Great Britain and the opening of Japan,

1834-1858.

Chapter I. The Foreign Office assumes responsibility
1834-1838

Chapter II. The Opium War by Anglo-Japanese
Relations 1839-1842

Chapter III. Secret W. G. Beasley.

Chapter IV. The Influence of British Policy
1842-1854

Chapter V. The Opening Convention 1854-1858

Chapter VI. Foreign Office Policy and the High
Commission 1854-1858

Preface and Conclusions

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Prefatory Note

Romanisation of Japanese words. Romanised forms of Japanese names and words are given in National roomazi, and long vowel sounds are indicated by doubling the vowel.

Japanese names and titles. Japanese names are given in the usual Japanese order, i.e. family name followed by given name. For feudal titles the Japanese form (e.g. Etizen-no-kami) has been used in preference to the translation (e.g. Lord of Etizen).

Japanese dates. Dates given in Japanese texts in the lunar calendar have been changed to Gregorian calendar equivalents, except where only the month and year are given; in that case the year is given according to the Gregorian calendar, followed by the lunar month and (in brackets) the Gregorian equivalents for the first and last days of that month, e.g. 1856, 8th month (30 Aug-28 Sept).

Acknowledgement. The material from the Hudson's Bay Company's archives used in Chapter I was made available by permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.

INTRODUCTION

In 1853 Commodore Perry led his squadron of the United States Navy's "Black Ships" into Edo Bay to demand a treaty of commerce and friendship with Japan. He returned in the following year, having given the Japanese some months in which to consider his proposals and meditate upon his display of force, to conclude the first of the nineteenth century conventions with that country, and the work he began was completed by Townsend Harris in July 1858, when the Treaty of Kanagawa opened Japan to American trade. The lead so given was followed by other Western countries anxious to establish treaty relations. After 1854 and again after July 1858, British, French, Russian and Dutch representatives hastened to conclude similar agreements. For Britain, Rear Admiral Sir James Stirling negotiated at Nagasaki in 1854 and Lord Elgin at Edo in 1858, but neither made any important change in the treaty-pattern established by the Americans.

The fact of American leadership in the opening of Japan has long been recognised. The negotiations of Perry and Harris and the events which led up to them have been investigated in some detail. Much less attention has been given to British actions, however, and no general agreement has been reached on the nature and objectives of British policy, especially for the two decades before 1854. The evidence of events is often conflicting. Visits of British ships to Japan in 1845 and 1849 seem to argue the existence of an interest and purpose not in fact borne out by the results of those visits. The negotiations of Stirling and Elgin, in that they followed closely those of Perry and Harris both in time and achievement, suggest that Britain attempted only to emulate American success: yet it has been shown that Stirling's actions were

brought about largely by the Crimean War and Elgin's dictated by events in China. Some writers, especially in Japan, have claimed that British interest began long before 1854. They argue that the territorial expansion and economic exploitation which characterised British relations with India and China would have extended equally to Japan had the opportunity offered, that known British actions are sufficient evidence of aggressive intentions. Many accept the view that only British pre-occupation with the affairs of China prevented decisive action against Japan.

These conflicting estimates of British policy have been founded on an incomplete knowledge of events and have it in common that they stem rather from theories about the general character of British policy in the East than from study of British records relating specifically to Japan. It is not always safe to argue solely from results to intentions. A nation's policy must surely be compounded of both. This study will attempt to trace both aspects of British policy towards Japan in the years 1834 to 1858, in the hope that the narrative will throw some light on existing differences of interpretation. It must be emphasised that it is not a study of British opinion about Japan, but of official plans and official negotiations, and is therefore concerned primarily with the Foreign Office and its representatives in China, to a lesser degree with the Admiralty and the commanders of the East Indies station. Other factors are treated only in so far as they impinge on this problem of official policy.

The period chosen has a certain unity in that its central theme was the problem of initiating relations with Japan, in particular of initiating trade. It ends logically in 1858 with the signing of a commercial treaty. Like all "periods" in history, however, it is arbitrary and has ~~xxxxxx~~ some disadvantages. To end at the point where full treaty relations

begin makes this a study largely of plans and intentions, of a policy formulated in the abstract rather than one modified by the impact of everyday problems. To this extent it presents a distorted picture. Similarly it is convenient to begin in 1834, with the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade, for it makes it possible to concentrate on the Foreign Office as the controlling agent in the formulation of policy, but it is not intended thereby to suggest that 1834 saw either the beginning or even a revival of British interest in Japan. In fact, British traders reached Japan as early as the seventeenth century. Since earlier contacts provided a background against which nineteenth century policy was worked out, it has been thought desirable to begin with a review of Anglo-Japanese relations before 1834.

(a) Anglo-Japanese relations in the seventeenth century.

The first Europeans to reach Japan were three Portuguese castaways who landed ~~at~~ soon after 1540 on Tanegashima, an island south of Kyuusyuu (Kyushu). The tales they told on their return and the desire to tap the treasures of Marco Polo's fabulous Cipango brought traders to follow them, first to the southern harbour of Kagoshima, then to the deep-water port of Hirado on the west coast. At first the foreigners were welcomed. For over two centuries Japan had been dominated by Shogun of the Asikaga family, de facto military rulers who had relegated the Imperial family to a position of political impotence and governed in its name. But the grip of the Asikaga was weakening as had that of other shogun before them.

Civil war seemed imminent as the great local lords, the ~~styx~~ daimyos, grew in power, competing eagerly for the guns and the wealth which trade with Portugal could bring and tolerating, even encouraging, Christianity as a means of gaining the foreigners' friendship and support.

From the internal struggles of the sixteenth century new leaders gradually emerged. Oda Nobunaga brought all central Japan under his authority and his successor, Toyotomi Hideyosi, set himself the task of unifying the whole country. By 1587 he had virtually succeeded. Once firmly established in power it was no longer so important to him to keep on good terms with the Portuguese, and Hideyosi began to see in Christianity, with its implicit right of appeal to a spiritual ruler beyond the seas, a political rival and a potential threat to his ambitions. In 1587 he issued an edict suppressing the religion. This was probably intended only as a warning, for it was never enforced, but in the next few years Spanish priests and traders from the Philippines made their way to Japan and were guilty of actions and statements which laid emphasis on the political implications of the Christian faith. In 1596 Hideyosi went one step further and decreed death to all foreign clerics. This time the decree did not remain a dead letter, for twenty-six religieux were crucified at Nagasaki, and though the terror was confined to Spaniards and proved short-lived, it heralded important changes in Japan's relations with the West.

Dutch and English knew little of these events. They did, however, know something of Japan and the prospects of trade there. One Dutchman, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, travelled widely in the Indies and wrote an account of the eastern ^{countries} and their trade, holding out promises of huge profits to Dutchmen trading in the East and emphasising the weakness of the Portuguese position there. An English translation of his

book, published in London in 1598, included a chapter on Japan. Another account, based largely on the Jesuit letters, appeared in Hakluyt's Voyages.⁽¹⁾ Apart from a brief reference to silver mines, neither bore out the promise of the legends heard by Marco Polo, but Dutch and English sought markets as well as treasure and planned to seek them in Japan as elsewhere in the East.

The English East India Company received its charter in 1600, and in the same year the first Englishman, Will Adams, set foot in Japan. Adams reached Beppu Bay in the north of Kyuusyu aboard the Dutch De Liefde, only surviving ship of a fleet of five dispatched from Amsterdam two years before. Japan was again in turmoil. Hideyosi had died in 1598 and civil war had broken out once more as Tokugawa Ieyasu tried to establish his own right to rule Japan against the supporters of Hideyosi's infant son. Adams fell into the hands of Ieyasu - who finally made himself Syoogun in 1603 - and entered his service as an advisor on ship-building and foreign trade. With his help the Dutch established a factory at Hirado in 1609, and Adams set himself to persuade his fellow-countrymen to follow their example, for Ieyasu seemed to favour trade.

Partly owing to Adams' letters, John Saris was sent from England in 1611 with instructions ~~to~~ from the East India Company to proceed to Japan and try to found a factory there with Adams' help. At the end of 1612, while Saris was still on his way out, Adams had a letter from the Company telling

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 (1) J.H. van Linschoten, Discours of Voyages unto ye Easts and West Indies (London, 1598), pp. 43-8.

R. Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (12 vols, Glasgow, 1903-5), VI, 327-47.

him of the expedition. He informed the Syoogun, who received the news with favour. He also wrote to the president of the Company's factory at Bantam in Java, urging that the English should establish themselves at Edo, ⁽²⁾ Ieyasu's capital, where they would find a safe harbour, a good market far from Dutch competition and powerful protection. He added a warning about the prospects of trade. As a result of Dutch and other foreign imports, cloth had become 'as cheap in Japan as in England'. Spices and Chinese goods, however, especially silk, were much in demand, and it would be more profitable to concentrate on supplying these than English goods. 'Could our English Merchants', he said, 'after settling in Japan, procure trade with the Chinese, then shall our country make great profit here, and the Company will not have to send Money out of England; for in Japan there are Gold and Silver in abundance; and therefore by the traffic here they will make in exchange Money enough for their Investments in the Indies'. ⁽³⁾ This was to be a recurring theme in early English relations with Japan.

In 1613 John Saris reached Hirado in the Clove. He at once sought out Adams, by whose intervention Ieyasu was persuaded to grant generous privileges to the English Company, including that of trading freely at any port in Japan. Against Adams' advice, however, Saris decided to establish the factory at Hirado, where the daimyoo had shown him much friendship. ^{The}

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 (2) Edo is now called Tookyoo (Tokyo).

(3) P. Pratt, History of Japan compiled from the records of the English East India Company...1822 (2 vols, Kobe, 1931), I, 16-20, Adams to President at Bantam, 12 Jan 1612/3. The volume is a calendar of documents from the East India Company archives.

decision^{was} founded largely on distrust of Adams, whose close association with the Dutch made him suspect. Nevertheless, Adams' predictions about the trade quickly proved true, for the Clove failed to find a market for her English goods and had to leave without a full return cargo. Still, Saris hoped that time would bring improvement. When he departed at the end of the year he left Richard Cocks in charge of the Hirado factory⁽⁴⁾ with instructions to open a trade with China, Siam, Cochin China and all parts of Japan.

