of and particularly accepted as an authority on Japanese art in the popular sense'. (1880, p.46) Evidently some people by this time had come to appreciate this aspect of his talents at the expense of his design work, but the same magazine welcomed the opening of the company's shop with great acclaim noting that:

Strong tones are thrown one against the other with singularly good effect and given evidence of a perfect mastery of the subtleties of colour. Dr. Dresser's long study of the Oriental school and his "Owen Jones" creed are guarantees that in this department he is not to be excelled.⁴⁹

Three samples of the furniture exhibited were illustrated by The Cabinet Maker and described as 'impressive' and 'with rails carried from top of the right down to the back rail of legs'.⁵⁰ This is reminiscent of Dresser's description of a similar chair of a 'Japanese character' at the London International Exhibition in 1862, and the simplicity and constructional play with solid and void in these chairs do appear to have been influenced by Japanese models. The Cabinet Maker was also impressed with the female shop assistants who were 'attired in aesthetic colours too, a sort of "greenery-yallery" dress, ruby sash and mob cap to harmonize'.⁵¹ The passion for 'greenery-yallery' colours amongst the aesthetes, evidently

also embraced ladies' fashion by the 1880s, and the broad sashes with large butterfly knots indeed reflect the admiration for Japanese dresses and sashes ('obies'). According to Elisabeth Aslin, similar costumes were designed by W.S. Gilbert (1831-1911) and Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) in Liberty fabrics for their comic opera Patience or Bunthorne's Bride which satirised the Anglo-Japanese fashions and was the theatrical hit of the season both in London and in New York in 1881. (1969, p.125-126)

The Art Furnishers Alliance prospectus was published in leaflet form in 1881 with 'Preparatory Remarks' by Sir Edward Lee and 114 of Dresser's principles abstracted from earlier publications. The company's stationery, designed by Dresser, was in the Japanese style, and in retailing goods from Dresser & Holme's they certainly catered for the 'Japanese rage' or 'mania', which The Cabinet Maker thus described in 1880: (fig.289)

For some years the Japanese tone has prevailed, and a very good tone too. The rage will die out, as a rage, but the quaint, quietly gay, busily dexterous, and in an eminent degree reconciling qualities of the Japanese art have taken so strong a hold on the true discernment of Englishmen that such booms are not likely to take flight and disappear in our time, or in that of our children's children....

Possibly we have overdone the Japanese mania, with penny fans and coarse china, but we have got rid of a good deal of formality and overdoing of symmetry in our drawing rooms. The freedom of the present day is much more agreeable, for we can gather around us all the pleasant souvenirs of our holiday travels, and all the pretty gifts given us by friends, and rejoice in the unsymmetrical effect of the new style which Japan has taught us.⁵²

J.W. Tonks expressed similar views in a series of articles about 'Japanese Decorative Art' published in The Furniture Gazette in 1881:

The essence of the modern rage for specimens of Japanese art consists, I am convinced, in the complete revolt of their producers from the monotony and uniformity, the symmetry and repetition, which characterise so many of the art products of Europe

and referring particularly to those 'natural wall papers' which Dresser had criticised already in 1862 Tonks said that:

The very difference between such wall-papers and those which we now have derived, consciously or otherwise, from Japanese

motives, shows how strong a hold that new art has taken on the public mind, and what a complete revolution it has worked in modern taste.

This reforming effect of the Japonism movement was consolidated by several writers on the decorative art such as Constance C. Harrison in her Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes (1881), Mrs M.E. Haweis in The Art of Decoration (1881), and Robert W. Edis in his Decoration and Furniture of Town Houses (1881). The spate of books and periodicals dealing with furnishing and interior decoration thus helped to promote the precepts of Japonism, which liberated the artist and home decorator alike, from the rigid naturalism and historical styles. Dresser and other artists championed creative freedom which helped to universalise design principles and focus them upon the intrinsic qualities of art rather than upon its referential functions.

DRESSER'S ARTISTIC CREATIVITY 1881-1882

This may be most strikingly observed in the bold designs included in Dresser's account-book for 1881, which were illustrated in Pevsner's article. (1937,p.185) Japanese, as well as Phoenician, Rhodian and possibly Peruvian shapes are combined in a non-objective and formalist way which may suggest a precursor of modernism. The 16 toast racks, 6 claret jugs, tea and coffee set, and spoons are annotated James Dixon & Co, and reveal the simple and angular or broken lines which characterised his designs in the late 1870s. This may also be true for the patterns for Edward & Cope's lace in Dresser's account book, and the stationery for Deykin & Sons appears to have been in the Japanese style similar to that which he had designed for The Art Furnishers Alliance in 1880. The 41 designs for Linthorpe Art Pottery reflect the styles mentioned above, and this also accounts for the 21 designs for goblets, vases and jugs that were probably prepared for the 'Clutha Glass' of James Couper & Sons, which had been launched in about 1880. There has been some controversy as to the dating of Dresser's first 'Clutha Glass' but his daughter Nellie provided the date

of 1880 when she donated a sample of it to the V & A museum in 1952. This would seem to be correct.⁵⁴ (fig.290, 291 & 292)

We do not know for certain whether all these designs were in fact manufactured, but some of them definitely were produced by the companies mentioned. This certainly accounts for all the designs of James Dixon & Sons who in the same year also went to produce mounts for Linthorpe pottery salad bowls, (fig. 293) and a daring tea-set no.2294 of a conical shape. (fig.294) The conical or pyramidal form occurs in Dresser's sketch book and also in an outstanding Old Hall Earthenware Co. jug, registered with the Patent Office 10 August 1881. (fig.295) This company was founded in 1861, and Dresser is known to have supplied table ware designs and other jugs for them in 1884. (fig.296) The eccentric jug dated 1881 was almost certainly created by him, and reflects the play with geometrical shapes which he had admired in Japanese art-manufactures.

A range of three double bowls, a meat dish with cover, a spoon-warmer, an egg coddler, a letter rack and a toast rack in electroplate produced by Hukin & Heath in 1881, have been attributed to Dresser, on the basis of their strong similarities with the earlier range of Dresser designs. The straight feet and angular ebony handles in the Japanese manner are the same, and the smooth surface and innovative shapes seem to be in accordance with his prior creations. (figs.297 & 298) An Elkington & Co. tea set no.16611 designed by Dresser, was produced in 1881, and it is almost identical to the spherical James Dixon & Sons tea set from 1879, but the omission of the lid finial probably satisfied Dresser's creed of creative originality. (fig.299)

William Cooke & Co. registered some of Dresser's most beautiful designs for friezes and wallpapers on 20 May and 20 August 1881. The frieze incorporates stylised flowers and butterflies in the Japanese manner combined with palm trees that resemble the *Urania* palm illustrated in The

Art of Decorative Design (fig.65) and his 'Palm' paperhanging created for Charles Knowles & Co. in 1894. (fig. 300, 301 & 302) The William Cooke & Co. wallpaper include Japanese cherry blossoms on a light green ground, similar to the pattern which covered the frontispiece of Tiffany's catalogue of Dresser's Collection of Japanese Curios and Articles. (figs. 210 & 303) Dresser's wallpapers had by this time received international acclaim, and the American writer Constance Harrison quoted his principles on wall decorations, saying that 'Those of Dresser and Morris are familiar in our homes'.(1881, p.136)

In the Summer of 1882 Dresser launched the most daring solution to the eternal question of 'What shall we do with our Walls?', the title of Clarence Cooke's popular book in 1880. The Art Furnishers Alliance exhibited a series of three wallpapers made of plain sugar paper and discreetly ornamented by Dresser. The Artist and Journal of Home Culture was pleased to note the arrival of this eccentric alternative to the more elaborate papers of the day:

At the Art Furnishers Alliance, an exhibition has been organised with a view to showing that really artistic wall decorations may be executed in the cheapest possible materials⁵⁵ The materials are brown paper, blue paper, and yellow paper.

