

Selwyn's Swastika

The Master

Stand at the west end of C Staircase with your back to Grange Road, then cast your eyes up to the archway that links the back of C to the present Library and you will find a small swastika carefully carved into the keystone. It is a curious sight. Soon after my arrival at Selwyn I made some enquiries, but no fellow, ancient or modern, was able to explain its provenance. At first sight, of course, a symbol like this, so easy to mistake for the Hakenkreuz of Nazi Germany, sends a shiver down the spine, but on closer examination you will find that it bends to the left rather than to the right. The swastika in this form is a sign of great luck and boundless virtue found in many parts of the world but particularly in the India of the Vedas. It was later adopted by Buddhists and can now be found on Chinese and Japanese maps as a symbol for a Buddhist temple. But there something else about this particular example, something that gives us a clue as to why it is sitting here in the middle of Selwyn: the swastika is held within a double circle. It must be a Japanese family crest.

The Library was built in 1929-30, and the Selwyn College Calendar for 1930-31 has the entry:

The very liberal donations from the Marquis Tokugawa and the Hon. M. Hachisuka, whose residence with us will be remembered by many members of the College, have been made to defray the cost of the Bridge upon which the recognizance of the Tokugawa family will be borne. (p. 56)

A few pages further on there is a list of subscribers for the War Memorial Fund which includes three Japanese names:

Hachisuka, Hon. M.....£150
Sawada, K.....£50
Tokugawa, Marquis.....£150

Unfortunately, the Calendar entry is mistaken in one rather important detail: the crest on the Bridge is not that of the Tokugawa, which is extremely well-known and consists of three heart-shaped vine leaves; it belongs to the Hachisuka.

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The Master at the time was the Rev. George Ernest Newsom, who took up his post in 1928 and died in office in 1934. William Brock writes of him as follows:

Newsom scored one notable success. The War Memorial Fund had paid for a large tablet in the Chapel, but its second aim was a new Library that would cost at least £6,000 and by 1928 there was only £3,000 in the fund. Nevertheless, Newsom persuaded the Council to go ahead [plus ça change]. T. H. Lyon (who had designed the new railings) was appointed as architect, some money was donated by old members approached privately by the Master, the rest was borrowed, and the new Library was built.' (W. R. Brock and P. H. M. Cooper, *Selwyn College: a History*. Durham: The Pentland Press, 1994, p. 168)

How was it that in 1929 Newsom managed to obtain a sizeable donation for Selwyn from three Japanese, two of them nobles? £150 in 1930 was the equivalent of £8000 today and a glance back through previous calendars reveals that these donations were by far the largest ever made to the War Memorial Fund. Who were these men?

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The trail first of all leads us back sixteen years to 1913. The College archives hold a pamphlet written by a certain Charles F. Shepherd in which he notes that Mrs Murray, the wife of Newsom's predecessor, the Rev. John Owen Farquhar Murray (Master 1909-28), made it her business to look after foreign students: 'one of her chief interests being the East and West Society, and on many occasions social evenings were held to which foreign students of all races were invited.' One of the visitors to the Lodge on a number of these occasions was a young gentleman called Tokugawa Yorisada (1892-1955) [I use the Japanese order: family name first. Note that a more formal reading of this name would give Tokugawa Raitei, hence the 'R. T.' in the diary entries that follow.]. The Tokugawa family ruled Japan for over two hundred and fifty years and survived the Meiji Restoration as nobles. When the future Marquis Tokugawa of the Kii Wakayama branch of the family made his trip to Europe, his tutor and companion was a young scholar called Ueda Sadajirø, who came from the same province of Wakayama, south of Osaka. Ueda himself was later to become Professor of Economics at Tøkyø Køtø Shøgyø Gakkø, which in due course of time became Hitotsubashi University. His diary, written in a mixture of English, (French while he was in France) and Japanese, was published in 1964. It contains a number of references to Selwyn, which make it clear that Mr Tokugawa was not only made welcome at the Lodge but probably stayed there for some considerable time.