From the first Cocks found his task difficult. The Japanese showed no great eagerness to purchase English cloth, while the goods they wanted could not be provided in any adequate quantity. Cocks' efforts to open trade with Cochin China and Siam met with little success. He had hopes of gaining a foothold in China itself through the good offices of the Chinese merchants trading in Japan and to this end expended large sums in bribery, with no more than promises to show for it at the end - to the considerable indignation of his superiors in Bantam. After three years in Japan he was convinced that Adams had been right. In January 1617 he wrote to the Court of Directors - 'My greatest sorrow as I lye in a place which hitherto hath byn chargable and not benefitiall to your Worships...And were it not for the hope of trade into China, or for procuring som benefit from Syam, Pattania and (it may be)

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(4) For the Hirado factory and English trade with Japan in the seventeenth century, see generally Pratt, op.cit. and J. Murdoch and I. Yamagata, History of Japan, vol II (London, 1925); L. Riess, History of the English factory at Hirado 1613-22 (Trans. Asiatic Soc. Jap., vol XXVI); M. B. Paske-Smith, Western Barbarians in Japan and Formosa 1602-1868 (Kobe, 1930); C. Muto, Niti-ei kootuu-si no kenkyuu (A Study of the History of Anglo-Japanese Relations) (Kyoto, 1941)

Cochinchina, it were noe staying in Japan. Yet it is certen here is silver enough, and may be carried out at pleasure; but then must we bring them comodeties to ther lyking, as the Chinas, Portingales and Spaniards doe, which is raw silke and silke stuffs, with Syam sapon and skins'. (5)

This was not the whole of Cocks' problem. To carry on a trade at all was difficult enough, but the rivalry of the Dutch made it doubly so. Saris himself had complained of their sharp practice in 1613. Once Saris left, Cocks received little support from Bantam or from home and his position grew steadily weaker. Almost unchallenged afloat, the Dutch found ways of providing themselves with Chinese goods for trade and presents in Japan, sometimes by acts of piracy off the China coast. On some of their raids they even gave themselves out to be Englishmen, Cocks complained, in an attempt to discredit their chief rivals. Nor were English ships free from their attacks. Between 1616 and 1620 the only English vessels to reach Hirado were brought in as Dutch prizes, and all Cocks' most indignant appeals could not move the Japanese to interfere. The English factor had no other means of obtaining redress. By 1620, indeed, the Dutch were so confident of their power that they proclaimed open war against the English in Japanese waters, put a price on the head of Cocks and his colleagues, attacked them in the streets and even attempted to storm the factory. They were only prevented, Cocks believed, by the intervention of the Japanese officials.

It was the attitude of the Syoogun that proved the final obstacle to trade. Relations with the Japanese had been

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 (5) Diary of Richard Cocks (2 vols, Hakluyt Soc, London, 1883), II, 279-88, Cocks to Court of Directors, 1 Jan 1616/7.

deteriorating ever since the factory was founded. Ieyasu had shown great favour to the foreigners, especially to the English, as long as his own position seemed insecure, but like his predecessor he recognised in Christianity a possible rival authority, an attitude in which he was encouraged by the violent accusations hurled against their Catholic competitors by Dutch and English merchants. In 1614 he issued an edict proscribing Christianity. This was not at once enforced, for Ieyasu was engaged in another struggle with his domestic enemies, but in the following year he captured Osaka castle and executed the more important of his opponents. He was thus able to give his full attention to the problems of trade and religion.

Unlike Nobunaga and Hideyosi, Ieyasu was a descendant of the Minamoto and as such had been able to make himself syoogun, a title traditionally confined to the Minamoto clan. It was his ambition, too, to succeed where the others had failed and found a ruling house. Convinced that his descendants would include men of mediocre or inferior ability, he attempted to create an administrative machine which would prevent any considerable power from falling into the hands of any single feudatory. A natural corollary was the change in his attitude to Europeans. Foreign intercourse was of great value and a source of strength while Japan was under the rule of a strong man. But once Ieyasu's own guiding hand were removed, foreign interference in domestic affairs might become a very real danger. Better no foreign trade than European help for a disgruntled vassal.

This argument was the basis of the Tokugawa policy of seclusion, put into practice after Ieyasu's death in 1616 by his son Hidetada and yet more forcibly later by his grandson Iemitsu. The regulations against Christianity - by which was meant the Roman Catholic faith of Portugal and Spain - were re-issued and enforced, its priests driven into hiding. For

the English, though not directly affected by these religious quarrels, the new policy proved just as disastrous. Since one vital object was to prevent the daimyoo and even Tokugawa vassals from increasing their wealth and power, they had to be cut off from foreign trade and foreign guns. The right of trading to any part of Japan, which Ieyasu~~xxx~~ had granted the English in 1613, now seemed to have dangerous potentialities. In 1616, after being closely questioned in Edo about the English religion, Cocks was told that the old privileges were revoked and that trade must be confined for the future to Hirado. His protests were in vain. Moreover, to ensure that even at Hirado no rival daimyoo should profit unduly from trade, Hidetada gave a virtual monopoly to a group of Japanese merchants under Tokugawa protection - 'ruch usurers', Cocks called them - and this ring was able to dictate its own prices to the English traders. Unable to secure even a moderate profit, Cocks threatened to close the factory and to his great astonishment was told that he was quite at liberty to do so. It was not until 1619 that Hidetada relented to the extent of permitting trade at Nagasaki, a better port in every way than Hirado, but even this brought little improvement in the general situation. (6)

It had become painfully obvious to the East India Company's council in Java that the Japan factory was losing money and had little expectation of future profits. Cocks' own behaviour and accounts were thought to need investigation, and at last he was ordered to close the factory and return to the Indies. In 1623, after some ineffectual delay, Cocks

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 (6) Cocks, Diary, II, 295-9, Cocks to Court, 15 Feb 1617/8;
 II, 312-3, Cocks to Court, 10 Mar 1619/20.

announced his departure to the daimyoo of Hirado. He expressed the hope that he might return to Japan 'if the next year shall produce any better encouragement', ⁽⁷⁾ and leaving the Dutch to collect all outstanding debts, set sail for Batavia.

The voluntary withdrawal of the English factory left only three European nations with interests in Japan. In the following year Iemitsu was able to eliminate one of these. The behaviour of Spanish missionaries and traders had long seemed to lend colour to the accusations of their Protestant enemies and even the renewal of the laws against Christianity in 1622 failed to convince them of danger. In 1624 the Bakuhu ⁽⁸⁾ claimed to have discovered a Spanish plot to conquer Japan and ordered all Spaniards to leave the country. It was the first open act of exclusion.

Iemitsu proceeded to put the finishing touches to the system begun by Ieyasu. The Syoogun governed Japan through a Council of Elders (Roozyuu) and a Junior Council (Wakadosiyori) to which only direct vassals and supporters of the Tokugawa (hudai) could be appointed. The other great lords, the outside feudatories or tozama daimyoo, ^{were} ~~being~~ left to administer their own fiefs at the Syoogun's pleasure, ^{but} they or their families were expected to be in constant attendance at Edo as hostages for good behaviour. Loyal hudai controlled all key areas of the country, including Kyooto (Kyoto) where the Imperial Court

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(7) Cocks, Diary, II, 345-6.

(8) Bakuhu, lit. 'camp government', was the term used for the government of the Syoogun, the effective central authority in Japan, as distinct from the purely ceremonial functions of the Imperial Court at Kyooto.

was kept in strict isolation. Even the hudai were not completely trusted, however. All important offices were held concurrently by two or more men, usually with the official rank of bugyoo, who took it in turn to perform the duties deputed to them, so that none was able to establish a personal following. Chief Censors (oometuke) and lower-ranking metuke were charged with the duty of watching and reporting the activities of all local lords and officials, and it is significant that these men, whose primary task was to protect the regime against sedition, were in later years often entrusted with the treatment and interrogation of foreigners who either by accident or design reached the shores of Japan.

Just as he completed Ieyasu's work of creating an administrative machine and a vested interest among the hudai in upholding it, so Iemitsu finally achieved Japanese isolation: the two policies were closely linked. After 1624 Dutch and Portuguese were the only Europeans remaining in Japan. The campaign against Christian priests and converts was intensified and new tortures devised to induce them to recant. Portuguese traders, who persisted in trying to smuggle religieux into the country, laboured under heavy exactions and in an atmosphere of increasing suspicion. The more careful Dutchmen at Hirado were little better off. The Japanese themselves were forbidden on pain of death to leave their homeland. An edict of 1636 so regulated the size and construction of their ships as to make them unfit for the open sea and effectively destroyed the valuable trade they had built up with other parts of eastern Asia. Then, in 1637, a rebellion broke out at Simabara in Kyuusyu. The grievances which caused it seem to have been largely economic, but many Japanese Christians took part and the Bakuhu, whether honestly or not, attributed it to Portuguese intrigue. The Portuguese, priests and merchants alike, were ordered to leave the country and forbidden ever to return. The penalty for

disobedience was death. Soon after, to show that this was no idle threat, the Syoogun executed the members of a Portuguese embassy sent from Macao to seek re-admittance to the trade.

There was a strong party at Edo in favour of expelling the Dutch as well. However, they had shown their loyalty by providing naval artillery support for the government forces in the Simabara campaign; and by submitting to all the new restrictions laid on their activities, they contrived to retain what had now become a valuable monopoly. Their factory at Hirado was destroyed and in May 1641 they were removed to the island of Desima in Nagasaki harbour, to which thereafter trade and traders were confined.

The transfer to Desima heralded a new era in the relations between Dutch and Japanese. The opperhoofd and his colleagues were forbidden access to the shore and became virtual prisoners on the tiny artificial island which had originally been intended to house the Portuguese. The trading season was limited to a few months by the monsoons and for the rest of the year there was little to do. Lavish bribes might purchase the privilege of an occasional walk under escort; in no circumstances were religious services allowed. When the ships arrived they were disarmed and their cargoes landed in lighters maintained at Dutch expense. Crews were not allowed to land, and even the captains' movements were restricted after some of them had been detected in smuggling. The cost of maintaining the establishment was enormous. In addition to the normal expenses of a trading factory, the Dutch were forced to pay the salaries - and bribes - of the often incompetent Japanese interpreters, to make rich gifts to local officials for every small privilege granted, and to provide annual presents for the Syoogun. The latter were usually taken to Edo by the opperhoofd and the doctor. Despite the close watch kept on their

movements, the discomforts of the journey and the frequent insults to which they were subjected, both were thankful for even a temporary respite from the monotony of Desima.

For all the inconveniences and restrictions, the Dutch clung to their foothold in Japan. It was too profitable to be lightly relinquished. Their imports of silk, cloth, tin and lead often sold at a loss, especially later in the seventeenth century when the Japanese took to fixing arbitrary import prices or restricting the total value of goods brought in. Yet the return cargoes realised prices which more than compensated. Between 1642 and 1660 profits averaged over £50,000 a year, and they stayed at much the same level for the rest of the century despite increasing Japanese restrictions. It is small wonder that other nations coveted a share in the trade.

When the English East India Company had withdrawn Cocks in 1623 it had not necessarily intended to give up all thought of trade with Japan. Moreover, it was for many years subjected to pressure to renew the connection from enthusiastic if usually ill-informed sources. As early as 1626 and 1627 the subject was raised by the newly-appointed council in Batavia, whose President wrote to the Court of Directors with specific proposals for an attempt. His letter revealed complete ignorance of the conditions under which trade had been carried on at Hirado. The Japanese, he stated, depended on China for the silk which was used for all their clothing, but they hated the Chinese and would gladly escape from this dependence on them. The winter in Japan was cold and European cloth much sought after in consequence. The Dutch were unpopular because their country was a republic; the Portuguese had already been expelled because of their religion. With a letter of recommendation from the King, the Company could not fail to be admitted

to trade, and this would bring a market for as many as 100,000 cloths - over what period he did not say - and bullion returns enough to pay for all the investments from the Indies. (9)

The Court refused to be enticed by these fair prospects, for the records hardly supported President Hawley's statements, but copies of the correspondence came into the hands of Thomas Smethwick, a disappointed adventurer in the Joint Stock, who promptly proceeded to make trouble. In December 1632 he drew up a memorial to the Attorney General. He accused the Governor and Committees of the Company of gross mismanagement and attempted fraud, claiming that they had abandoned what was a promising opening because their private interests in the Levant trade would be seriously affected by success in China and Japan. He took part in some acrimonious exchanges before the Court of Directors, but his charges were dismissed by the Attorney General, who accepted the Company's plea that the Japan trade had never been profitable and was most unlikely to be so unless a connection with China could first be obtained. (10)

Smethwick was still not satisfied. As a member of the Court in 1635 he returned to the charge, but this time his proposals were more brusquely dismissed. (11) Thereafter, it seems, he turned his energies to other interests.