The same journal in order to encourage its readers revealed that the plain brown paper scheme had even been adapted for a nobleman's dinningroom probably that of Lord George Hayter Chubb (1849-1946) for whom Dresser had designed an Anglo-Japanese set of diningroom furniture.⁵⁶ (fig.209) Dresser as we know had always promoted unobtrusive wallpapers, and his latest creation was evidently inspired by the brown papers used in Japanese sliding-doors or 'Shoji', which separate the various rooms of the house and were admired by Dresser during his stay in Japan. (1882, p.151)

Dresser's invention was still remembered after his death in 1905, when The Journal of Decorative Art praised him as the creator of a modern style

in wall papers:

Some 22 years ago Dr. Dresser surprised the British public by covering the walls of some rooms with what was known as sugar papers...Dr Dresser's action was only an intelligent anticipation of the taste of the past few years, plus a very keen apprehension of what intrinsically was a very artistic and suitable medium. The experiment or "fad" of 22 years ago is today "un fait accompli", and the charming and varied plain surfaces which the enterprise of our manufacturers places at the disposal of the decorator is a feature well worth of commendation.⁵⁷

Evidently the furniture exhibited with these wall papers at The Art Furnishers Alliance in 1882, were equally ahead of their time:

A recent visit to the premises of the Art Furnisher's Alliance leads to the observation that here are some of the freshest and boldest things in furniture which are being at present produced. Dr. Dresser who is the appointed designer, shows an especially varied and robust invention in chairs. In no similar show rooms, perhaps, is there so little of the commonplace and merely imitative. Against the actually false and base there is a guarantee in the censorship which is exercised over the admission of articles.⁵⁸

Clearly this was the ebonised Anglo-Japanese furniture produced by Chubb & Co. in 1880, (figs. 21 & 269) and to fulfil 'the essentially novel' impression of the Art Furnishers Alliance in 1882 Dresser also included his recent production of glass as well as of metal marquetry in the Japanese manner for Benham & Froud and for Richard Perry & Sons. The Cabinet Maker heralded the arrival of this new ware:

A new kind of glass of English manufacture, which in point of artistic merit and originality, promises to rival the finest examples of the old Venetian glass-blowers. The specimens on view will be large and important decorative works, which are in no degree imitative, but have a character essentially original as regards design and treatment, and are more imposing than the examples of glass-blowing with which we have hitherto been familiar. This exhibition, I understand will be followed by a display of works in iron,⁵⁹ brass, and mixed metals adapted to household requirements.

We have already speculated about the manufacturers of Dresser's early glass creations in connection with the designs included in Principles of Decorative Design, and mentioned the Tees Bottle Co. of Middlesbrough and Sowerby Art Glass as potential producers in addition to James Couper & Sons who in about 1880 began producing their 'Clutha Glass' after Dresser's

designs. They may all have been exhibited at the Art Furnishers Alliance in 1882, and we know for certain that this was the case with the Sowerby Art Glass. The recent exhibition catalogue of Sowerby glass has stated that 'Much of it of extraordinary shape with clouded, bubbled and streaked decoration (is) similar to that associated with the designs of Dr. Christopher Dresser for James Couper & Sons' "Clutha Glass"'.⁶⁰ (figs.117 & 118)

Shapes, colours, texture and the considerable height of up to 50 cm., do indeed correspond. Dresser's 'Clutha Glass' was also retailed by Liberty & Co. and was frequently marked with Liberty's trademark, the lotus flower, and 'designed by C.D.'. (figs.304 & 304) Dresser's designs contain bubbles and striae commonly found in Venetian and Persian glass, and the wide range of colours such as yellow, amber, brown, blue, pink and green were mixed in a soft delicate palate according to Dresser's principles. A certain effect of 'Objects trouvés' was obtained by an apparently faulty and irregular disposition of colour, frequently touched with aventurine, and iridescent. We have noted that a similar Persian glass was examined by Dresser in Japan, (fig.180) and some of the Clutha shapes were modelled on Japanese vases of metal and ceramic. (figs. 306, 307, 308 & 309)

This is also applicable to the kettles, flower pots, candlesticks and trays which Dresser designed for Benham & Froud from 1882 onwards. Some of these works executed in various metals are based on Japanese prototypes retailed by Londos & Co. and by Dresser & Holme at the time. (figs. 139, 141, 207, 208, 223) A Japanese candlestick in Dresser's collection served as model for a Benham & Froud creation, and contemporary photographs preserved in the Chubb & Son archive show similar designs. (figs. 310 & 311) Two boudoir safes, probably from Dresser's designs, were manufactured by Chubb & Son in the same year and The Artist described these as being 'In Japanese style, with panels of papier maché ornaments of bronze, the

butterfly and heron being utilised as covers for keyholes, and a tripod stand being fitted with small shelves for the display of china'.⁶¹

Photographs of these highly original boudoir safes have been preserved in the Chubb & Son Archives, and one incorporates a front-articulation like a Japanese lattice with panels in the Japanese style, similar to those included in the mahogany dinning room furniture which Dresser had designed for Lord George Hayter Chubb at the time. (fig.312) Decorative panels of this kind combined with large quadrangular structures in cabinet doors and predominant metal hinges became a characteristic of Anglo-Japanese furniture, and it did much to divert designers from the elaborate carving and inlay which had been so prevalent a feature in Western furniture making for centuries. The Furniture Gazette in an article on 'Modern English Furniture and Decoration' published in 1882, stated that

What was most noticeable in it is its greater simplicity, a larger variety, and a departure from the rigid symmetry of former days,...and a suddenly awakened interest in the products of Japanese art, have resulted in producing an immense multiplicity in the forms of chairs and tables. Wooden chairs are now straight and square.⁶²

Even more marked responses to Japanese art might be observed in the new range of Liberty textiles launched as the 'Lotus Fabrics' in 1882, some of which were certainly designed by Dresser. His daughter Nellie remembered that he had supplied a few designs for Arthur Liberty in 1882, and that her brother Louis on his return from Japan in the same year joined the Liberty furnishing department.⁵³ Christopher Dresser certainly contributed to the creation of the Liberty style, and Guy Bentley retrospectively recalled him as 'an early business friend of the head of our firm, and being always ready to talk, he was extremely interesting company'.⁶⁴

In 1882, the Royal Society of Art arranged its first exhibition of 'Modern English Pottery' and gave further impetus to the art pottery

fashion which had been launched by Henry Doulton, Minton & Co. and by the Linthorpe Art Pottery. The latter according to The Graphic figured prominently amongst the exhibits of Brown-Westhead, Moore & Co., Henry Doulton & Co., Minton & Co., Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, and Worcester;

The great feature of the exhibition is a magnificent collection of the new Linthorpe Art Pottery, which more than any or even all the rest, emphasises the great advantage which we Britishers have made in these matters during recent years.⁶⁵

The Journal of the Society of Art was equally enthusiastic saying that:

The large display of specimens of Linthorpe ware in vases, tazzas, flowerpots, card-trays, fruit-dishes, & C. must now be noticed. These are varied in shape and tone of colour, but all have a rich glaze...Some of the shapes have been derived from Egyptian, Moorish, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and other examples. Considerable picturesqueness may be perceived in the form of the handles of some of the objects. Low-toned reds, mottled olives, brown and yellows, are found in great variety. An attempt has also been made to reproduce the highly-priced Sang-de-Boeuf.⁶⁶

A similar collection of Linthorpe Pottery was exhibited at the Manchester Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition in the same year, and was greatly praised in The Cabinet Maker.⁶⁷

By then the potters industry had received constant stimulus from the widespread distribution of Japanese and other Oriental ceramics, which in turn stimulated a general interest in these products. Leaders of fashion such as Princess Louise and Oscar Wilde had contributed much to this craze and when lecturing in America in 1882, Wilde encouraged the Cincinnati potters to take inspiration from Japanese potters, whom he described as being 'in the possession of the secret of beauty'.⁶⁸ Charles Pfouder expressed similar views in his articles on 'Japanese Art, its Teachings and Meaning, and the Follies and Fallacies of the Japanesque', which also signalled the danger of indiscriminate adaptation of Japanese models:

For all practical purposes of the English decorator, the Japanese designs would, if intelligently utilized, be found to be an inexhaustible mine that would be suggestive to any of our designers, who has some moderate amount of real artistic genius, and who would learn a lesson from the Japanese.⁶⁹

DRESSER'S LECTURE ON 'JAPANESE ART WORKMANSHIP' IN GLASGOW 1882

This warning indeed was appropriate by the 1880s when the Japan mania had developed into a nonsensical fashion for everything Japanese, which inspired uneducated designers to produce whimsical 'Japanesque' creations. The indiscriminate importation of all kinds of goods from Japan had also converted many homes into mere curiosity shops. Dresser criticized this fashion when he lectured upon 'Japanese Art Workmanship' at the Glasgow Corporation Galleries in April in 1882, which according to The Furniture Gazette was attended by a large audience:

Dr Dresser first dealt with the peculiarities of Japanese art, showing the manner in which it has been moulded and influenced by the two prevailing systems of religion - Shintoism and Buddhism - of the Japanese...Dr. Dresser finally gave a number of interesting particulars regarding the various manufactures, dwelling especially on the process in making the cloisonné enamels, lacquers, and the various classes of pottery and porcelain. (XVII (1882) pp.223-224)

Dresser is recorded as having lectured on the same topic in Liverpool when en route to Glasgow, and it appears that his lecture was given in conjunction with the opening of a large 'Loan Exhibition of Oriental Art' in Glasgow. This contained Japanese objects from the S. Ken. Museum as well as from the Duke of Edinburgh's collection, notably 1,150 samples of Japanese art products received as part of an exchange from Tokyo National Museum.⁷⁰

This collection has frequently been mistaken for the one which Dresser mentions as having sent to Glasgow on his return from Japan. (Yamada, 1980, p.291) However, Robert Balfour, a local collector, is recorded as having lent the objects that illustrated Dresser's lecture and these are more likely to have originated from his Japan tour.

THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF DRESSER'S JAPAN, ITS ARCHITECTURE, AND ART MANUFACTURE

It appears that Dresser lectured on the subjects presented in his

Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art Manufacture published in December in the same year. The book as we have noted was received with great acclaim and the reviewers were particularly intrigued by his passages on Shinto and Buddhist aesthetics:

There are many passages in Japan which have a deeper interest than lies on the surface, from the light that they throw on that very ancient, if not most ancient, form of nature worship, the survival of which in Japan is known by the name of Shinto. And in urging that in architecture and in other arts may be found as distinct memorials of prehistoric man as in language itself, the chapter on analogies and symbols, if not so wholly original as the author supposes, is full of interest.⁷¹

The anonymous critic in The Edinburgh Review regretted however, that colour illustrations were lacking in Dresser's book. He pointed out that Thomas W. Cutler's A Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design (1880) and James Bowes Japanese Marks and Seals (1882) would provide good companion guides to Dresser's chapter on the potters' industry and concluded that:

We trust that the volumes of which we have thus given some account are calculated to whet, rather than to satisfy, the curiosity of the English artist and artificer as to the wonders of the Japanese art. We are glad to believe that each of the writers we have cited aims at something higher⁷² than the mere catering to a fashionable and fleeting taste.

Dresser's book represents the first attempt in Western literature to address the art-manufactures and architecture of Japan as a coherent and full-fledged subject, and this was particularly acknowledged by the critic of The New York Times whose article, 'Wonders seen in Japan, Dr. Dresser's unrivalled and curious experiences', emphasised that:

Accordingly, although every part of his book is valuable, the architectural chapters of it, and especially the illustrations they contain, are inestimable. Japanese architecture is scarcely understood at all in Europe as yet and unfortunately its ancient masterpieces receive at present so little respect from the Japanese Government itself, with its mania for modernisation of⁷³ national life, that they are rapidly falling into fatal decay.

This positive reception of Dresser's book was certainly influential for American architects who looked to the Orient for inspiration, and who in the 1890s embraced Japanese architecture. The subject as we know had been

entirely neglected by European writers. Sir Rutherford Alcock, for instance, had given rise to the myth that;

The Japanese have no architecture. They live on a volcanic soil, the surface of which is affected with tertian ague, thus denying the first conditions of the builder, a stable foundation, and imposing a law of construction fatal to all architectural pretensions or excellence. (1863, I⁷, p.279)

This fatal lack of cultural insight dominated Western opinion on the topic down the decades, and William Morris as late as 1893 maintained that; 'The Japanese have no architectural, and therefore no decorative instinct'. (Morris, 1893, pp.22-38) In this context Dresser's book stands apart from the mainstream of British response to Japanese architecture, and the preface stressed that he aimed to do 'something towards revealing the fact that Japan has had a great architectural history'.

American critics and architects seem to have been more favourably disposed towards this theory and we have already alluded to the concurring views expressed by Ernest Fenollosa and Edward S. Morse. Morse's book Japanese Homes and their Surroundings (1886) presented the first attempt to succeed Dresser's work in correcting the erroneous assumptions of a generation of writers. Morse may well have been influenced by the favourable reception of Dresser's book in America. Both writers dealt at length with the important use of bracketing in Japanese architecture, and the houses of Green & Green in California in 1908 and Frank Lloyd Wright in Minnesota in 1912-14 bear a striking resemblance to illustrations in Dresser's book. (figs.314A & B) These American architects together with Henry V. Van Holst and Walter Burley Griffin had been subjected to the influence of Japanese architecture in the 1890s, and they certainly derived many of their ideas from the publications of Dresser and Morse, which remained unrivalled for more than half a century.

Dresser's work was well received in the major art periodicals of the day and The Furniture Gazette in particular stressed the fact that he was

the first Western art theorist and designer to publish a scholarly treatment of the subject:

Japanese manufactures have, moreover, been largely patronised in this and other countries, and some of their distinguishing characteristics have been copied or adapted in connection with different branches of British industry. As regards the manufacture of furniture, for instance, designs à la Japonaise have for some time past been in great favour. In response to the demand for information on everything that relates to Japan, a literature on the subject has sprung up, and has helped to throw considerable light upon a variety of subjects, such as literature, the religion, the philosophy etc., of the great island empire. To the one subject of paramount interest to designers and craftsmen (i.e. the Arts and Manufactures of Japan) there has thus far, however, been but scant justice done by English writers and travellers, who as a rule, have lacked the special training without which their observations on such matters would have been valueless. A volume that supplies this long-felt want is, however, now before us in the form of a handsome octavo of 480 pages, entitled Japan, its Architecture, Art, and Art-Manufactures. The author Dr. Dresser, is well known as a specialist in connection with architecture and decoration, and it is this fact which gives⁷⁴ exceptional value to the observations embodied in this work.

Recent research by scholars such as Klaus Berger (1980, p.107), Toshio Watanabe (1983, p.200), Chisaburo Yamada (1976, p.150), Toshio Yokoyama (1982), and Joe Earle have consolidated this view, and the latter in dealing with the lack of British scholarship has cited Dresser as 'an outstanding exception to this striking example of cultural blindness.' (1986, pp.864-73)

DECLINING FORTUNES AND NEW CREATIONS 1883-1885

In 1883 Dresser moved from his large house in London to Wellesley Lodge in Sutton, probably due to a declining fortune and failing health. In Japan he had excused the delay in publication for the book as being caused by 'a long and painful illness' and this was probably also the reason for him leaving Dresser & Holme, as well as Londos & Co and the Linthorpe Art Pottery in 1882-83. This may explain the failure of the Art Furnishers Alliance which was liquidated in May 1883 but The Studio Magazine in an anonymous article about Dresser released in 1898 in addition hinted

at another reason for its closure:

Perhaps partly owing to the fact that it was before its time. For it was alone in its mission in addressing a popular audience. It is true that Morris & Co, were known to a few, and that one or two manufacturers of beautiful things for the house could be found by searching, but no window in a popular thoroughfare was supporting the movement destined to assume such large proportions later. Liberty's at the time was almost entirely a Japanese ware-house, and the ordinary upholsterer, ironmonger, or other furnishing tradesmen kept little, if anything, that was in harmony with the new ideals in domestic appointments.⁷⁵

The Art Furnishers Alliance evidently provided the clearest response to the new ideals advocated by Dresser and other artists, and it is interesting to note that the venture may have appeared too avant garde for its time. This did not deter Dresser from continuing his revolt against convention and stale design.

One important contemporary leader of fashion, Arthur Liberty recognised Dresser's potential, commissioning designs from Dresser in 1882, and in 1883 organising his own company much after the pattern of the Art Furnishers Alliance of which he had been shareholder. Mervyn Levy in his recent Liberty Style has stated that 'Arthur Liberty's awareness of the need for change derived partly, at least, from his close friendship with Christopher Dresser'. (1986, p.39) This is certainly true, for when Liberty's Metalware and Jewellery department was opened in 1883, one of the main attractions was Dresser's 'Kardofan Candlestick in Liberty Art Colours'. This innovative design which was probably designed for retailing at Liberty's in 1883, was produced by Richard Perry & Sons, and consisted of two hemispherical shapes joined with a curved handle with bamboo-like mounts in the Japanese style. (fig.315) It was painted in aesthetic colours such as blue, green, yellow, red and turquoise, and was sold in quantities at Liberty's prefiguring as it did the simplicity and purity of form that gave rise to the Liberty Style in the 1890s. Adrian Tilbrook has suggested that Dresser in the 1880s also indirectly asserted his influence through a former student Archibald Knox (1864-1933) who designed much of

Liberty's original 'Cymric Silver' and 'Tudric Pewter' from the late 1890s onward. (Tilbrook, 1976, pp.16-17) Knox also frequently produced mounts for the Clutha glass retailed by Liberty & Co at the time, and some of these pieces were certainly designed by Dresser marked with the acid etched Lotus flower Liberty trademark and 'Designed by C.D.'