1913

- Sept. 24 Arrived London
- Oct. 11 Called Mr Tokugawa
- Oct. 19 Been to Tea of Dr. Chas. R. Maitland with Mr. Tokugawa. Dr. M. is a friend of Prince Iyesato Tokugawa and a Cambridge man.
- Oct. 20 Started Liverpool Sta. at 8.40. Ar. Cambridge 9.50. Bull Hotel.
- Oct. 23 Visited...Dr. Murray (Selwyn)
- Oct. 31 Called on Dr. Murray, Master of Selwyn College, with Mr. R. T.
- Nov. 21 Went to Cambridge with R. T.

1914

- Jan. 14 Remove to Cambridge. 20 Glisson Road.
- Jan. 16 Mr. Tokugawa remove here. Dine with Murray family.
- Jan. 19 Dine at Selwyn College
- Feb. 1 Receive a letter from Registry granting me to be a Research Student of the University. Subject: English theories of the Functions of Government and their application to Economic life of the people under the supervision and direction of Mr. G. L. Dickenson.
- Feb. 14 Dinner at Selwyn Lodge. Note: An English doctor, who has been working in North China for seven years, was a guest at the Selwyn Lodge, when I was invited to a dinner there. The first question to me was an extraordinary one. He asked: 'How long will it be before Japan and China become one country?' My answer was: 'I have never thought of its possibility.' He also asked afterwards: 'Don't you think Japan will be made a republic?'
- Feb. 17 We are having an extraordinarily mild winter this year. I did not use an overcoat for last three weeks except for a few cases. Daisies are coming out meadows.
Larks are heard. Some trees are shooting.
- Feb. 18 I was matriculated at the University Registry. There is nothing ceremonial in it but I had to be present in cap and gown and sign in the book personally. Mr. Tokugawa came about at five o'clock and told me that he did not return to Selwyn Lodge but was told to remove to Mrs. Pollock's. This was a surprising news for me because, although I knew by Mrs Murray's letter of yesterday that her little girl was unwell and there was a doubt of her illness being infectious. I also was told that doctors thought it quite safe for Mr. T. to come back. Beside it is rather curious that I was not consulted about it by Mrs Murray. I called on Mrs. Murray later on and was apologized by her. She said her child was

suspected of being infected with scarlet fever and kept isolated in her room and as she thought it was not dangerous for Mr. T. She telephoned asking him to come back but she was bewildered on objection made by Dr. Butler Smythe. She asked Mrs. Pollock to take Mr. T. in for some time.

I think Mr. T. need not be kept separate from the house and live in another house without his things under these conditions. I shall let him go back in a couple of days.

Feb. 19 Mr. Tokugawa called on me and we discussed about his intention of reading for music at Cambridge. Wrote afterward to Mr. Kamada on this question. Went to see the boat race with him and Mr. Tomoyeda and Baron Kujø. Had tea at Baron's. Dine with Mr. Tomoyeda and Baron Kujø at Bull Hotel.

Feb. 20 Went to see Mr. Tokugawa and found him in bed, feverish. Sent for Dr. Wingate, who said he caught a cold.

Feb. 21 Mr. T. a little better. Doctor says his illness is influenza.

Feb. 23 Dr. Murray tea.

Mar. 4 [In Japanese] Mr. Tokugawa expressed a desire to matriculate as a University student. Back in January he had started talking about taking a degree in music at Cambridge. I did not pay too much attention at the time but he kept on mentioning it. I told him that unless he put his mind to it and worked hard he ought to realise that he would find it difficult even to pass 'little-go'. I asked him to think about it very carefully but he seemed serious about it. I knew that there were bound to be reservations in Japan about both lengthening his period of study abroad and about the subject of music but I also felt it was only sensible to allow him to study what he wanted to and to play to his strengths. I therefore decided to do what I could to counter whatever objections might come from home. I was, of course, rather doubtful as to whether he could really make a success of it, but I decided that even if he gave up half way there would be some merit in getting him to study English, mathematics and [Classical] Chinese. Although an extension of stay in England was not without its problems, there was nothing wrong with his health and no real reason to stop him studying music.