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(9) Calendar of State Papers (East Indies) 1625-9, pp.371-80, Pres. Hawley to Court, 18 July 1627.

(10) Cal.State Pap.(E.Indies) 1630-4, p.335, Smethwick to Attorney General, 27 Dec 1632; pp.374-7, Court minutes, 13 Mar 1633; p.383, Court minutes, 20 Mar 1633.

(11) Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company 1635-9, p.119, Court minutes, 23 Nov 1635.
Pratt, History of Japan, II, 130-1.

There were those who agreed with Smethwicke, however, and during the next twenty years the Company's "refusal" to engage in the Japan trade sometime proved a useful argument to men who wished to break its monopoly. In 1635 a group of such opponents, financed by Sir William Courteen, obtained a royal licence to trade in the Far East. An expedition was organised to voyage to India and the China coast and the ships were given letters to the Emperor of Japan with orders to trade in that country if they found any encouragement.⁽¹²⁾ These plans were not carried out, though the Courteen Association continued to trade in eastern waters. Some years later a new group was formed, known as the Assada Merchants, who also planned to trade with Japan and equally failed to make the attempt. However, when in 1649 these warring interests amalgamated with the Company, the Assada Merchants inserted a clause into the agreement⁽¹³⁾ stipulating that if at any time proposals were made for a further attempt in Japan and the Company should refuse to entertain them, private members would be free to fit out ships and try the trade on their own account.

Several more years were spent in negotiating the Company's new charter before any action was taken on this concession, but in 1657, when the charter had been issued and the New General Stock raised, it was learnt that two private ships had succeeded in trading at Canton and the Company revived its plans for a commerce with China and Japan. Three ships were made ready during 1658, including the Discovery for Japan. Factors were appointed and letters of recommendation obtained

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 (12) Cal. Court Min. 1635-9, pp. 130-1, instructions to Weddell and Mountney, 12 Dec 1635.

(13) Cal. Court Min. 1644-9, pp. 383-4, Court minutes 5 Dec 1649.

from the new Protector, and by the end of the year preparations were almost completed. But by this time it was becoming apparent that war with Holland might break out at any time and it seemed to the directors that open hostilities with the Dutch would make a voyage to Japan too hazardous a venture. (14) Once again the project was abandoned.

The Chief appointed for this abortive expedition was Quarles Brown, formerly agent at Bantam, who now returned to his old station. He returned, apparently, with some regret, for in 1663 he asked permission to employ a ship of his own to seek trade in Japan. His offer was referred to a committee and no more is heard of it, but it must have helped to revive interest in Japan, for in 1664 the Court wrote to Bantam seeking full information as to cargoes, ships and credentials needed for the attempt. The Java factors did not view the prospects with enthusiasm. They urged, in fact, that a factory should first be settled in Siam or Cambodia, whence goods suitable for Japan could be obtained. After this inconclusive exchange the correspondence lapsed until 1668, when the Company was given a set of papers relating to the Dutch trade at Nagasaki which had been taken in the capture of two Dutch East Indiamen, and found, moreover, that it would be possible to make arrangements with Spain for English ships to get stores and water in the Philippines. Encouraged by these developments, the quest for information was continued. Bantam still favoured an indirect approach, using credentials provided by some friendly eastern monarch; but reports from Bombay urged that an expedition be sent direct to Japan and predicted

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 (14) Pratt, History of Japan, II, 131-2.

that complete success would result from such a course. (15)

Both methods were tried. To aid the Bantam factory in its attempt to extend trade to Siam or Cambodia, the frigate Advance was sent out from England in January 1671, but to the Court's considerable displeasure she was used in a voyage from the Indies to Persia. The fact was that the council in Java had already decided that Taiwan (16) was the best point from which to approach Japan. Two ships had been sent there in 1670 in an attempt to found a factory, but had only limited success. In 1671 two more were dispatched to call first at Taiwan and then continue to Nagasaki, where they were to make enquiries about the former English factory in Japan. Both ships, however, were lost at sea. (17)

In London, meanwhile, a direct attempt was being planned. Early in 1671 Samuel Baron, a native of Tonquin of mixed European descent, approached the East India Company through the Paris embassy with plans for a voyage to Japan. Some of his proposals were quickly dismissed as 'dishonourable', but a committee was formed to consider the rest. In April it was agreed that two ships should be sent out that year with Indian and European goods to a total value of £30,000, to found a factory at Tonquin under William Gyfford, and then continue to Japan with David Stephens as Chief Factor, Baron as Second and Simon Delboe as Third. Letters would be sent by the King and the Company. Three ships, the Experiment, Return and Zant,

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(15) Pratt, History of Japan, II, 133-42.

(16) The island of Formosa. Taiwan is the Japanese and Chinese name,

(17) Cal. Court Min. 1671-3, intro. pp. vii-viii.
Pratt, op. cit., II, 142-6.

were chosen and sailed from London in September 1671, carrying passes issued under the terms of the 1668 treaty to protect them from Dutch search and interference at sea.

Although the Court had apparently intended that they should go direct to Japan, the Experiment and Return called at Taiwan in July 1672. Stephens had died on the voyage from Bantam and it was now decided that Delboe should succeed him, taking the Return on to Nagasaki, while Baron remained to take charge of the factory in Taiwan. By calling there Delboe had lost the last of the southerly monsoon, with the result that he did not reach Nagasaki until June of 1673, and this delay was important, for it enabled the Dutch in Batavia to warn their fellow-countrymen in Desima of the English attempt to break down their monopoly.

At Nagasaki Delboe presented his copy of the privileges granted by Ieyasu in 1613, claiming that the original had been returned to the Japanese in 1623. He asked for permission to trade on the old terms. In order to avoid arousing Japanese fears of Christianity, the Return entered harbour flying a red and white flag instead of the cross of Saint George, but this seemed to excite rather than avert suspicion. So, too, did the long absence of English ships from Japan. The whole crew was interrogated at length about religion, but the officials, obviously primed by the Dutch, showed most concern over Charles II's Portuguese marriage and returned to this point time and time again. Finally, after weeks of waiting, word came from Edo that Delboe could not be admitted to trade. The marriage alliance with Portugal, traditional enemy of Japan, was the only reason given for this decision, but local officials held out little hope that success would attend any future English efforts, even under a Protestant queen. Once given, they said,

the decision of the Syoogun was irrevocable. (18)

The direct attempt to open trade had failed, but the Company did not immediately relax its efforts. The Court of Directors attributed the failure largely to Bantam's disobedience of orders, which had given the Dutch time to work on Japanese suspicions, and still hoped that an indirect approach might succeed. In October 1674 they wrote to the Bantam agents vetoing a proposal to obtain trade by force and instructing them to seek the intercession of the rulers of Bantam or Formosa to explain away the difficulties that had arisen. Meanwhile, as gold, silver and copper were still much needed, they were to make every effort through the Taiwan factory to push the sale of English goods among native merchants having access to Japan, 'that soe if possible by our trading to Tywan it may be in effect as if we did trade to China, Japan and the Manillaes'. (19)

Taiwan was not the only possible means of approach. In January 1676 the Surat Presidency wrote that the King of Siam was willing to assist by writing to Japan and was ordered to make use of this opening. At about the same time a factory was founded at Amoy on the China coast and seemed to offer the prospect of a connection with Japan, for Chinese merchants were still allowed to trade there and could doubtless be persuaded to ship English goods. It was hoped, in fact, that this new factory would make it unnecessary to continue the one in Taiwan, but before any success had been achieved both became involved in the Manchu campaigns in China and had to be withdrawn.

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(18) A short account of this mission appears in Cal.Court Min. 1671-3 (intro, pp.viii-ix), the relevant papers being in that volume and Pratt, op.cit., vol II.

(19) Cal.Court Min.1674-6, p.xix, citing Court to Bantam, 23 Oct 1674.

Not lightly discouraged, the Company now tried to transmit letters to the Japanese Emperor through the good offices of a number of eastern rulers. A letter was drafted asking that trade might be resumed with his country, reminding him that the behaviour of the English had always been peaceful and considerate and pointing out the advantage to Japan of breaking the Dutch monopoly and allowing foreigners to compete for her goods. In 1681 copies were sent to Bantam, Siam, Tonquin, Amoy and Taiwan with a request that they be forwarded. It was found, however, that the Chinese merchants, who alone could act as messengers, dared not convey a letter for a private individual, much less one addressed to the Emperor, and the same fears prevented them from co-operating in a plan to found a Chinese colony at Madras and use it to carry on a trade with Japan. In 1684 the Siam factory in its turn was instructed to send a ship to Japan if it could see any hope of success, but the ship which was to have been sent from England for this purpose lost the season and was diverted to Bengal. For some years no new plans were formed.

The events of 1688 gave England a Dutch king and a Protestant queen. To the sanguine it appeared that this would remove both Dutch and Japanese opposition and that the trade should therefore be attempted once again. The Company, however, had at last been discouraged by the constant failure of its efforts, and was content simply to remind the Madras Presidency of the changed circumstances while explicitly withholding permission to fit out an expedition at the Company's expense. Instead, the trade was thrown open to the licensed traders in India, the 'country' merchants, but there is no record that any of them ever planned a voyage to Japan. (20)

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 (20) For these attempts at indirect trade see Cal. Court Min 1677-9, pp. xvii-xviii and Pratt, op.cit., II, 195-205.

In the eighteenth century Englishmen seem to have lost all interest in the Japan trade. It was noticed briefly and with little enthusiasm in 1701 after the Company had succeeded in getting a foothold in the Chusan Islands, a group just south of the Yangtse River delta, but thereafter, for more than seventy years, Japan was hardly mentioned in English books and records. (21) The reasons for this loss of interest are not far to seek. The East India Company had met with little success in China and Japan, nor in the East Indies themselves. It began to concentrate more and more on its trade with India, where it met new and powerful competition from France, to overcome which needed all its strength. Relatively little thought was given to the lands farther east. The Dutch, no longer so important as political and economic rivals in Europe, were left to consolidate their position in the East Indian archipelago, for they were already too firmly entrenched there to be easily dislodged.

Even for the Dutch the Japan trade lost much of its appeal. From the beginning exports had consisted principally of gold, silver and copper, but the export of silver had been prohibited in 1668 and debasement of the gold coinage soon made that no longer a source of profit. Copper cargoes, however, continued to increase until the end of the century. By 1700 they often exceeded 1000 tons a year, but at this point the Japanese became alarmed at the quantity of metal leaving the country and began to limit the amount that might be exported. By 1745 the Dutch were allowed only a little over 250 tons a year. In the same period other restrictions were imposed and the number of ships allowed to visit Nagasaki was sometimes limited to only one a year. So small was the trade that more were hardly necessary. When the last of these

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 (21) J.F. Kuiper, Japan en de buitenwereld in de achttiende eeuw, ('s-Gravenhage, 1921), pp. 198-200.

regulations was introduced, the Dutch, on the advice of Governor-General Imhoff at Batavia, made efforts to improve the situation by greater care in selecting both the goods and the officials sent to Desima, and for a few years the trade thrived again. Some of the restrictions were lifted, but soon these were re-imposed, profits dwindled and Dutch threats to close the factory altogether met with contempt or open anger. By the end of the eighteenth century, European contacts with Japan had reached their lowest level.

(b) The renewal of interest, 1763-1833.