A new range of brass and copper creations designed by Dresser for Richard Perry & Sons in October-November 1883, may well have been retailed by Liberty's as well. These incorporate the hemispherical shapes of the 'Kardofan candlestick' and the angular handles in the Japanese style, often repeating the Japanese shapes produced by James Dixon & Sons and by Benham & Froud. (fig.316) The latter company produced a number of coalboxes from Dresser's designs in 1883, and they all combine simplicity with a functional form, an intrinsic feature of Dresser's style. Mervyn Levy has underlined that this particular characteristic of Dresser's work influenced the Liberty designers. (1986, p.35) and it was probably equally important for Charles R. Ashbee (1863-1942) who in 1882 had founded the 'Guild of Handicraft', and launched another alternative to contemporary metalware. His biographer Allan Crawford has stressed that:

These wares have earned Ashbee a wider reputation, they, more than any other of his designs, have made him a part of the genealogy of the Modern Movement, reaching out on the one hand to the radical metalwork of Christopher Dresser, and on the other to the novelty of Art Nouveau...The comparison with Dresser is apt, for both men designed silver table-wares simpler than most trade work, proud of their plain surfaces and evident construction; but Dresser was thinking of semi-industrial processes and of geometry, Ashbee of gentle, traditional shapes and the skills of craftsmen. To a modern eye both Dresser and Ashbee seem to stand apart from the work of their contemporaries; but they were not necessarily alike for all that. (1985, p.343)

Ashbee although firmly rooted in the traditions of the Arts and Crafts Movement was certainly indebted to Dresser, and this is probably also true of another craftsman William Arthur Benson (1854-1924) who in 1880 had been encouraged by William Morris to establish a workshop in Hammersmith and who in 1887 opened showrooms in Bond Street. Benson's brass and copper objects

and lighting fixtures indeed bear a striking resemblance to some of Dresser's designs but no direct contact between the two designers has been traced. Benson's main source of inspiration however was the Arts and Crafts Movement which during the 1880s gained momentum, and established itself in the foundation of 'The Century Guild' 'The Art Workers Guild', and 'The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society', respectively in 1882, 1884 and 1888. Urging a return to medieval standards and craftsmanship, these designers were fundamentally opposed to Dresser who continued promoting designs for mass production and industry. Looking to Japan rather than to Medieval England, Dresser managed to liberate his artistic creativity from historicist attitudes at a time when this was still an anathema to the Arts and Crafts movement. It was not until the next ten years, following the death of William Morris in 1896, that these designers purified their artistic vernacular in the manner of Dresser, Liberty and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who continued to draw inspiration from Japanese art throughout their lives.

Lecturing on 'Some features of Japanese Architecture and Ornament' at the Architectural Association on 5 December 1884, Dresser again stressed the importance of Shinto and Buddhism, and he dealt at length with the artistic perception of Shinto's most sacred symbol, the mirror:

The idea that everything a man did should be capable of being revealed to the world, just as his own image was revealed to him in the mirror. Shinto comprised also the worship of the sun, fire, and of heroes. Demanding that everything a man did should be capable of being revealed, it enjoyed the most perfect workmanship, and that nothing should be "scamped". All were familiar with the perfect finish of Japanese articles. (1884, p.384)

Dresser had explained his motto 'Truth, Beauty and Power' in similar terms, and purist attitudes of Japanese artists evidently inspired his own creativity. The lecture chiefly presented a condensed treatment of Dresser's chapter on architecture in Japan but he added a certain attraction to it by including a number of photographs that

'showed all the details, and displayed the internal construction of the roofs, and the external aspects, and also some curious curved roofs. The roofs were supported by a system of bracketing: the roof was brought out gradually on brackets. (1884, p.385

It is this type of bracket which Dresser had incorporated into his facade for Bushloe House in 1880, and his continuous efforts to enlighten the Architectural Association about Japanese architecture must have made an impact on British architects at the time. Charles F.A. Voysey for example created similar facades and curved roofs supported by brackets in the 1890s. It was largely due to Dresser that Japanese architecture had become a matter for serious contemplation.

The International Health Exhibition in London in 1884 displayed the first native drawings and plans of Japanese houses shown in the West. Edward S. Morse recorded this in his publication of 1886, and these drawings together with Japanese porcelain, bronzes and lacquer furniture ensured that the image of Japan remained vivid in the eyes of the Western public.⁷⁶

Linthorpe Art Pottery gained international renown at the same exhibition in 1884, where it received a medal of excellence and was thus described by The Cabinet Maker:

The peculiar blending of the rich colourings, and the brilliancy of the glazes are features particularly identified with this ware, and they have placed Linthorpe pottery on an equality with some of the choicest Oriental faience.

Evidently Linthorpe continued to produce vases that were associated with the Orient and with Japan even after Dresser had left in 1882. Dresser's designs were certainly included in Linthorpe's advertisements, and also at the industrial exhibitions in Calcutta in 1883-84 and in New Orleans in 1884-85 where the pottery was recognised as being of exceptional merit. (Lee, 1934, p.40).

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CHAPTER VIII

JAPONISM CONSOLIDATED AND DRESSER'S LAST YEARS 1884-1904

Surprisingly the Japan Cult showed no sign of abating throughout the mid 1880s, when The Art Journal for example continued to encourage it's development:

It is curious that of all our interiors, reproducing the decoration of different periods or peoples, the most successful have been the Moorish and the Japanese. This is not probably because they are more vital or truthful, but because they are so foreign to us that the mind makes no attempt to adjust them to our surroundings. We live in them as in strange lands,¹ delighted with their beauty and novelty, and unconscious of self.

This rather superficial attitude to the fashion appears to have predominated at the time, but Dresser and other artists strove to advocate a more conscious assessment of Japanese art. George C. Haité (1855-1924) for instance was a young designer who successfully assimilated Japanese ideas and in 1884 wrote about 'Japanese Decoration' in The Furniture Gazette. His approach is similar to that adopted by Dresser:

The trick is soon acquired of giving a Japanese touch to our own productions; but to enter into the spirit of their work, and find the excellence of their method, and the principles of their art, is not so easy...The last thing I wish to see is that servile copying of Japanese models, which was lately the fashion, and which was about on par with our imitation of wood by means of graining. True art scorns such servile reproductions.²

Evidently Dresser's ideas had found a receptive audience amongst designers of the new generation, and Japonism continued to assert a vital influence on the design-reform in Britain; as expressed by The Journal of Decorative Art in 1884:

The effect of their introduction has not only stimulated our own artists to further effort and fresh exertion but has given us new ideas of forms, and methods of workmanship which have added materially to our knowledge and conception of what Decorative art really means. It has been like the infusion of new life into a torpid body, and whilst undoubtedly in those quarters where results could not be discriminated from means, the consequences have been hurtful, it is also true that on the whole our own artistic life has been furthered and developed by the message and story which Japanese art has to tell us.³

Perhaps the most important lesson adopted from Japan was respect for

the material and its surface per se, which Dresser continuously exercised in his designs during the 1880s. A letter-rack and eggboiler for Hukin & Heath electroplate executed in 1885 reveal the smoothness and simplicity which characterise Dresser's former designs for this company, and a number of his creations for Elkington & Co from the same year display similar bold features. (figs. 317) These are all annotated 'Dresser' in the Elkington pattern books, and comprise four tea sets, production nos. 16675 to 16679, six cruets nos. 17281, 17282, 17284, 17286, 17287, and 17288, (figs. 318 & 319), five jugs or decanters nos. 16594, 17556 to 17559, and one teakettle no. 17912, (figs. 320 & 321) as well as the two sugar-basins, nos. 247-248, tea kettle no. 10272, tureen no. 12782, and teaset 16670 (identical to no. 15184) which as we have noted had probably been executed at an earlier date and subsequently reproduced in 1885. (figs. 318, 319, 320 & 321) The essence of these creations seem to lie in the relationship of geometrical forms, combined with simplicity and honesty concerning the material, which in turn facilitated machine production. As in the Hukin & Heath and James Dixon & Sons designs, the distinctively Japanese features are the forms of the kettles and stands, as well as the strap-like decorations, angular handles and spouts rising to the top of the jugs. The overall designs, however, are surprisingly free from stylistic precedents and entirely of Dresser's own devising. James Dixon & Sons' sales-catalogue for 1885 contained several of Dresser's prior designs, but he seems to have supplied them with no new creations and probably ended his contact with the firm about this time. Benham & Froud however, executed a number of new Dresser designs in 1885, such as three kettles of copper with brass legs and mounts supported by a wrought iron stand, and inlay trays combining copper, brass, lead and electroplate silver in the Japanese manner. (figs. 322, 309) This technique as we have noted had been recommended by Dresser already in his Principles in 1873 (p. 141). In the following year The Cabinet Maker

praised the same company's invention of 'metal-marquetry' which had been particularly adapted to a new range of coal-boxes 'from the fertile pen of our old friend, Dr. Dresser'.⁴ Dresser's designs were named Sutton, Victoria, Marlborough, Kingston, Richmond, and Negron, and their artistic force was conveyed in sharp, clean and functionalistic forms combined with 'metal-marquetry' plaques in the Japanese style. The Cabinet Maker noted the progress made in the design of such utilitarian objects which had taken place since the last years of Dresser's engagement:

No firm has done more to adorn the chimneypiece with art work than Messrs. Benham & Froud Ltd. They were the first among those who saw the opportunity, and used it, to life, the coal-box and the fitments of the grate from the decrepitude into which they had, some years ago, fallen. Taking only the coal-box, which is our present concern it is wonderful what has been evolved from the garish, meretricious, and really dreadful things of the last generation.' (fig.323)

Dresser's designs for the Coalbrookdale Company, Richard Perry & Sons and Benham & Froud were certainly a part of this new order and the mixing of metals must have looked wonderful in the soft lighting of the day. These objects were intended to provide a colourful element in the aesthetic interior, likewise Dresser's cloisonné porcelain and ceramics which he envisaged as brightening the ebonised Anglo-Japanese furniture that he advocated.