[During the Spring break Mr. Tokugawa was a guest of Mr T. H. Lyon, an architect connected to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, at his house Middlecott, Ilsington, near Newton Abbot, in South Devon. In April, while in France, Ueda writes (in French) of his decision to return to Japan and have his place as tutor to 'young Tokugawa' taken by Koizumi Shinzø from Keio University. It would seem that Mrs. Murray was in Paris at the same time.]

May 4 Saw Mr. Fines-Clynton, the new coach for R. T.

May 7 Lunch at Mr. Dickinson's with him and two other gentlemen and Mr. Tokugawa.

May 8 Called on Dr. Naylor, the tutor of music for Mr. R. T.

July 9 Write a financial report to Mr. Hibiki. Row [on the river?] with Mrs. Murray.

Aug. 15 Went to Bowness on Windermere with Mr Santo. Met there Mr. Tokugawa and Mr. Rogerson.

Aug. 23 Met Mr. Koizumi. He spent four days on the journey from Berlin. Did not bring any luggage.

[From then on the hand-over to Kozumi seems to be taking place. About this time Mr. Tokugawa gave up the idea of trying to matriculate. Ueda finally left England on 14 November on the Newcastle-Bergen route.] (Ueda Sadajirø nikki. Tokyo: Keiø ts/shin kabushiki kaisha, 1964)

I have found no further information as to how long Tokugawa stayed with the Murrays. He left England in November 1915. Although, as we have seen, he never formally studied at Cambridge, his interest in Western music stayed with him. In 1918, three years after his return to Japan, he commissioned a large concert hall called the Nanki Gakudø, the first in Japan to be equipped with a grand pipe organ. Unfortunately the enterprise almost bankrupted him and he was forced

to close the hall only seven years later. The pipe organ was transported to the Tōkyō Music Academy (Koizumi Tae, *Ryūgakusei Koizumi Shinzō no tegami*. Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1994). He died in 1955. His eldest son Yoriaki died childless three years later and his second son Gō died in 1965 leaving two daughters, Kotoko and Reiko. There were no male heirs.

The connection between Marquis Tokugawa and Selwyn continued. In 1927 we find his acting as the financial guarantor for a student called Taniichi Azuma (1899-?). A letter from Taniichi to Murray dated 6 February 1925 reads:

I believe that you know Mr Y. S. Tokugawa, my guardian on whose introduction I returned last November to call on Mrs Murray. I am now very anxious to come to Cambridge myself as I only landed in England in September last. I find it will be impossible to pass the Previous in English and French by June. Could you accept me to your College if I pass Previous in October or December? I enclose the letter of Mr Ridsdale [Nowton Rectory, Bury St Edmunds], my tutor.

The file also contains a note from T. H. Lyon to Murray dated 11 February 1925:

My dear Master.

Taniichi was sent to England by Tokugawa whom as you know I was on very friendly terms with in England. He put Taniichi under my care. He is exceedingly nice and a gentleman and has stayed with me in my house in Devon. He is a Xtian of the Methodist persuasion but prefers the C. of England which I believe he will join.

If you could take him into Selwyn I should be very grateful. He has to be careful in money matters and C. C. C. is too expensive for him.

As it happens, it took Taniichi until 1927 to complete all three Previous Examinations. He eventually matriculated in November 1927 and gained his BA in Architectural Studies in June 1930. Thomas Henry Lyon (1869-1953), the architect whom we have had occasion to mention more than once, was at Corpus from 1890-93 and then went into practice. He produced a new chapel for Sydney Sussex in 1912 and from 1913 onwards did much design work for his old College. In 1914 his brother-in-law Edmund Pearce was elected Master. He was made Fellow Commoner in 1918 and in 1920 he became Director of Design at the Faculty of Architecture. Corpus never, however, made him a full Fellow. More information about him to be found in the colourful autobiography of the writer John Cowper Powys (1872-1963), who married another of his sisters, Margaret, in 1896 (see Susan Rands, 'Thomas Henry Lyon, architect, of Middlecott, Ilsington (1896-1953)', *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, 37 (1995-96): 220-28, 252-56, 283-88. None of Lyon's papers are at Corpus.)