After 1763 the Pacific became once more of major concern to the governments of Europe. France, defeated in the first struggle for empire, sought new fields to conquer. Britain, no longer on the defensive after her resounding victories in the Seven Years War, thought once more of eastward expansion, this time in terms of trade rather than of settlement. The change was accompanied by a sudden increase in the trade with China. In 1775 the East India Company's ships carried 26,918 piculs⁽²²⁾ of tea out of a total of 125,125 piculs shipped from Canton; in 1780 this rose to 69,445 piculs, in 1785 to 103,834 piculs out of 232,034; the following year saw yet another increase of nearly fifty per cent.⁽²³⁾ The future seemed bright.

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(22) 1 picul was 133 lbs approx.

(23) H.B. Morse, Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China (5 vols, Oxford, 1926-9), II, 11, 50, 111, 119.

Europeans had hoped to find another such market in the south Pacific and began systematic exploration in search of it, but by 1775 Captain Cook had proved that it did not exist - or at least that Terra Australis was no rich and thickly populated land which could become the object of a new trade. There remained one great object of discovery. In 1776 Cook set out on the last of his voyages, this time to find the Pacific entrance to the long-sought Northwest Passage, a shorter and safer route for the existing China trade. It seemed that its exploitation must become the principal object of Pacific trade.

Cook's instructions were to cruise along the northwest coast of America and winter in Kamchatka. A garbled version of this plan gave rise to rumours in Europe that among his tasks was that of organising a joint Anglo-Russian invasion of Japan, ⁽²⁴⁾ and while this report was totally unfounded, it combined with some of the minor discoveries of the voyage to draw attention to that country for a time. On his way to Kamchatka, Cook visited Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island. There his men obtained a number of sea-otter pelts which they subsequently sold at high prices in Canton, and the publication of Cook's narrative of the expedition opened to Englishmen the prospect of a profitable three-cornered trade between England, Nootka and Canton. Moreover, James King, continuing the narrative after Cook's death, expressed his regret that weather conditions had made it impossible for them to explore the coasts of north China and Japan. He urged that if exploration were to be combined with a trade in furs, 'that object might still be happily accomplished, through means of the East India Company,

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 (24) G.V. Blue (ed.), 'A Rumor of an Anglo-Russian Raid on Japan, 1776', Pacific Hist. Review, VIII, 4 (Dec, 1939), pp. 453-63.

not only without expense but even with the prospect of very considerable advantages'. (25)

It was not long before English traders took advantage of this opening. Among others, Sir Joseph Banks and Lord Mulgrave were interested and backed the brothers John and Richard Cadman Etches in the formation of the King George's Sound Company. With government support, licences were obtained from the South Sea and East India Companies to trade between Nootka, China and Japan, (26) but in the event the new company confined its sales at first to Canton, where it found a ready market for furs. At the same time the 'country' merchants of India were planning to engage in this apparently lucrative commerce. The Bengal Fur Company was formed to trade between Nootka and China and to explore new regions of trade. John Meares, an advocate of commercial expansion in the northwest Pacific, was chosen to command its first venture, and in 1789, after two voyages, he met John Etches in Canton. The two men agreed to pool their resources to found a settlement at Nootka Sound, as this would benefit both companies. They bought and fitted out the Argonaut for the expedition and put her under the command of Captain James Colnett, formerly one of Cook's officers, and although he failed in the main project owing to Spanish opposition, Colnett brought back a good cargo of pelts to Macao in May 1790. It was at this point that the idea of a Japan voyage was revived.

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 (25) J. Cook, A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean (3 vols, London, 1784), III, 437-8.

(26) East India Co, Court Minute Book, vol 94, minutes for 29 Apr and 6 May 1785.

M.E. Wilbur, The East India Company and the British Empire in the Far East (New York, 1945), p. 337.

Colnett found that he was forbidden to sell his furs at Canton by an Imperial edict directed against the Russians, from whom the Chinese thought the furs to be obtained. Daniel Beal, his company's agent and Prussian consul at Macao, suggested that a market might be found for them in Japan and Korea, and in July 1791 gave him instructions to make a voyage to those countries. These instructions constituted, in fact, orders to open a general trade with Japan. If the Japanese did not immediately turn him away, Beal wrote, Colnett must be 'particularly careful' to inform them that his ship and crew were English and that he came 'for the purpose of obtaining permission to trade Annually to the Port of Nangasaque or any other belonging to Japan'. (27)

The narrative of the voyage is briefly told. During August 1791 Colnett cruised up the west coast of Kyuusyuu, and at several points tried to establish communication with the Japanese. On each occasion, Argonaut or the boats she sent away towards shore were met by Japanese craft which signalled them to depart. Colnett's interpreter, a Chinese, proved useless. At last he wrote in his journal that he had made six such overtures 'without any prospect of communication or Trade with the natives, but by force of Arms which in my present situation...I did not think proper to attempt'. (28) A brief visit to Korea met with as little success, and from the Korean coast Colnett was forced by weather to Chusan and returned thence to Macao.

At the time Colnett could see small prospect of success

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 (27) J. Colnett, The Journal of Captain James Colnett aboard the Argonaut (Champlain Soc, Toronto, 1940), pp. 234-9, Beal to Colnett, 25 July 1791.

(28) Colnett, Journal, pp. 242-51.

for a private venture in opening trade with Japan. The attempt if made, he thought, should be in a vessel sufficiently well-manned and well-armed to command respect, but was still 'too doubtful and hazardous an Undertaking for two or three Merchants to Enter into, nor should it be thought on without an exclusive privilege to the trade granted by Charter'.⁽²⁹⁾ The passage of time modified these views. Seven years later, when writing an account of another voyage, he said nothing of his rebuffs at the hands of the Japanese, confining himself to the fact that he had coasted Japan and Korea in search of a market and that he saw there 'an encouraging prospect of a new and valuable commerce'.⁽³⁰⁾ The implication was that only the damage ~~xxxx~~ his ship sustained in a typhoon robbed him of trade!

Before news of Colnett's voyage and its failure had reached England, the Japan trade had become a subject of discussion between the East India Company and the government. The Company's charter was to expire in 1793 and its renewal was expected to provoke a bitter struggle in the House. Opposition to the monopoly would come from business circles interested in obtaining a market for their goods in India and the Far East, who already protested vigorously that a monopoly trade restricted the growth of British exports and in particular that the Company had not made sufficient efforts to find new areas of trade. As a result of these accusations, the Board of Trade began an investigation of the East Indies trade. On 24 November 1791 the East India Company was informed that the commissioners had taken into consideration the reports

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 (29) Colnett, Journal, pp.278-81.

(30) J.Colnett, A Voyage to the South Atlantic and round Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean (London,1798), pp.iii-iv.

already furnished and now requested that others be prepared on the trade to China, Japan and Persia 'so that their Lordships may be enabled to judge what prospect there may be of extending or opening such Trade with any of those Countries'. (31)

The report on Persia and Japan which was produced in January 1792⁽³²⁾ was primarily a defence of the Company's past actions. The section devoted to Japan opened with a brief history of British trade there in the seventeenth century and emphasised that it had proved useless as a gateway to China and a constant source of loss. It had always been assumed that copper and camphor were the chief goods to be received from Japan. The committee urged that in these could lie no profit for Great Britain - 'Supposing, however, that Woollens, Lead and Curiosities for such a Cargo could be made to amount to £8,000, what is to be received in Payment? About £30,000 or £32,000 Value in Copper, an Article which is also the Produce of Great Britain, and which must be disposed of in India to the Prejudice of our Mines. Thus Great Britain on the one Hand would gain £8,000, while she lost on the other £32,000'. In fact, they concluded, the Japan trade could never become 'an Object of Attention for the Manufactures and Produce of Great Britain'. It was a singularly unselfish and patriotic argument which seems to have impressed the government but little. Certainly it did not prevent the Secretary of State from including the negotiation of a pact with Japan as one of the objects of Lord Macartney's mission to the East which was then being planned.

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 (31) East India Co, Court Minute Book, vol 100, minutes of 7 Dec 1791.

(32) East India Co, The Third Report of the Select Committee Appointed to take into Consideration the Export Trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, London, 1793.

In 1787 the British government had decided to send Lieutenant-Colonel Cathcart on a mission to China in an attempt to improve the conditions under which Britain traded there. Cathcart had died before reaching Canton and since then the plan had remained in abeyance. At the end of 1791 the Secretary of State, Henry Dundas, approached Lord Macartney on the subject and Macartney, who had served as Envoy-Extraordinary in Russia and as Governor of Madras, accepted the appointment. Discussion of his instructions began in January 1792 and continued throughout the summer. From the beginning it was assumed that the mission to Japan should be included, though as a secondary objective, ⁽³³⁾ and this was made quite clear in the final version of his instructions:-

'It is possible that you may find it either necessary or expedient to touch upon the Coast of Japan... The difficulties of trading there, which have so long deterred other nations from attempting it, are now said to have almost ceased.

It is [not] impossible that the competition of the Japan market with that of China might render the commodities of both places cheaper to the purchaser. The probability of such a resource might at least operate in some degree to facilitate the negotiations at Peking.

You will therefore likewise receive a letter addressed to the Emperor of Japan which you will either deliver, send or suppress as circumstances may induce you to think necessary or advisable'. ⁽³⁴⁾

Macartney left Portsmouth on 26 September 1792 aboard H.M.S. Lion, Captain Sir Erasmus Gower, and arrived off the mouth of the Peiho near Tientsin in July 1793. He at once decided that the Lion would not be required until the following May, and might therefore be employed in an exploratory visit

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 (33) Colonial Office, East Indies (C.O.77), vol 26, abstracts of letters dated 7 Jan and 8 Aug 1792.

(34) Morse, Chronicles of the E.India Co., II, 241.

to Japan. He sent orders ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ to Gower accordingly. After curing his sick, Gower was to proceed to Edo and present to the Syoogun a letter from the ambassador, 'to which, coming to him in so respectable a manner, it was likely he would pay attention'. He was to make the usual nautical surveys, find out whether reports of Japanese aversion to foreigners had been exaggerated, how far they were likely to purchase British manufactures and whether they had any goods or raw materials, apart from copper, that might profitably be exported in return. If no reply was received to these enquiries within a fortnight, the cruise must be continued to Luzon, Celebes and other islands to the south so as to arrive at Macao early in May 1794. (35) The instructions leave little doubt that Macartney hoped to open up a much more general trade with Japan than that already enjoyed by the Dutch.

Macartney himself continued from Tientsin to Jehol, and there all negotiations with the Chinese broke down. There, too, he received a letter from the Company's committee at Canton warning him that there was danger of war with France and urging him to allow the Lion to escort the season's ships from Canton. As the convoy could hardly be ready before the end of March, however, Macartney decided that there was yet time to go to Japan if he could stop Gower at Chusan. He left Pekin on 7 October 1793 after sending fresh orders for the Lion, but Gower had sailed from Chusan without receiving them, leaving word that he intended to go first to Canton to make up certain deficiencies in his stores, and thence to Japan in accordance with

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(35) Sir G. Staunton, An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China (3 vols, London, 1797), I, 507.

his instructions. Macartney at once set out overland for Canton, sending a letter ordering Gower to await him there. This, too, failed to arrive in time. The Lion had already sailed for Japan, but Gower soon found that the northeast monsoon made progress difficult and was forced to return to the Canton estuary from the coast of Taiwan to refit for a further attempt. At the Ladrones he was overtaken by Macartney's dispatches, and the attempt to reach Japan was abandoned. (36) Definite news of war with France had now reached China and an enemy squadron was said to be in the Sunda Straits. As only the Lion was available it was imperative that she convoy home the Company's ships, and Macartney reached London in September 1794 having failed in all his major objectives.