Carpets manifested another colour component in the interiors advocated by Dresser in his publications in 1873 and 1876. In 1885 The British Colonial Manufacturer Journal remembered precisely this time as a turning point for the advancement of the rug trade, saying that it had 'completely altered in pattern, design, and quality' and that some were even in 'the Japanese style'.⁶ Perhaps some of these were created by Dresser, for the same journal simultaneously published his criticism of 'Landscape Designs in Carpets', which asserted that:

Some firms, that have issued many of my patterns, come to me every year with their orders, and I have been recently informed

that even one of my carpets has not been out of the loom for sixteen years. (1885, p.2)

Dresser was probably referring here to John Brinton & Co. to whom in 1869 he had sent no less than 67 sketches according to Pevsner's article. (1957, 184) Dresser certainly continued to design carpets into the late 1880s, but as production methods progressed and manufacturers became eager to reproduce more intricate naturalistic patterns, he found it necessary to condemn such 'Landscape Designs in Carpets':

But this strange reversion to a most debased form of art is the natural outcome of the changes which have been going on around us for some years past. We are getting almost as anxious for change as are the Americans, and in too many cases we seek novelty without for one moment considering whether the new is better or worse, or more appropriate or less so, than what it superseded. (1885, p.2)

French naturalism in the form of landscape or floral patterns had come into vogue again by the mid 1880s and these tendencies evidently retarded the influence of Morris and Dresser who had promoted geometrical and conventional patterns. Ironically Dresser became a victim of the industrial revolution and the progress of which he had pleaded so enthusiastically. Whilst the demand for changes and intricate techniques increased dramatically towards the end of the century Dresser and the other instigators of this movement were virtually forgotten. Jennie J. Young had foreseen this development in 1884:

"Make something new" demands the public; and without ceasing the order is repeated; and without ceasing, great factories copy the old and call it new - copy again, and for ever copy.

Perhaps the most poignant critic of such tendencies was James M. Whistler, whose famous 'Ten O' clock Lecture' delivered at the Princes Hall in Piccadilly on the 20 February 1885, denounced the current desire to democratise and popularise art in terms such as 'art furniture', 'art pottery' and 'art carpets'. Whistler emphasised that 'there arose a new class, who discovered the cheap and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham'. Despite this however, Whistler concluded his lecture with hope for

the future:

We have then but wait - until, with the mark of the Gods upon him - there come among us again the chosen - who shall continue what has gone before. Satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete - hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon - and brodered with birds, upon the fan of Hokusai at the foot of Fujiyama. (McMullen, 1973, p.232)

'THE MIKADO' AND THE JAPANESE VILLAGE IN LONDON IN 1885

Japanese art evidently continued to play a crucial role in the gradual rehabilitation of Western art, and a new source of reference was Gilbert & Sullivan's operetta The Mikado which was launched in 1885. Consolidating the final stage of the Japan craze, it brought about the arrangement of a 'Japanese Village' at Humphrey's Hall in South Kensington in the same year. This was opened by Sir Rutherford Alcock on 10 January 1885, and comprised five streets of shops and work shops inhabited by 200 Japanese men and women, described as 'Japan in England' by The Cabinet Maker:

Three weeks ago "The Mikado" in the shape of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new opera certainly took the town by storm. Such potent influences will be sure to tell on the novelty seeking section of Society, and presently, as a consequence, we shall probably see a more decided Japanese "feeling" in the dresses and posturing of ladies, as well as in the enrichments of fashionable houses. In view of such Japanese rage it seems to me a pity that we cabinet makers did not save up the Anglo-Japanese ideas, which were in vogue a few years ago, until the present time, for, after, the education afforded by these two Japanese exhibitions, things in the style of "the land of the rising sun", will be much in demand.

The Cabinet Maker recommending Dresser's expertise concluded that:

Books on the manners and customs of the Japanese have, during the last few years, been multiplied, and several able travellers and technical writers - notably, Dr. Dresser - have given clear descriptions of the talent and painstaking methods of Japanese artisans and artists, but, after all is said and done, such things must be seen to be believed, and, doubtless a sight of the clever workers of Kensington will be a revelation to the majority of the people.⁸

THE NEED FOR A TAXONOMIC CLASSIFICATION OF JAPANESE ART

The impact can be measured by contemporary literature concerning

Japanese art, and particularly in the articles and books published by the collectors Ernest Hart, William Anderson, and Marcus B. Huish. Dresser's demand for a more scholarly attitude and a proper taxonomic classification of Japanese art was taken up by these writers, and Marcus B. Huish, in 1886-87 published a series of articles on 'Japan and its Art Wares' in the columns of The Art Journal, of which he was editor. Although aspiring to scholarship, Huish presented but a layman's point of view, and was heavily criticised by Ernest Fenollosa. (Earle 1986, p.868) It was Hart and Anderson who presented the much longed for scholarly treatment of the topic, and Hart in conjunction with the exhibition of his Japan collection at the Fine Art Society in 1886 lectured on 'Japanese Art Work' for the Royal Society of Art. He dealt thoroughly with the various groups of exhibits such as kakemonos, ukiyoe, wood-carvings, netsukes, repoussé work, sword-guards, lacquer, bronzes, pottery and ceramics, and the Journal of the Royal Society of Art noted that these had been arranged in 'historic succession' by Hayashi Tadamasa who was regarded as the greatest expert of the day.⁹ This culminated in the first taxonomic classification of Japanese art which has dominated British scholarship on the subject.

Hart also acknowledged Ninagawa Noritane and Wakai Kanezaburo, as well as Alcock, Audsley, Cutler, Gonse and Dresser amongst Western scholars. Augustus Franks and William Anderson in particular were credited as having 'contributed to our growing recognition of the importance of studying and discriminating the various schools and successive changes in Japanese schools of art'. In treating Japanese art according to schools and masters, Hart recommended the collection of readily classifiable items that were signed and decorated in a recognisable fashion, such as his sword-guards, netsukes and lacquer. These particular media indeed became the main objects of collectors and have remained so to the present. The credibility of such a system of classification and collection has recently

been questioned by Joe Earle, but Hart's intention was one of reconciliation:

I wish to rescue Japanese art from the somewhat ignorant pell-mell system of collection in to which it has been apt to fall owing to difficulties in the study, and to help to put it more and more in the hand of the art student and technical craftsman. It should not be a craze, for it is worthy to be a serious study, and it is in studying the merits and defects of the enduring works of the great masters of the past which is rapidly dissolving, that we shall most profitably learn the lessons of the art academies of the far East.¹⁰

William Anderson, a physician who lived in Japan from 1873 to 1879, published on The Pictorial Arts of Japan in 1886. He contributed the most orderly and comprehensive study of the topic to that date, and his extensive collection was to enrich the British Museum in the same year. He may well have been friendly with Dresser since the collection contained an album of contemporary Japanese prints annotated 'Christopher Dresser'. (fig.170)

In the 1880s information about the masters and schools of Japanese painting and printing began to filter out of Japan, and Vincent van Gogh is known to have organised in 1886 one of the first exhibitions devoted exclusively to Japanese prints at the Café Tambour in Paris. His sizeable collection had been purchased from Samuel Bing's shop and in 1888 Bing himself held a show of ukiyo-e at his premises, which in particular influenced the Nabis school of French Painters, (Yamada, ed. 1980, p.261.) The Goncourt's and other French art critics helped to secure the place of Japonism in the public's consciousness throughout the 1880's, and in 1887 Pierre Loti published his highly popular Madame Chrysantheme.

DRESSER'S 'MODERN ORNAMENTATION' (1886)

Japonism certainly meant a great deal to those artists who were active in the 1880s and Dresser's publication Modern Ornamentation in 1886 contained patterns that were deprived from Japanese, Arabian, Celtic, Greek, Gothic, Persian and Medieval sources. The Japanese motifs appealed

particularly to The British Architect critic, who said that:

We think the work will be suggestive and useful, and chiefly in those designs which have their motif in Japanese precedents, for in that direction we much prefer Dr. Dresser's work.¹¹

The sentiment of precedent rather than imitation is significant, and the review in The Builder expressed similar views, noting that the designs 'were to be regarded as abstract ideas in ornament' and thus were bound by no limited conditions to known styles. The same critic, however, objected strongly to two of the Japan inspired bird ornaments, and the plate depicting 'Evening' which incorporated beetles, moths and spiders, described as 'inherently vicious'.¹² (figs.324 & 325) Modern Ornamentation indeed may have appeared too modern for some critics, and it was not until the year of Dresser's death in 1904 that Alphonse Mucha popularised similar insect motifs in his Formenwelt aus dem Naturreiche. (fig.326) The Celtic ornaments in Dresser's books clearly influenced the 'Cymric silver' and 'Tudric pewter' designed by his student Archibald Knox for Liberty & Co. from the late 1890s until the early twentieth century, and sadly it was only then that the influence of Dresser's publication could be noted. Few contemporary artists, however, credited his pioneering work as a source of inspiration.