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So much for Marquis Tokugawa. But what of the Hon. M. Hachisuka, who crest adorns the Bridge? The reference is to Hachisuka Masauji (1903-53). The Hachisuka family had been powerful in Japan since the sixteenth century and played a substantial role in creating the modern state, although it too was to die out. In 1952 their large mansion with its substantial grounds was bought by the Australian Foreign Office for its new Embassy in Tokyo. Hachisuka Masauji's grandfather had been at Oxford for a while and his father Masaaki studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, returning to Japan in 1895 (see the reference to him in H. J. Edwards, 'Japanese Undergraduates at Cambridge University', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, London, vol. 7, fourteenth session, 1904-05). It is unclear when Masauji came to Cambridge but it may have been as early as 1921; records held in Magdalene suggest that Murray had been giving him private tuition from about that date. He was admitted to study Zoology at Magdalene in October 1924 with the mathematician A. S. Ramsey as his tutor, but he seemed uninterested in taking a degree and left after four terms, going down in December 1925. His formal sponsor was the Japanese ambassador in London, Baron Hayashi, but Murray acted as his local representative in Cambridge and as Magdalene was pressed for space he lived with the Murrays in the Lodge at

Selwyn for much of this time. Magdalene's archives also hold the following letter from Murray to Ramsey dated 28 December 1924:

Hachisuka has written to me from the Riviera, where he is apparently having a very good time - to ask whether he might ask your permission to come back a week late next Term. There is a wedding in the family of one of his chief friends on Jan. 20 & he is being strongly pressed to stay for it, but if he does he cannot be back before Jan, 22nd. As he is not reading for a Tripos, or specially interested in keeping Terms, it is not easy for me to say no: but if you like, I [sic] choke him off from asking! or tell him that I have consulted you and that you have no objection. Physically there are advantages to keeping him out of England in winter. He had to winter last year in Egypt, but he is much fitter now and there is certainly no absolute bar on that ground to his being back on Jan 14.

Hachisuka's passion was ornithology. A letter to Ramsey from the Zoological Laboratory records that 'he is, in the year 1925, an Ornithologist of the Newtonian type of 30 years ago; he is keenly interested in the description of Birds and their natural history, the formation of the races and local varieties.' Cambridge University Press published his *A comparative handlist of the birds of Japan and the British Isles* (107 pp) in 1925 and he went on to produce a large number of descriptive books on birds, covering the world from Iceland to the Philippines and Taiwan. The year he died, 1953, saw the publication of *The dodo and kindred birds of the Mascarene Islands* (London).

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And what of the third donor, Mr Sawada? Sawada Kiyoshi (1903-94) came from the port city of Kobe. He matriculated at Selwyn in January 1925, having passed the Previous Examination in 1924. He studied law for two years and then graduated in 1927 with an Ordinary degree in Economics. He was clearly an excellent sportsman, vice-captain of the tennis team in 1926-7, and winning a top skiing prize at Grindelwald in the same year. There is a splendid portrait of him as a tennis player in 1926. Although no undergraduate file for him survives, it is probable that he returned to Kobe soon after gaining his BA in December 1927.

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We must conclude, therefore, that it was probably Murray, not Newton, who approached Tokugawa and Hachisuka for a donation for the Bridge. The response was generous, in return for the openness shown by Murray and his wife to Japanese visitors and their willingness to lend out spare rooms in the Lodge. Today there are many Japanese who look back on their years spent studying in Cambridge with much affection; the effect in the 1920s must have been all the greater. Look up to the archway, then, and let the swastika bring back not a shiver but a smile for past generosities.

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