Although rumour was current on the China coast that Japan was becoming more ready to receive foreigners, there is no good reason to suppose that Macartney would have been successful even had he reached Japan. Certainly the Dutch would have intrigued against him. Moreover, his former connection with the Russian court would have been a valuable weapon to them. During the first half of the eighteenth century the Russians had made several attempts to penetrate to Japan, especially through the Kuriles and Hokkaido, and their missions and expeditions had alarmed the Japanese, who interpreted them as armed attacks aimed at conquest. Later a Polish adventurer, Count Beniewski, who visited Japan in 1771, invented a story of an Anglo-Russian plot to divide the world in which Japan was to be part of Russia's share. The tale was ~~xx~~ enthusiastically recounted in Japan and implicitly believed, and to a

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 (36) Col. Off, East Indies, vol 29, Gower to Adty, 30 Oct 1793. Staunton, Embassy to China, II, 336-41, 440-2.

people so suspicious, Macartney's appearance could only have seemed confirmation of the existence of such a plot.

On the other hand, there was growing in Japan a party which opposed the Tokugawa policy of seclusion. In western Japan the Satuma fief, never reconciled to Tokugawa domination, had an interest in foreign trade deriving from suzerainty over the Loocheo (Ryuukyu) Islands. In the late eighteenth century, under the leadership of Simazu Sigehide, Satuma began to press for a relaxation of the ancient laws, but met with uncompromising opposition from Matudaira Sadanobu, himself a Tokugawa⁽³⁷⁾ and guardian of the boy Syoogun Ienari. Sadanobu gradually lost ground and was unable to prevent occasional local relaxations. In 1793 the Satuma faction gained the upper hand. By 1797 the Dutch shipping permit had been revised to allow the use of two ships a year instead of one. For the moment more than this could not be done, for opinion was sharply divided and Sadanobu still had many friends in the administration, and events of the next two years swung the pendulum back once more.

The first of these events was the appearance of an English ship off Hokkaido. Captain William Broughton had been sent out to continue the exploration of the north Pacific begun by Cook, and in September 1796 he touched at Hokkaido, returning again in the following year. On both occasions he made friends with the Ainu inhabitants. He was actually presented with a chart - a gross breach of the laws - before Japanese officials appeared to prevent any further intercourse.

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(37) Only senior branches of the family used the family name of Tokugawa. Other branches - and many not related by blood to whom it had been awarded as an honour or reward - used the original family name of Matudaira.

Broughton's visit and an offer made by the Russians to Hokkaido fishermen in 1798 to carry out a barter trade in the Kuriles, made it seem that in the north, at least, the seclusion laws were being only half-heartedly carried out. The isolationists raised an immediate outcry. Simazu was accused of intriguing with the Dutch opperhoofd at Nagasaki to arrange for Dutch vessels to visit Satsuma ports. In 1799 an investigation was ordered, but Satsuma was too powerful to suffer any direct attack and only two subordinates were punished. Despite the imposition of stricter anti-luxury laws, the consumption of western goods continued to increase, and by 1802 the demand was so great that the Chinese were given permission to load two junks with western merchandise from Annam. This represented a new victory for Simazu, and by 1803 his party was again in the ascendant. Sadanobu could do no more than protest from an enforced retirement.

There followed a strange interlude. By 1797 the Dutch were finding it difficult to provide ships for the Japan trade. The war in Europe had cut their communications with home and they feared, with some reason, that the English fleet would try to capture any ships sent to Japan. They accordingly hired an American ship commanded by William Stewart to make the voyage under American colours, for which the Dutch flag was to be substituted when approaching Nagasaki. The ruse was successful, especially for the opportunist Stewart, who contrived to obtain a licence from the Japanese for a voyage on his own account, though when he later tried to use it he found it was not honoured by them. After leaving the Dutch service he apparently persuaded some merchants in India to provide him with a cargo for another attempt, this time in co-operation with a Bengal ship under Captain James Torey. Both reached Nagasaki in 1803.

Torey, flying the Union Jack, was immediately ordered to leave. Stewart, however, was known to the officials, who were also aware that the dominant influences in the capital favoured foreign trade. On the other hand, they suspected that he had been concerned in the intrigues which led to the investigation of 1799, and after much deliberation took the momentous step of ordering him to leave on their own responsibility without referring the case to Edo.⁽³⁸⁾ When in doubt, in fact, the officials still thought it safer to rely on tradition.

The Dutch continued to use American ships, though the fact was concealed as far as possible from the Bakuhu. However, in 1804 the Russian-American Company sent a mission to Nagasaki under Nicolai Rezanov to open trade relations, and this news was altogether too important to suppress. There were violent discussions in Edo. The Satuma leaders were not yet strong enough to grant privileges to the hated Russians, and under suspicion of wishing to do so they steadily lost support. By 1805 Sadanobu had again triumphed and the Russians were dismissed without ceremony. Rezanov, furious at the treatment he had received, incited two young Russian officers to seek revenge, but the attacks they made on the Kuriles in 1806 and 1807 served only to confirm the Tokugawa in their opinions. Moreover, at about this time some inkling of the fact that the Dutch were using American ships seems to have reached Edo, and though their coming was not actually prohibited, they were not thereafter welcomed.

In 1808 the worst Japanese suspicions of British motives

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(38) For a fuller account of Stewart see Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.122-32.

were confirmed. Captain Fleetwood Pellew of H.M.S. Phaeton, hearing an India that the Dutch were to send two ships to Nagasaki, set out to intercept them. Failing to meet with them at sea, he decided to follow to Nagasaki, where he arrived in October 1808. According to Dutch accounts, he entered flying Dutch colours and was at first mistaken for the annual trader, but finding that the port contained only Chinese and Japanese vessels, he confined himself to a demand for food, wood and water, seizing hostages to ensure prompt delivery. So gross an insult to Japan could not be allowed to pass unpunished. But the Nagasaki bugyoo⁽³⁹⁾ found that the defences of the port had been allowed to fall into disrepair, while none of his subordinates had any stomach for an attack on a crack English frigate. He had no alternative but to provide the necessary provisions, and the Phaeton triumphantly departed as the Japanese soldiers - or so they later claimed - made ready to attack and destroy her. But excuses were of no avail in the capital. The bugyoo committed suicide rather than face dishonour and the daimyoo of Hizen, who was responsible for providing the Nagasaki garrison, was disgraced and even imprisoned for a time. It seemed that many years would have to pass before the English could expect a welcome at Nagasaki.⁽⁴⁰⁾

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(39) A bugyoo was a high-ranking Bakuhu official, responsible either for general supervision of on aspect of governmental activity (e.g. the kansyoo-bugyoo or Finance Commissioners) or for the administration of one of the few Japanese cities directly administered by the Bakuhu. Nagasaki, because of its foreign trade, was one such city. Two bugyoo were usually appointed, one acting in Nagasaki itself, the other in Edo, the two changing places at intervals in accordance with the system of rotation.

(40) W.G. Aston, 'H.M.S. Phaeton at Nagasaki', Trans. Asiatic Soc. Japan, 1st Ser, VII(1879), pp.323-36.
C.Muto, Niti-ei kootuu-si, pp.92-4, 246-435.

This incident greatly increased the anti-foreign excitement in Japan. Dutch learning (Rangaku) was spreading and the Japanese were rapidly becoming aware of the scientific improvements, especially in the art of warfare, which were being made in Europe. Scholars began to produce pamphlets pointing out the inherent strength of the western nations and the comparative military weakness of Japan. Some even urged the dangers of too rigid an adherence to seclusion. The old story of an Anglo-Russian plot directed against Japan was revived, and when, in 1811, the Russian explorer Vassily Golovnin was captured in Hokkaido, the officials refused to release him until they received a formal disavowal of Russian raids on the Kuriles in 1806-7. When this was forthcoming in 1813, Golovnin was released. The success re-assured the Bakuhu and more than ever convinced the isolationists of Japan's superiority and the justice of the seclusion laws.

Since Macartney's return the British government had shown no interest in the Japan trade. Broughton's object had been exploration, while the Phaeton, despite the importance of her visit for future commercial relations, had been engaged in naval operations and not at all concerned with trade. The war with France was engaging all the attention of both government and public, and Japan had always been a secondary consideration in Far Eastern policy. In the continued attacks on the East India Company which led in 1813 to the opening of the trade with India - the China monopoly was retained for a time - there seems to have been no appeal to the Japan trade as an example of the evils of monopoly. Even Daniel Beal, who had drafted the Argonaut's instructions in 1791, did not introduce the subject when called on to give evidence. In India, apparently, there was

still some interest, for the Bengal merchants had let themselves be persuaded by Stewart to send him with Torey to make an attempt in 1803. It is not surprising to find, then, that in the next major British attempt to open trade with Japan, it was from the East that the initiative came. It sprang, more particularly, from the enthusiasm of Thomas Stamford Raffles.

After five years' service under the East India Company at Penang, Raffles visited Calcutta on sick leave in 1810. There he attracted the attention of Lord Minto, the Governor-General, who was at that time planning the conquest of Java from the Dutch, since the French occupation of Holland had made it enemy territory. He sent Raffles to Malacca as his personal representative to study the project, and when the operation was successfully carried out at the end of 1811, Raffles was installed as Lieutenant-Governor of Java under the supreme direction of the Governor-General in Council at Calcutta.

It is not clear what caused Raffles' interest in Japan. It is certain, however, that it existed some months before he reached Java. In June 1811 he wrote to Lord Minto from Malacca urging that an attempt be made to open an English trade with Nagasaki. Admitting that the Japan trade was 'by no means equal to that of many neglected countries in Asia', he still considered it worth trying because of 'the prospect of it being opened on a more extensive scale, an event...very likely to be accelerated by the aggressions of Russia,' an argument designed to silence those who claimed that there was no profit to be made from such a trade. He said, too, that the intrigues and misrepresentations of the Dutch would condemn to failure any open attempt to resume the trade and that the attempt must therefore be made 'by gaining to our interest the present Dutch Resident in Japan and the Japanese Corps of Dutch interpreters,

at whatever price it may cost'.⁽⁴¹⁾ This plan he tried to put into practice two years later.

Although he knew it would be impossible to get his plans approved in time by the Governor-General, Raffles first tried to dispatch an expedition to Japan in 1812. He obtained the services of Waardenaar, a Dutchman formerly in the Japan service, as nominal head of the mission and proposed to send with him Dr Ainslie, to watch over English interests while acting ostensibly as surgeon for the voyage. Minto subsequently approved this plan in the warmest terms, but Raffles had meanwhile found it impossible to obtain all the trade goods he required and had postponed the venture to the following year.

In 1813 preparations were more complete. Many of the goods required were provided from Bengal and two ships, the Charlotte and Mary, were chartered from a Batavia firm. The actual plans were unchanged. Waardenaar was to go as ostensible Chief, but Ainslie was his colleague, to succeed him as soon as direct intercourse between the British government and the Japanese could be attempted with safety. Waardenaar's task was to gain admittance to the port and carry on trade as long as it proved necessary to conceal from the Japanese that the voyage was a British venture, and to this end, while not actually suppressing news of the conquest of Java, he was ordered to present it as circumspectly as possible. The main object of the voyage, however, was openly to substitute a British for a Dutch trade.