Another plate in Modern Ornamentation named 'Night' was of a similar nature to 'Evening' and was clearly derived from Japanese models. Both designs were incorporated in his designs for Minton & Co. and for Linthorpe Art Pottery, as were other Japan-inspired plates such as the cats meeting and departing and the 'Quick March' of the cranes which both appeared in his Minton & Co vases. (figs.327, 164A & B) The swallow pattern in plate 12 was based on a pattern in Dresser's album of Japanese crests, and the ornaments in pl. 32 were influenced by Japanese appliqué patterns. (figs. 324 & 328) The peacock ornament in the Japanese style in pl.27 as we have noted had been incorporated in his 'metal-marquetry' for Benham & Froud.

(figs.329 & 176)

Peacock ornaments, feathers and colours indeed were in vogue at the time, and were satirised by George du Maurier in Punch.¹⁵ The Linthorpe Art Pottery in 1886 was referred to as displaying colours that 'rival the tail of the peacock': 'Oriental yellows, and wondrous mixture of the lot, all combine to show the technical knowledge and culture which is brought to bear upon the colourings of these manufactures'.¹⁴

THE CULT BECOMES AN INTEGRAL CALCULUS

The widespread influence of Japanese art was noted by numerous contemporary art critics, and the American Edward Morse when publishing his book on Japanese architecture in 1886 expressed the consensus of opinion when he stated that:

It is an interesting fact that the efforts at harmonious and decorative effects which have been made by famous artists and decorators in this country and in England have been strongly imbued by the Japanese spirit, and every success attained is a confirmation of the correctness of Japanese taste. Wall-papers are now more quiet and unobtrusive; the merit of simplicity and reserve where it belongs, and fitness everywhere, are becoming more widely recognized. (p.316)

Lewis F. Day in his article on 'Victorian Progress in Applied Design' published in The Art Journal in 1887 upheld similar views, but also signalled the decline of the Japan cult:

An influence excessive at the time, resulting in a style of art most un-English, but which now that the fever is past, we may believe will effect the design of the near future very favourably, for in workmanlikeness, fitness of treatment, spontaneity, and many other qualities most essential to good ornament, there was everything for us to learn from it. (p.196)

Dresser as we know had advocated this attitude to Japanese art since the 1860s and 1870s, and his notion finally gained support in Britain. Dealing with most of the famous designers of the Victorian era, Day was largely neglectful of Dresser, who was probably too great a rival, but he cited Dresser's carpet for Barlow & Jones' (fig.231) Paris stand in 1878 as a good example of design, and referred to him in connection with Owen Jones

whose mantle according to Day had fallen upon Dresser. (p.188) He placed Dresser and Jones within the movement of 'sobriety of taste' which was recommended as a counterbalance to the confusing tendencies of contemporary design:

This comes in some cases of degrading the quality of the material which necessitates a fussy and undignified character of ornament; but that is not the only source of evil. In costlier and better class of the material there is an equally unpromising tendency towards the rococo. (p.202)

The proclivity towards French ideals, which was first apparent in the textile and carpet industries, increased during the latter 1880s and 1890s, and merged in Britain with revivals of the 'Adams' style and the rococo. Combined with Japonism in France, the rococo revival gave rise to the swooping lines of 'Art Nouveau', but in Britain led to a deplorable 'Battle of Styles' as The Journal of Decorative Art termed it in 1899.¹⁵ Eventually around the turn of the century the Liberty and Mackintosh styles evolved as a counterpoint to the continental 'Art Nouveau', and revived the more formal spirit of the debased British decorative style. The fashions of the 1880s and 1890s however, were not entirely without merit, and Dresser's Modern Ornamentation had already paved the way for the new style which was to emerge at the time of his death, when Lewis F. Day announced 'Modernity in Decoration'. (1904, p.127)

QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE EXHIBITION IN MANCHESTER 1887

In 1887 Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee, and the artistic attraction of the year was the Jubilee Exhibition in Manchester. Dresser is recorded as having contributed designs to the collection of Jeffrey & Co. wallpapers which were exhibited, and his pattern 'Coronal' executed in 1884 may well have been included.¹⁶ Unfortunately, reviews and catalogues of the exhibition scarcely mention the designers of the exhibited objects but Minton & Co., who attracted considerable attention, certainly displayed the

Dresser-designs executed between December 1886 and January 1887. These included vases of the production nos.2683 to 2702, 2744 to 2751, 2759 to 2760 and 2763, and combine many of the shapes previously created by Dresser for Minton & Co. and for Linthorpe Art Pottery, Nos.2783 to 2691 were produced both in biscuit with relief decor in the Japanese manner and with cloisonné painting in Japanese and Persian style. The remaining designs were decorated with cloisonné patterns, and several of these are referred to as 'Chintz'. The original art work for these designs has been preserved in the Royal Doulton/Minton archive, and the overlapping floral patterns bear a striking resemblance to the Japanese 'sarasatic' and layered designs previously referred to, - but also to the pattern incorporated in vase 2763, which was adapted from a Japanese bronze candleholder in Dresser's collection. (figs. 330, 331 & 309) Vase no.2693 is decorated with the Japanese feather pattern recommended by Dresser as early as 1863, and vases 2694 and 2698 incorporate floral or crest patterns in the Japanese style. (fig.332A & B, 333) A pattern for ewer and basin from this time comprises stylised irises, lotus flowers and leaves in the Japanese manner, and is signed 'C. Dresser'. (fig.334)

A range of new wallpapers by Lightbown and Aspinall executed for the exhibition stand, bear a striking resemblance to Dresser's Minton designs from the time, and are evidently based on similar Japanese 'sarasatic' and appliqué patterns. These were certainly created by Dresser who is recorded as having been engaged by the firm at the time, and two patterns released by Jeffrey & Co in the same year are equally 'Dresseresque'. (figs.335, 336, 337 & 338) This is also true of the Anaglypta floral patterns from Dresser's designs exhibited in Manchester in 1887. This relief wallcovering which resembles Lincrusta was launched at this exhibition by Thomas J. Palmer. The first range of patterns were contributed by famous designers such as Owen W. Davis, Arthur Silver, Alfred Jonquet, and Christopher Dresser,

whose numerous 'Japanese' and 'Oriental' designs were favourably received. Pattern nos.147 and 298 in particular bring to mind Hokusai's famous 'Wave' and the lattice panels propagated by Dresser, and these creations which certainly were 'modern' in feeling remained in vogue long after Dresser's death in 1905. ¹⁷ (figs.339A & B, 340)

Barlow & Jones' famous 'Empire Quilt', created for the Queen's Jubilee and adopted for use at Windsor Castle, was designed by Dresser and displayed heraldic devices of the principal Empire colonies, with the royal arms in the centre surrounded by a stylised wreath of seaweed symbolising the Ocean empire and with the Star of India and the Prince of Wales' plumes in the corners. (fig.341) Linthorpe Art Pottery, which also exhibited in Manchester in 1887, received royal patronage in the same year when the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Middlesbrough for the opening of the Town hall. Princess Alexandra was noted as having given encouragement to:

The beautiful colour of Turquoise Blue in which her purchases of pedestals and large vases had been carried out, which was reflected in the enormous number of orders which were subsequently given for Linthorpe Ware, especially in this shade. (Lee, 1934, p.37)

BRITISH ARTISTS IN JAPAN

Mortimer Menpes (1860-1938), a student and follower of Whistler, was the first British painter to visit Japan in 1887. He returned with enthusiastic reports which he published in The Magazine of Art in the same year, ¹⁸ and in 1888 he exhibited his Japonism paintings in Dowdeswell's Gallery in London. ¹⁹ The show was a great success and Menpes was encouraged to decorate his home in the 'Anglo-Japanese' style with yellow walls, Japanese ceilings &c., which probably led to the controversy with Whistler in the same year. The latter insulted his former student publicly and called him a 'robber'. (McMullen, 1973, p.241) Clearly Japonism ideals were still guarded jealously by British artists, although their respective styles were entirely different. Menpes was far more timid in his use of

Japanese principles than Whistler, and his rather conventional motifs appealed more to the naturalistic taste of the time. Two Scottish artists, George Henry (1858-1943) and Edward A. Hornel (1864-1933) followed in Menpes' steps by visiting Japan in 1893 and both produced paintings in a similar style far into the twentieth century. Hornel's immensely successful exhibition in Reid's gallery in 1895, was reviewed in The Studio Magazine, as displaying 'beautiful and sumptuous colour, full in tone, quaint in designs' and the product of 'a romantic mind revelling in the charm of colour for colour's sake alone'.²⁰

More significant for the development of decorative art in Victorian Britain was the joint trip to Japan conducted by Sir Alfred East (1849-1913), Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Liberty and Charles Holme in 1888-89. They visited several of Dresser's friends and associates, and Liberty also gave a lecture at the Tokyo National Museum on 'Art Productions of Japan' which dealt extensively with the interrelation of influences between Japan and the West:

Now it has permeated every European decorative art manufacture, and notably fabrics, pottery and printing. This great wave of Japanese influence over the art workshops of Europe is indeed a flattering tribute, and allsufficient testimony to the vitality and intelligence of Japanese work, for no mere freak or fashion could have so long held possession of or influenced the direction of European effort. (1889, pp.694-697)

Liberty warned strongly against the indiscriminate adaptation of Western ideals in Japan, however, and expressed a marked respect and understanding of the integrity of Japanese art, which was close to that asserted by his friend Dresser:

There is as soul, a spirit, an intent, a thoughtful intelligence underlying and directing it (Japanese art) - the intent of form, from what ever medium may be employed, and object that, first, shall (if intended for a practical or useful purpose), fulfill in the most simple and direct manner the purpose of its creation, secondly, that shall be pleasing or graceful in form, - and thirdly, that, when ornamented, the ornamentation shall grow out of, or be within, the lines of form and in unison with the object of its creation. (1889, p.694)

It was this attitude to design in general which came to characterise the evolving 'Liberty style'. The views of Liberty, Holme and Dresser frequently concur, and we may assume that Dresser was the common source of inspiration. Following their return to England, Liberty and Holme expressed themselves authoritatively about 'The Industrial Arts and Manufacture of Japan' and 'Japanese Pottery' respectively, and in the spirit of Dresser's criticisms stressed the necessity of comprehending the aestheticism of Shinto and Buddhism. Holme in particular wrote perceptively about Japanese tea-ware and the coarse ceramics advocated by Dresser:

To know something of Japanese glazes is to be familiar with the soft greenish greys of the Sanda Seiji ware, the dull leaden blue of the metallic sheen of the brown glaze of Bizen, the iridescent blacks, reds, browns, and bottle-greens of the Raku wares, the thick opaque overglazes of Shigaraki, the delicate greys and salmon shades of Hagi, the heavy brown and yellow glazes of Tamba, or the speckled greys and browns of Soma. (1892, p.157)

Significantly Dresser had himself mentioned these wares in similar terms and they evidently provided him with the impetus for his own ceramic production at Linthorpe Art Pottery. Messrs. Dresser and Holme were responsible for importing quantities of Japanese ceramics and other manufactures to Britain, and when Holme exhibited his collection at the Warrington Museum in 1890, he recommended Dresser and Edward Morse as the most scholarly writers on the topic.²¹

JAPONISM DEBATED AND CONSOLIDATED

We have already noted the coinciding interests of Dresser and Morse, and the academic high-mindedness which separated them from the mainstream of contemporary writers on Japanese architecture and art-manufactures. Holme's recognition reflects a critical attitude which was emerging at the time, and Morse and Fenollosa in fact had condemned the deficiencies of the British writers Marcus A. Huish and James Bowes respectively. Fenollosa in

his art-report to the Japanese government in 1887 criticised Huish's articles in The Art Journal, and Morse was appalled by Bowes' ignorance of tea-ware which he had the audacity to publish in 1890. Morse's unsigned critique of Bowes' Japanese Pottery (Liverpool, 1890) in The New York National, resulted in a series of discussions which encouraged Bowes to publish a new volume with the misleading title A Vindication of the Decorated Pottery of Japan. (Liverpool, 1891) Morse however, disregarded the entire works of Bowes concluding with a statement which had inspired Dresser and other serious Japanists: 'How far one may go astray who undertakes to study the products of a country from just the opposite side of the globe'. (Earle, 1986, p.868)

Joe Earle has recently grouped Dresser with Morse and Fenollosa, and clearly it was their scientific background which inspired them to interpret Japanese art in its native context. Dresser in particular utilised the system of classification he had launched in 1862 and we have noted that this was based on contemporary botanist, zoologist and linguistic methods to which he paid tribute in Japan:

By the agency of language something has been done in the way of tracing the wanderings of mankind and the affinities of races, but I am not aware that decorative forms have been used, to any material extent, as means of arriving at similar knowledge, although to me they seem capable of yielding valuable help in such inquiries. (1882, p.321)

The difficulty of constructing strategies of classification was thus hinted at by Dresser, and similar uncertainties and controversies dominate Western studies on Japanese art to this day, - yet his book and those of Morse and Fenollosa are worth consulting. A more thorough attempt at taxonomic classification was not undertaken until 1904 the year of Dresser's death, when Captain Frank Brinkley published his extensive study entitled Japan and China, their History, Arts and Literature. (London) Brinkley had served as military advisor to the Japanese government in the 1870s and was editor of the Japan Mail until he returned to the West in 1885. He severely

criticised Audsley and Bowes's authorship, and published one of the most scholarly works about Japanese pottery. Brinkley's book which contained several of the articles he had written during the 1880s reflect the increasing need for a more critical evaluation of Japanese art in the West.

This was understood by Samuel Bing in Paris who published his magazine Le Japon Artistique in French, German and English from 1888 to 1891. He encouraged specialists on various topics and advocated a more factual investigation of Japanese art, frequently referring to Dresser. Its influence upon Western art and the cross-cultural influence between Japan and Europe was analysed at length in the magazine, and according to Geneviève Lacambre it became the target of much speculation during the 'Expo Universelle' in Paris in 1889. In 1893 Bing organised an exhibition of 725 Japanese prints at the École National des Beaux-Arts, and a show of Utamaro and Hiroshige at Galerie Durand-Ruel. He subsequently linked his interests with contemporary French art in 1895, when he opened his shop as a gallery space for 'L'Art Nouveau', featuring Japanese art next to the work of progressive young designers. (Lacambre, 1964, pp.198-221)

By the 1890s, Japanese art had become a well known element in the wider panorama of art in the West, and Japonism was a generally acknowledged factual sector. More inherent elements, however, such as the capacity to assimilate Japanese aesthetics etc., were implicitly under consideration. Dresser disregarded the mindless imitation of exotic and naturalistic motifs, and maintained that proper adaptations could only take place following a better understanding of Japanese art, its principles and aesthetics. The French critic Roger Marx (1859-1913) expressed similar views in his influential article 'On the Role and Influence of the Arts of the Far East and Japan' released in Le Japon Artistique:

There is nothing which our age dislikes so much as repetition,
receipts handed down from the past; it is afflicted with a

craving for some new thing; it yearns for fresh sensations, to get free of the trammels of remembrance. (1891, p.465)

Clearly 'L'Art Nouveau' was imminent, and its aspect of novelty certainly facilitated the reception of Japanese art in the West. Walter Crane in an article on 'Decorations and Illustrations of Books' published in 1889 offered another explanation in this vein:

There is no doubt that the opening of Japanese ports to Western commerce whatever its after effects - including its effect upon the arts of Japan itself - has had an enormous influence on European and American art. Japan is a country very much, as regards its arts and handicrafts with the exception of architecture, in the condition of a European country in the Middle Ages, with wonderful skilled artists and craftsmen in all manner of work of the applied and decorative kind, who are under the influence of a free and informal naturalism. Here at least was a living art, an art of the people, in which traditions and craftsmanship were unbroken, and the results full of attractive variety, quickness, and naturalistic force. What wonder it took Western artists by storm, and that its effects²² have become so patent, although not always happy ever since.

Crane encouraged his readers by pointing to the similarities between Japanese art and that of the Middle Ages, and stressed the aspect of naturalistic elements of the genre which attracted support from contemporary European artists. A need to justify and analyse Japonism may be detected in Crane's words, and this topic became the focus of artistic and critical attention towards the end of the century. The Art Journal in 1889 analysed the pros and cons of Japonism and concluded with a warning against indiscriminate submittance to the fashion:

An art of this character is of course most seductive to the inexperienced student, but in untried hands it is capable of exerting a most dangerous influence, and it is an art of which one soon tires. Much as we admire the Art workmanship of Japan, we feel most strongly the need of these few words of warning. A distinguished German designer, who recently visited this country, and had many opportunities of inspecting our Art manufactures, informed the writer, as the general result of his observations, that English Art had been more strongly influenced by the art of Japan than that of any other European country, and he stated that he thought "we were all bewitched"²³

The Anglo-Japanese style indeed attracted considerable attention in Germany at the time, and Peter Jessen treated it with reverence in his articles on

'Der Kunstgewerbliche Geschmack in England' published 1892-93. He was particularly impressed with the wallpapers and textiles produced by Walter Crane, Lewis F. Day, William Morris and Christopher Dresser, - the latter of whom he referred to as Owen Jones's follower and the 'head of a famous studio outside London'.²⁴

Unfortunately, Dresser did not participate in the topical public debate on Japonism which continued during the late 1880s and 1890s, but he certainly continued adhering to this style. In 1888, for instance, he created two wooden tumblers with a straight wooden handle and silvermounts respectively for Elkington & Co. and for Heath & Middleton, (formerly Hukin & Heath) both of which were clearly modelled on a similar Japanese tumbler sold by Dresser & Holme. (figs. 342, 343 & 249) The Heath & Middleton sample in particular was decorated with lacquer work featuring plants, butterflies and insects in the Japanese style.