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 (41) Sir T.S. Raffles Report on Japan to the Secret Committee of the East India Company, ed. M.B. Paske-Smith (Kobe, 1929), pp. 1-4, Raffles to Minto, June 1811. This book is a print in extenso of East India Company, Factory Records, China and Japan, vol 195.

This it was to be Ainslie's duty to achieve, and once established it was to be not a perquisite of the new colony, but specifically a right pertaining to the East India Company. (42)

Waardenaar's report and journal (43) show that the latter object was never attained. The two ships left Batavia on 24 June 1813 and reached Nagasaki at the end of July. There they were met by Hendrik Doeff, opperhoofd of the Desima factory, who refused absolutely to comply with Raffles' instructions on the grounds that he could only obey orders that came from the Dutch authorities. Moreover, he asserted, such was the Japanese hatred of the English as a result of the Phaeton incident that to inform them that the trade was now under English "protection" would not only cause its abrupt termination, but would probably jeopardise the safety of the ships and the lives of their crews. The four chief Japanese interpreters were consulted and agreed with Doeff. They added that could they have believed the trade might be continued after acquainting the Japanese government with the real state of affairs, they would certainly have preferred such a course to that of suppressing the information and thereby exposing themselves to considerable personal danger. Waardenaar thought that the decision on this point must be taken by Raffles himself. This would occasion no other disadvantage than a delay of twelve months, and meanwhile the trade could be continued on its former footing, thus removing any suspicion that might have been caused by the non-arrival of Dutch ships in the seasons 1809-12. Furthermore,

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 (42) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.56-70, Raffles to Gov-Gen, 23 Sept 1813; pp.77-95, Raffles to Secret Comm, 11 Feb 1814; pp.178-83, Raffles to Gov-Gen, 10 Feb 1814.

(43) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.97-136, encls 3 and 3a in Raffles to Secret Comm, 11 Feb 1814.

if the Japanese were later to learn the truth of the situation from China or elsewhere, it would still be to the credit of the Company that two of its ships had traded in Japan 'in friendship and mutual good understanding'. The argument was Doeff's, though Waardenaar, Ainslie and Raffles all adopted it as their own.

Once agreement had been reached on these lines, the trade continued without disturbance. The English company's crest was removed from the cloths for fear it should be recognised as the same as that on goods brought by the Chinese from Canton. The goods were not of the usual quality, while much of the proceeds of the sales had to go to pay off the debts incurred by the factory in the years without trade, with the result that the surplus did not meet the cost of a return loading for the two ships. They sailed still owing 5,306 taels⁽⁴⁴⁾ on this account and reached Batavia at the end of December 1813.

Waardenaar and Ainslie were not alone in meeting difficulties. When they discovered the extent of the expenditure to which Raffles had committed them, the officials in Calcutta proved a good deal less enthusiastic than they had been in the previous year. In September 1813 copies of the instructions to Waardenaar and Ainslie had been forwarded to the Governor-General, and in January 1814 his reply was drafted.⁽⁴⁵⁾ It deprecated the large scale of the venture and the consequent expense, undertaken 'without having more satisfactory grounds for assuming that the experiment was likely to succeed and that the advantages to be derived...were likely to be such as to

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 (44) 1 teel equalled 6s.8d.approx.

(45) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.71-4, Gov-Gen to Raffles, 29 Jan 1814.

justify great pecuniary sacrifices in the prosecution of the attempt'. Moreover, an attempt to establish trade by subterfuge was fraught with danger in view of the probable effect on the Japanese should the deception be discovered. In fact, the letter summed up, 'the Governor-General in Council is of opinion that the attempt to establish an intercourse should have been open and avowed, that it should have been in the first instance at a small expense, and that if serious obstacles were found to exist the idea should for the time have been relinquished'. Such caution about Japan was to be characteristic of British officials both in India and England for more than thirty years.

Before this letter could reach Java the ships had returned from the 1813 voyage and Raffles had prepared a report for the Company's Secret Committee in London. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ He adopted Ainslie's estimate of the results of the voyage. The venture had been a commercial success, had ensured the continuance of the trade - at least on its former footing - and led to arrangements which should eventually secure the ^{admission} of the British to Japan. The successful and uneventful trading, if it came to the knowledge of the Japanese Court, would appreciably diminish 'the violent prejudices entertained against the English Character'. Ainslie had brought back specimens of tea, beeswax, pitch, borax and other goods which proved that returns need not be limited to copper and camphor, and led Raffles to consider 'the present very limited state of the trade as no criterion whatever of the extent it may be carried to'. The Phaeton

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 (46) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.77-95, Raffles to Secret Comm, 11 Feb 1814.

affair, much magnified by Dutch intrigue, was the principal obstacle to be overcome. It should be the object of a special embassy to Japan, he thought, and once a footing had thus been obtained it seemed very likely that both Dutch and Chinese merchants would succumb to British competition. As action must be taken while Britain still had possession of Java, Raffles put forward a concrete plan. He proposed sending only one ship in 1814 to keep open the connection and relieve Doeff. Then in 1815 the Company should send an envoy with two ships and if possible a letter from the Prince Regent, to explain away the Phaeton incident and solicit a direct trade. In this policy he saw every chance of success.

None of these arguments seem to have impressed the Accountant-General in Calcutta, to whom the Governor-General referred the balance sheet of the 1813 voyage. His report was entirely unfavourable. By making certain adjustments in the charges on the account and the market price of copper, he showed that despite Raffles' statements the voyage had proved a loss. He referred to the argument in the 1792 report that the principal export from Japan was copper which competed with that produced in English mines, and added a new objection of his own. An expansion of the market for English cloth in Japan, he argued, would be to the detriment of the Chinese traders there. As they obtained their cloth from the Company's Canton factory, which in turn relied on these sales for much of the bullion required to purchase tea, the only result of trading direct to Japan would be to complicate the bullion problem, already difficult enough. This apparently convinced the Governor-General. He wrote to Raffles directing that 'no further steps be taken ...for the purpose of renewing a Commercial Intercourse with Japan, without special authority and instructions from the

Supreme Government or from the Public Authorities in England'. (47)

In the summer of 1814 Raffles sent one ship to Japan and made a profit on the voyage. However, the plan to relieve Doeff failed, for he was too experienced in the ways of Japanese officials to be easily outwitted and succeeded in countering Waardenaar's only serious attempt to force his departure. (48) He was still in Desima when Java was finally handed back to the Dutch.

Raffles did not abandon his project merely because of opposition in India. He carried his case to London, urging that the future prospects of the Japan trade far outweighed any present disadvantages. His letter did not reach London until 24 June 1815, and by that time a decision had already been taken on the basis of previous reports. In May the Court had written to India favouring the continuance of the Japan trade if at all practicable, admitting that ~~its~~ 'its value and importance have been over-rated' and warning the Governor-General that he was given no 'imperative directions' in the expectation that he would be guided by the results of the 1814 voyage. (49) It is not clear what effect this letter had in India, but in any case there proved to be no time to take any further steps before Britain evacuated Java. Thereafter, in Raffles' view, further interference in Japan became impracticable.

Raffles continued to defend his views after he left

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(47) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.191-201, Gov-Gen to Raffles, 11 June 1814 and encls.

(48) Raffles Report on Japan, p.208, Raffles to East India Co, 24 Dec 1814.

H.Doeff, Herinneringen uit Japan (Haarlem, 1833), pp.225-45.

(49) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.206-7, Raffles to E.I.Co, 10 Dec 1814; pp.210-1, Court to Bengal, 5 May 1815.

Java, and he quoted Dutch records to support his belief that the trade was capable of considerable extension. It is possible to find some justification for this in later events, but there is little doubt that Raffles was more optimistic than the facts warranted. More significant, perhaps, were the attitudes revealed by responsible officials in India and England. The project was devised by an enthusiastic but relatively junior official serving in the East and his superiors welcomed it at first, but their attitude cooled rapidly when they realised the possible extent of the commitments involved. In fact, while access to the Japan trade was considered desirable so long as the venture entailed no great expense or risk, it was not considered of sufficient importance to justify decisions that might lead to controversy. The pattern was to be repeated several times before Japan was finally opened to Western trade.

With the end of the war in Europe, the British government was free once more to turn its attention to commercial affairs in the East. In February 1816 a mission under Lord Amherst was sent to China, but this time the instructions contained no reference to Japan, and it would seem that Raffles' failure had led the government to conclude, against Raffles' own recommendations, that a diplomatic mission would serve no useful purpose there. Amherst failed in China as had Macartney. His two escort vessels, the Alceste and Lyra, spent some time exploring the coasts of Korea and the Loochoo Islands, though without commercial results. Indeed, Captain Basil Hall of the Lyra, who published an account of the voyage on his return, (50)

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 (50) B. Hall, Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea and the Great Loochoo Island (London, 1818), pp. 137-222.

urged the value of Nape on Okinawa Island as a naval base, but insisted that the Loochoos were of no use as a trading centre owing to their poverty.

However, Raffles' attempt to open trade with Japan had stimulated the interest of some of the 'country' merchants. When it became known that no ship was to be sent from Batavia in 1815, Skelton and Company, the firm which owned the Charlotte and Mary, had applied to Raffles for permission to equip a vessel for the trade on private account. Raffles was unable to give permission until he knew what decision would be taken on his own plans, but promised every assistance if a private trade became possible. When the request was renewed in the following September, this time for the 1816 season, he forwarded the correspondence to India for decision. The Governor-General had still received no instructions from London, however, and felt forced to refuse. (51)

No more was heard of this particular proposal, but Skelton and Company were not alone among the 'country' merchants in wishing to try their luck in Japan. Captain Peter Gordon of the brig The Brothers had already tried with little success to trade at Okhotsk on the Russian Pacific coast when in 1818 he determined to make an attempt in Japan, with Okhotsk as an alternative in case of failure. He chose Edo Bay for his experiment in the belief that the central government was much more likely to relax the seclusion laws than hide-bound provincial officials. The Brothers stood into Edo Bay at dusk on 17 June 1818. Gordon had hoped to reach Edo itself by dawn, but the wind dropped in the night and the brig was forced to anchor, apparently near

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(51) Raffles Report on Japan, pp.213-6, Raffles to Gov-Gen,
30 Oct 1815; pp.217-8, Gov-Gen to Raffles, 10 Feb 1816.

what is now the port of Yokosuka. Here Gordon was visited by officials, who agreed to forward his request to the capital but insisted that his ship must meanwhile remain disarmed and under guard. While waiting for a reply from the Bakuhu he received many visitors, both official and unofficial, and was questioned at length about the Russians. His replies must have given satisfaction, for when at last he was refused permission to trade, the blow was softened by many expressions of personal friendliness. (52)

Gordon's own views on the Japan trade were quoted in the Quarterly Review in the following year. Like President Hawley in 1627, he felt that the severity of the Japanese winter would ensure a demand for English woollens and that Japanese ore would more than supply a return. The Quarterly disagreed utterly on this point. While blaming the government for having failed to open a trade while Britain occupied the East Indies, it regretted that omission 'not so much ^{because} we lost the opportunity of extending our commerce, (for we believe the wants of this people are few and their superfluous produce neither great nor valuable), as that we let slip the occasion of convincing this proud and jealous government that the few Dutchmen, on whom they were long accustomed to trample, are not the best specimen of Christian Europe.' (53) Apparently some Englishmen, at least, were not dazzled by the prospect of trade with Japan. Even the Whig Edinburgh Review viewed it with indifference. (54)

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 (52) Chinese Repository, VII (Mar 1839), pp.588-94.
 Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.180-5.

(53) Quarterly Review, XXII (July 1819), p.119 and note.

(54) Edinburgh Review, XXIX (Nov 1817), pp.35-52.

After Gordon's departure the Japanese coast was more frequently visited. American whalers discovered that the waters off Japan abounded with their prey and British ships were quick to follow them to the new grounds. Before long the tiny whaling vessels became a familiar sight to the Japanese, but familiarity bred neither contempt nor friendliness. Undoubtedly some of the whalers were unscrupulous men, not averse to pillage where it seemed both safe and profitable. Moreover, the treatment they received left much to be desired. The Japanese response to the new situation had been an increase in the number of their coast look-outs and garrisons, and the whalers, driven to seek Japanese harbours as a source of wood and fresh water and the only available shelter in bad weather, sometimes found themselves ~~wikxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ attacked without warning. Typical was the experience of Captain Gibson at Otu in 1824. Gibson landed there with eleven men to seek water and provisions. Unable to understand the requirements of these armed men, the Japanese imprisoned them and called out the feudal levies in case of attack. During the next ten days, while the prisoners were being closely questioned by netuke and interpreters, there were frequent alarms as foreign ships were sighted off the coast - though as the Japanese did not normally distinguish between a ship and its boats, the seas may not have been as crowded as they seem to have thought. After ten days Gibson was judged to be harmless. He was given fresh provisions and allowed to depart, and the local officials were subsequently commended for their conduct. ⁽⁵⁵⁾ At such

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(55) E.W.Clement, 'British Seamen and Mito Samurai in 1824',
Trans.Asianic Soc.Jap, 1st Ser, XXXIII(1905), pp.86-131.
 Muto, Niti-ei kootuu-si, pp.467-83.

incidents as this, both sides waxed indignant. In 1825, after another more violent clash in the south, the Japanese made the situation still more difficult by amending the seclusion laws. The new regulations provided that coast batteries must open fire at sight on any foreign vessel approaching the shore.

Most of the ships engaged in this North Pacific whaling industry were American, not British. Moreover, American traders could reach China by rounding Cape Horn and crossing the Pacific, passing close to the shores of Japan, so it is not surprising that the American government began to evince an interest in these inhospitable islands. In 1815 Captain Porter of the United States Navy had made proposals to open communication with the Japanese, (56) but no action had been taken on them. The plan was revived in the late eighteen-twenties by John Quincy Adams and expanded by Andrew Jackson, his successor as President. Edmund Roberts, himself a sea-captain, was chosen for the task and every precaution was taken to prevent news of his mission from reaching European countries. His instructions, which he was not allowed to open until he had put to sea, ordered him first to conclude treaties with Muscat and Siam, then hire a private vessel and make the attempt at Japan. At the same time he was admonished to make no unnecessary expenditure, and he found it so difficult to reconcile this with the necessity of hiring a ship and fitting out a separate expedition to go to Japan, that after concluding treaties with Muscat and Siam he returned home for more explicit instructions. All secrecy was now abandoned. In 1835 Roberts set out openly to exchange ratifications with Siam and visit Japan, but in June 1836

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 (56) A.B.Cole (ed.), 'Captain David Porter's Proposed Expedition to the Pacific and Japan, ~~xx~~ 1815', Pac.Hist.Rev., IX (Mar 1940), pp.61-5.

he died at Macao with the second part of his mission still not accomplished. (57)

Thus the first attempt of the United States government to open trade with Japan proved abortive. But the project was never thereafter entirely given up, and the next twenty years were to see other attempts, culminating in that under Commodore Perry which brought success in 1854. Similarly, European governments were coming gradually to give attention to the problem of Japan. In particular was this true of Britain. As the foregoing survey shows, before 1830 such British interest as there was in Japan was to be found chiefly among the merchants, though the experiences of Colnett, Torey, Ainslie and Gordon had served to discourage private ventures. The government had taken some interest during the late eighteenth century, especially at the time of Macartney's mission, but thereafter it had played no active role, nor had it been sufficiently convinced of the importance of the question to urge action on the East India Company, presumably the agency to which any trade would have been entrusted. The Company itself, since the end of the seventeenth century when it abandoned its attempts to renew the former connection, had been consistently cautious, at times even hostile to the idea. It was with apparent reluctance that it gave some support to Raffles' ambitions. In 1833, however, the emphasis in policy-forming shifted. In that year the East India Company lost the last of its monopolies, that of the China trade, and its political responsibilities on the China coast were taken over by the Foreign Office. Thereafter British policy towards China, and by implication that towards Japan, became primarily a matter of government action. It seemed reasonable to expect some change in both.

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(57) Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.194-6.

Chapter I. The Foreign Office assumes responsibility:
1834-1838.

In 1814 the East India Company lost its trading privileges in India. It retained, however, a monopoly of the trade with China, whether carried on directly by the Company from England or indirectly by the 'country' ships trading between India and Canton. The charter under which this monopoly was exercised was to expire in 1834 and before that date Parliament would have to debate the question of its renewal, but in the intervening twenty years opposition to the theory of monopoly trading, and to the existence of the China monopoly in particular, grew rapidly in Britain. British merchants on the China coast watched with envy the growth of American trade, a growth primarily due, they maintained, to the absence of any such restrictions as were imposed on British traders by the East India Company. Even the Company's opposition to an open trade was weakening. After the trade with India was thrown open in 1814 the Court of Directors became increasingly dominated by the shipping interest and representatives of firms trading with India, who stood to gain rather than lose by the abolition of the monopoly.⁽¹⁾ As early as 1825 it was recognised that the opening of the China trade would be an indispensable condition of the renewal of the charter. Nevertheless, the merchants of the outports, anxious to ensure that the benefits of such a change would not be confined to London, began in 1829 to urge their claims to be admitted to the trade, while in the following year both houses of Parliament appointed select committees

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 (1) C.H. Philips, The East India Company 1784-1834, pp.193, 243, 290-1.

to enquire into the affairs of the Company and its eastern trade.⁽²⁾

The merchants and others who were brought before the select committee of the House of Commons in 1830 were almost all hostile to the East India Company. In their evidence most of them emphasised the Company's failure to find markets for the increasing volume of British manufactures; especially had it failed to extend its trade to many countries of the East which might - indeed would - furnish profitable outlets. Japan was cited as a notable example. John Aken, former master of a 'country' ship, held that an embassy should be sent to Japan, for if successful it would undoubtedly pave the way for an immense trade.⁽³⁾ Another witness, John Deans, who had lived in the East for twenty years and knew much about the Dutch trade with Japan, doubted whether the Japanese government would be influenced by such a mission. None the less, he said, there was a market for British goods in that country. Once the monopoly were abolished that market would be developed, whatever the attitude of the Japanese authorities, either through Chinese middlemen or as a direct but illegal trade, for 'our enterprising countrymen generally manage to conduct a trade with every part of the world which they can get to.'⁽⁴⁾

Both witnesses believed that these views were widely held in the East. Certainly they were known to, and apparently respected by, the East India Company's select committee at

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(2) Philips, East India Co., pp.287-9.

(3) Parliamentary Papers 1830, vol V (Sess.No.644), First Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company (China Trade), p.140, minutes of evidence, Mr John Aken, 4 Mar 1830.

(4) ibid, p.242, evidence of Mr John Deans, 16 Mar 1830.

Canton. In a letter to the Court of Directors in January 1831 they discussed a project for using the Bonin islands as a base for opening trade with Japan, Korea and Loochoo, recommending it not as a potential source of profit to the Company but because 'it seems a great desideratum at the present moment to find some means of satisfying the British Mercantile and Manufacturing community with a legitimate prospect of extending their trade in these Eastern Countries'.⁽⁵⁾ Of more immediate political importance, the few merchants interested in Japan received powerful support from the Edinburgh Review. The Whig periodical maintained that Japanese aversion to foreign trade had been much exaggerated and that once their coasts were being regularly visited by merchants having no ulterior political motives and anxious only to bring them the benefits of friendly commerce, ancient fears would entirely disappear.⁽⁶⁾

Future trade expansion, however, remained a minor issue in the discussions between Company and Cabinet to decide the terms on which the charter should be renewed - the government of India and regulations for the existing trade with China were their chief concern. Discussions were begun in 1830 while the Parliamentary committees were still hearing evidence. They were soon interrupted by a change of government and remained in abeyance during the political campaigns leading to the Reform Act, to be resumed in December 1832 by Lord Grey and Charles

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 (5) Foreign Office, General Correspondence, China (F.O.17: hereafter cited as F.O.China Corres), vol 2, Canton Committee to Court, 26 Jan 1831, quoted in memoir on China trade prepared by the East India Co.

(6) Edinburgh Review, LII (Jan 1831), pp.310-3.

Grant, President of the Board of Control. (7) The Company now answered some of the charges which had been brought against it. It claimed that this monopoly was not open to the usual objections, for it was not so employed as to restrict sales and raise prices. It made possible control over British merchants and seamen, essential when dealing with distant and jealous peoples like the Chinese, whose hostility once aroused might easily put an end to trade altogether. Finally, the supposed market for British goods was illusory, it said - the Company was often forced to sell them at a loss, while the Americans provided the purchase-money for their return cargoes not by the sale of manufactured goods but by importing specie into China. Little good and much harm would come of opening the trade. (8)

The government's reply was made by Grant. Monopoly trading must be regarded as undesirable in principle, he wrote, and the Company's arguments were not strong enough to justify making an exception of the China trade. The arguments themselves were suspect. The control of British trade could be as easily exercised by a representative of the Crown as by the Company, and with less chance of provoking disputes. As to exports, there was evidence to show that trade with ~~the~~ China was increasing, especially the 'country' trade from India, and this was an increase that owed nothing to the Company's efforts. In effect, the abolition of the monopoly must be accepted or it would be imposed. (9) This ultimatum decided the broad

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(7) Philips, East India Co., p.287.

East India Co., Papers respecting the negotiations with His Majesty's Ministers on the subject of the East-India Company's Charter (1833), pp.2-4.

(8) E.India Co., Papers respecting Charter (1833), pp.5-10, minutes, Secret Comm. of Correspondence, 2 Jan 1833.

(9) ibid, pp.14-53, Grant to Chairs, 12 Feb 1833.

outlines of the settlement. The rest of the discussions concerned only points of detail, and neither Company nor Board of Control showed interest in the extension of trade to Japan or any other neglected area of the East. It remained to be seen whether the government would do so in bringing the new charter before Parliament or in drafting detailed instructions for the officials it must eventually send to China.

On 13 June 1833 Sir George Staunton, supporting the East India Company, moved a number of resolutions on the China trade in the House of Commons. These set out once again the difficulties of Eastern trade caused by the exclusion policies of oriental governments, in particular those of Japan and Cochin China, and attributed the relative ill-success of the China trade to the existence of similar sentiments in China rather than to any inefficiency on the part of the Company. In fact, Staunton argued, the Company exerted a most beneficial influence. That influence should only be removed if there were to be substituted for it an effective system of protection based on a national treaty with China, and an embassy to obtain such a treaty would be a far more valuable measure than the abolition of the monopoly.⁽¹⁰⁾

Staunton's resolutions were rejected without a division, and he was followed by Charles Grant, who introduced the terms of the new charter in a tone of optimism. The monopoly must be abolished, he said, and there was no good reason for the gloomy forebodings of the Company's servants, since the Chinese were prepared for the change and the people, if not the officials, would welcome an increase of trade. On the other hand, such

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 (10) Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Ser, XVIII, cols 698-700 (13 June 1833).

an embassy as Staunton proposed might alarm them unnecessarily and thus defeat its own ends. Representatives of the Crown could control the trade as effectively as had the Company; more so, in fact, as they would not be held responsible for English activities in Nepal and Burma which had so alarmed the Chinese, for such actions had been directed by the Company not the Crown - a distinction, as it proved, altogether too subtle for the Chinese and Japanese to appreciate. In all the circumstances, Grant thought it best to interfere as little as possible, letting the passage of time and the normal working of free enterprise bring a gradual improvement in conditions.⁽¹¹⁾ Clearly the Board of Control had no more desire than the Company for a "forward policy" in China.