In 1889 Dresser moved to Elm Bank, Barnes outside London and established 'the famous studio' referred to by the German writer. According to his youngest daughter Nellie, who joined the studio at this time, Dresser was then mainly creating designs for cretonnes, damasks, tapestries and wallpapers,²⁵ but he continued to supply a few designs for 'Clutha Glass' until about 1896, when George Walton (1867-1933) replaced him. In 1894-95, Dresser also supplied some striking Japan inspired designs for tea-sets and candleholders produced by Heath & Middleton and by Elkington and Co. (fig. 344 & 345) These surprisingly modernistic designs appear to have been amongst Dresser's last creations, for Cecil F. Tattersall, who was trained in his studio from 1894 to 1904, recalled that Dresser during this period was mainly concerned with supervision and sales. A letter from Tattersall to Peter Floud of the V & A dated 6 September 1952 provides a fascinating impression of the working procedures in the studio:

You can take it that he was doing business with every firm manufacturing wallpapers and cretonnes at the time. He also did

bedspreads and tapestries. At one time he had a contract with F. Steiner of Manchester for cretonnes. When the Wallpaper Combine was formed (1899) he went to Germany and did extensive business in that country, which he visited at intervals. I am sending you 98 photos of the original designs as shown to the Manufacturer.²⁶

Unfortunately these photographs have not been traced, but we can confirm that Dresser provided designs for F. Steiner & Co of Lancashire and for Jean Zuber & Co., of Rixheim in Alsace (then Germany). Four of his designs for F. Steiner & Co. cretonnes were illustrated in The Studio Magazine article on Dresser, and were described as showing 'the modern note, and one with a quaint ship and weird fishes recalls Japan'.²⁷ Pevsner in his article included two similar cretonnes said to date from 1890-1904, and he perceptively noted that these 'served to show how an accomplished draughtsman reacted to the various phases in the development of style which took place during the nineties and the first years of our century'. (1937, p.186) (figs.346 & 347) Clearly these designs some of which are inspired by the Japanese 'sarastic' floral patterns, reflect the 'Battle of Styles' raging at the time, and some of Dresser's students appear to have been under less obligation to remain consistent to his ideals. Some F. Steiner & Co. cretonnes from the same period are preserved in the V & A, and these are strikingly similar to those emanating from Dresser's studio. A daffodil pattern for instance can be compared to a drawing in his sketchbook, and a 'lady's smock' design is reminiscent of his creation for Liddiard & Co. in 1853. (figs.7,133A & 348) A wave pattern with flowers superimposed in the Japanese style are reminiscent of wave-patterns illustrated by Dresser in Japan and in The British Architect in 1879. (fig.349) These were most certainly designed by Dresser and a similar silk damask produced by Warner & Co. in 1891 is probably also by him. (fig.350) Pevsner listed Warner & Co. amongst the companies that received designs from Dresser but these patterns have only recently come to light, and controversies surrounding Dresser's textile designs remain unresolved. (Pevsner, 1937, p.185)

Dresser continued to supply designs for textiles and wallpapers until his death in 1904, and in 1893 he is recorded as having created the 'Columbian Celebration Quilt' produced in satin by Barlow & Jones in honour of the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America celebrated at the Chicago world fair of the same year. The quilt displayed heraldic shields, stars and leaf-borders and most dominantly some palm leaves.²⁸ palm leaves had fascinated Dresser since the time he mentioned them in The Art Decorative Design in 1862, and in 1894 he also supplied a design for a wallpaper to Charles Knowles & Co, named 'Palm'.(fig.302) This appears in the company's logbook with two other Dresser designs entitled 'Bidford' and 'Lonsdale', of which the latter includes swaying poppies in the manner of Japanese 'sarastic' patterns. (fig.351) 'Lonsdale' bear a striking resemblance to Arthur Sanderson & Sons' popular poppy designs named 'Poppy' and 'Belvedere' launched respectively in 1890 and 1901, and these unattributed patterns may well have been created by Dresser who is recorded as part of their designing staff at the time. Sanderson's records from the period, however, are incomplete, and Dresser's name only appears in their first 'Register of Artists' from 1900 to 1904, which lists 25 unidentified designs of his.²⁹ (fig.352)

In 1891 The Art Journal commented favourably on some Dresser damasks in the Japanese style manufactured by John Wilson & Sons:

Flowers should be wholly or semi-conventionalised and the same holds good with animals, in dealing with which Dr. Dresser's designs for Messrs. Wilson and Sons have sometimes been specially able. One of his designs is of owls, small birds, and butterflies, with the border's panelling formed of bamboo-canes and foliage. He usually displays a feeling for Japanese character, than which there can be no more appropriate. No 9 shows the middle and narrow border of such a cloth, in which varied diapers prettily break, yet connect, the discs with bamboo, storks, and peony flowers.³⁰ (fig.353)

Similar motifs and patterns in the Japanese manner, as we have noted had figured prominently in Dresser productions, and some Lightbown & Aspinall wallpapers from the same year incorporated similar broken diaper patterns

that probably emanated from Dresser, who according to Sugden personally delivered designs to the company in the 1890s.³¹ (fig.354)

Some James W & C. Ward designs from 1886-1889 display similar Japanese patterns, including one named 'Japanese tapestry' and another incorporating the owl panel which Dresser had included in his furniture and stained-glass designs for Bushloe House in 1879-80. (figs.355 & 215) These Ward & Co. textiles were certainly designed by Dresser, for a young apprentice of the company at the time, Roland Midgely in 1951 retrospectively informed Peter Floud of the V & A that he 'remembers quite well Dr. Christopher Dresser's designs'.³² Clearly James W. & C. Ward's contract with Dresser, which had been signed some time around 1865 continued into the new century. A range of floral designs figuring in Ward's logbooks in 1891-93 and in 1901 bear a striking resemblance to the so called 'chintz' patterns introduced by Dresser at Minton & Co.'s around 1887, and a number of fan-like patterns can be compared to Dresser's design for Jeffrey & Co from 1883 and to drawings in his sketchbooks. (figs. 356, 357, 358) The 1901 pattern in particular is very similar to the water-lily frieze made by Dresser for Minton & Co. in 1887, and the swooping lines reflect the influence of the Japanese 'sarastie' patterns and the continental 'Art Nouveau' style. (figs.359 & 334) This is not surprising since Dresser had travelled to Alsace on business from 1899 onwards, and two of his last recorded designs have recently been traced in the 'Musée Papier Peinte' in Rixheim. These were executed for the well known wall paper manufacturer Jean Zuber & Co. of Rixheim in 1903 and 1904, and respectively incorporate swaying sweet peas in the Japanese manner and stylised trees derived from 'Art Nouveau' motifs. These beautiful designs were Dresser's last creations for he died in his sleep in a hotel in Mulhouse 24 November 1904.³³ (fig.287 & 360)

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1. The Art Journal (1884) 64.
2. George C. Haile, 'Japanese Decoration', The Furniture Gazette, XXII (1880) pp.229 & 413
3. The Journal of Decorative Art (1884) 494.
4. The Cabinet Maker (1886) 103 and Furniture Gazette XXIV (1886) 347.
5. Ibid. p.103.
6. The British Colonial Manufacturer Journal (1885) February Supplement, p.1.
7. The Contemporary Review (1884) 204.
8. The Cabinet Maker (1885) p.181.
9. Ernest Hart, 'Japanese Art Work' Journal of the Society of Art, XXXIV (1886) p.645.
10. Ibid. pp.1204-1215, 1231-1242, 1254-1275.
11. The British Architect XXV (1886) 157.
12. The Builder, LII (1887) 492.
13. The Punch Magazine, (1881) 78.
14. The Cabinet Maker, (1886) 187.
15. The Journal of Decorative Art, XIX (1899) 59.
16. Arthur Sanderson & Co Archive, Jeffrey & Co Logbooks, II.
17. Journal of Decorative Art, Supplement (1905) & Anaglypta Sales catalogue
18. The Magazine of Art (1887) 192-99.
19. The British Architect (1888) 7.
20. The Studio Magazine (1895)
21. Catalogue of Charles Holme's Collections of Japanese Art, (Bradford 1890) preface.
22. Walter Crane, Decorations and Illustrations of Books Journal of the Society of Arts, (1889) p.899.
23. The Art Journal (1889) 330.
24. Peter Jessen, 'Der Kunstgewerbliche Geschmack in England', Kunstgewerbeblatt (1892) 1-3.

25. V & A Registry, Nominal File, Nellie Dresser, 1 April 1952.
26. V & A Registry, Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts Exhibition File.
27. 'The Work of Christopher Dresser', The Studio Magazine, XV (1898) 114.
28. The Warehouseman and Drapers Journal (1893) 23-25.
29. Arthur Sanderson & Son Archive, Sanderson's Register of Artists.
30. The Art Journal (1891) 179.
31. V & A Registry Victorian and Decorative Arts Exhibition File.
32. Ibid.
33. Journal of Decorative Art, (1905) 17.

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