The debates that followed were of little moment. The East India interest in the Commons, weakened by the Reform Act, was able to put up only feeble opposition.⁽¹²⁾ The most noticeable feature, one commented on by nearly every speaker, was the lack of interest shown in the question both in Parliament and outside it. The East India Company's monopoly of the China trade was abolished by a half-empty House of Commons.⁽¹³⁾

The government had now to work out the details of the new organisation for the China trade, select its representatives and draft their instructions. No one department was solely responsible for this task. The India Board and the Foreign Office were first to consider the problem,⁽¹⁴⁾ and there were later

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(11) Hansard, XVIII, cols 700-18 (13 June 1833).

(12) Philips, East India Co., pp.285-6.

(13) Philips, op.cit., pp.293-4.

Hansard, 3rd Ser, XIX, cols 155-75 (5 July 1833); XX, cols 14, 17-22, 38 (26 July 1833).

(14) East India Co, Letters from the Board of Control, vol 9, Board to Chairs, 30 Aug 1833.
Foreign Office, Miscellaneous Series II (F.O.96), vol 17, Palmerston memo, 24 Sept 1833.

a number of meetings and discussions between members of the government. The Treasury, as was to be expected, took the initiative on questions of salaries and funds for the new China establishment.⁽¹⁵⁾ Lord Auckland, President of the Board of Trade, was present at some of the discussions,⁽¹⁶⁾ but his department concerned itself only with such practical details as port facilities and shipping dues at Canton.⁽¹⁷⁾ The chief responsibility lay with Grant and Palmerston.

At the beginning of November 1833 Grant sought the assistance of the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the East India Company. He sent them drafts of the commissions and general instructions for the new Superintendents of Trade for China, together with a number of proposed Orders in Council relating to the new establishment, and promised to give serious consideration to any suggestions they might make.⁽¹⁸⁾ They found little with which to quarrel in the drafts. Noting that the Governor-General of India was to receive copies of correspondence passing between the Superintendency and the Foreign Office, they emphasised that India and China must now be regarded as separate problems. In both commerce not conquest was the original object, but in India it had been obtained by treaties followed by the acquisition of territory, a sequence which had so alarmed the Chinese that they had refused to enter into

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 (15) Treasury, Minutes (T.29), vol 348, minutes, Sundry Division, 6 and 7 Dec 1833.

Treasury, Out Letters (T.28), vol 57, Treasury to For. Off, 10 Jan 1834.

(16) India Board, Secret Dept, China, vol 7, Grant to Auckland, private, 14 Nov 1833; Auckland to Grant, 14 Nov 1833.

(17) Board of Trade, Minutes (B.T.5), vol 41, passim, e.g. minutes of 22 and 26 Nov, 6 and 17 Dec 1833.

(18) East India Co, Letters from Board, vol 9, Board to Chairs, 1 Nov 1833.

treaty relations. Both had previously been the concern of the Company, but that, the sole connection, was now to be severed, and it must not therefore be thought 'that the resources of India are the natural means with which any line of Policy may be enforced by His Majesty's Servants at Canton'. With this reservation and one or two criticisms on points of detail the Chairs were content. In fact, they expressed much gratification that the government had followed so closely the policy which the Company had ~~now~~ long enjoined on its own servants at Canton. (19)

While the general lines of policy were thus worked out by the government in consultation with the East India Company, the responsibility for its detailed execution lay with the Foreign Secretary. Accordingly, in addition to the instructions given under the Sign Manual, Lord Palmerston issued more particular instructions in a series of dispatches written in January 1834, in the drafting of which he consulted Lord Napier, who had been appointed Chief Superintendent in the previous month. (20) In these instructions, too, the influence of the East India Company was clearly shown.

The first dispatch concerned only the Canton trade, by far the most important of the new Foreign Office responsibilities. Palmerston, however, was the Foreign Secretary of a Whig government which had abolished the East India Company's monopoly ostensibly, at least, to make possible an extension of British trade. He could not, had he wished it, completely

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 (19) E. India Co, Letters to the Board of Control, vol 12,
 Chairs to Board, 14 Nov 1833.

(20) F.O. China Corres, vol 4, passim.

ignore the criticisms which had been directed against the Company in the previous four years, particularly the charge that it had neglected opportunities to open new markets in the East for British goods. In his second dispatch Palmerston turned his attention to this problem. He cautiously directed Napier to take every safe opportunity of encouraging the extension of trade with China. Trouble might be caused by ships attempting to explore the China coast in search of new markets, but while Napier was not to give public support to such adventures, he must clearly understand that he had no authority to prevent or interfere with them. He must investigate the need for surveys of the China coast and the adjacent islands, an indispensable concomitant of trade expansion, but was to take no action in the matter without reference home. Finally, in equally guarded terms, direct reference was made to Japan:-

'Observing the same prudence and caution,...you will avail yourself of every opportunity which may present itself for ascertaining whether it may not be possible to establish commercial intercourse with Japan, and with any other of the neighbouring countries, and you will report to this Department from time to time the results of your observation and enquiries.' (21)

The Foreign Office papers give no direct indication of the origin of this instruction. (22) Yet its origin may be

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(21) F.O. China Corres, vol 5, For. Off. to Napier, No.2,
25 Jan 1834.

(22) Except the question of surveying, which had first been raised by Napier on the basis of a report from Capt. Horsburgh, Hydrographer to the East India Co. Palmerston had been inclined to authorise it, but the Admiralty urged that nothing be done till Napier had reached China and decided whether surveying could be carried out without alarming the Chinese. See F.O. China Corres, vol 4, Napier to Palmerston, 31 Dec 1833; For Off to Adty, 3 Jan 1834; Adty to For Off, 6 Jan 1834.

inferred. The Foreign Office had only once before had to deal with the problem of relations with China - on the occasion of Lord Amherst's special embassy in 1816 - and it now apparently relied for most of its information on a long memorandum detailing the history of the China trade, which had been drawn up by the East India Company.⁽²³⁾ In many respects the Foreign Office planned to continue the China policy of East India House, and one might reasonably expect a similar tendency in its attitude to Japan. The Company had long ceased to show interest in the Japan trade except when under attack from merchants and manufacturers at home, and as these attacks had been revived in the period 1830-4 and in a sense constituted pressure upon the government to work for an extension of trade when the monopoly should end, this was probably enough to ensure some reference to Japan in Napier's instructions. Yet the Company's influence would be against direct and decisive action. Nor was there any consistent attempt by any other group to force trade with Japan. The Edinburgh Review, the most influential supporter of the idea, had mentioned the subject but once. Other equally powerful opinion, which found expression in the Tory Quarterly Review later in 1834, was opposed to any rash undertaking. The Quarterly held that the trade of Japan was no longer worth the effort required to obtain it - long the East India Company's belief. Even the trade of the Dutch had become 'rather matter of curiosity and habit, than of commercial profit'. Moreover the opposition of the Japanese presented a serious obstacle, so serious that it seemed much more likely 'that the sole remaining link between Europe and Japan, the Dutch connexion, should be severed by violence or obliterated

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(23) F.O. China Corres, vols 1 and 2.

by disuse, than that either force or persuasion should devise a new one between this country or any of its dependencies and that empire.' (24) Trade with Japan, by this estimate, was neither practicable nor desirable.

It is not surprising in these circumstances that Lord Palmerston, still a relatively inexperienced - and perhaps uninterested - Foreign Secretary, should refrain from committing himself too deeply in the wording of his instructions about Japan. Napier was to observe and report; he was to take no action without reference home. Palmerston thus showed proper respect for the views of his political supporters but did nothing to arouse the ire of his opponents. There ~~was~~^{is} no direct evidence to show that such was his intention, but his attitude to the proposed annexation of the Bonin Islands and to the Morrison's visit to Japan lends colour to this interpretation of his policy.

For some years Englishmen had discussed the advisability of establishing an island base off the China coast. The idea attracted some as being the best protection for the Canton trade, providing a secure refuge for the ships and merchants engaged in it, free from the oppressions of Chinese law. There were others, however, who were still more ambitious. They regarded such a base as one from which trade could be extended directly to North China and even to Japan, and it was from this group that there came a number of proposals for the annexation of the Bonin Islands.

These islands, some twelve hundred miles east of Taiwan and seven hundred from the south coast of Japan, were too far

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(24) Quarterly Review, LII (Nov 1834), pp.293-4.

from China to be of value in the Canton trade, but might prove useful for trade to the north and northwest. They had been known to the Japanese as early as the sixteenth century, when they were used for a time as a prison colony, but in 1823, when they were visited by an American whaling vessel, they were uninhabited. Captain Beechey of H.M.S. Blossom called there four years later and claimed them formally for Great Britain.⁽²⁵⁾ In 1830 a group of Europeans of various nationalities formed a settlement there, hoping to raise fresh provisions for sale to the whaling crews who used the islands as a base for the Japan fisheries and to any merchant ships that might call ~~xxxxx~~ on their way to the coasts of China and Japan. The venture had the support of Mr Charlton, British consul in the Sandwich Islands. Ignorant of the real distance of the Bonins from Japan, he thought it possible to persuade Chinese junks to call there on the run from Canton to Nagasaki, for they would thus be able to pick up British goods for the Japan market at a port free from the heavy duties imposed in China. At about the same time the Canton committee of the East India Company also remarked on the islands as being a convenient centre for the northern trade, far enough from Canton not to endanger British interests there. But neither the Company nor the Foreign Office took any action on these reports.⁽²⁶⁾

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 (25) Wildes, Aliens in the East, p.202.

F.W.Beechey, Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait (London, 1831), pp.514-20.

(26) F.O.China Corres, vol 2, quoting Canton Comm to Court, 26 Jan 1831.

Foreign Office, Embassy and Consular Archives, China (F.O.228; hereafter cited as F.O.China Emb.Arch.), vol 153, Charlton to For Off, No.5, 1 Dec 1831, encl in For Off to Bonham, No.97, 24 Nov 1853.

The matter was not allowed to rest, however, for the settlers themselves began to seek British protection. In April 1834 Francis Stavers of Peckham Rye sought permission to found a colony on Bonin under British authority and protection, to be a port of refuge for whalers and for the British shipping 'which may be expected to endeavour to drive a Trade in those Seas both to the Coast of China and to Japan'. Stavers claimed that he had a friend already established there. None the less, the Colonial Office declined to offer its protection on the grounds that the islands were outside the range of ordinary naval assistance. It contented itself with commending the idea of such a settlement and hoping that no harm would come to it for lack of official protection. (27)

At the end of the same year a British ship, the Volunteer, was damaged in a typhoon and put in to Port Lloyd in the Bonin group to effect repairs. On his arrival at Macao, Robert Edwards, her owner, gave an account of his visit and of the settlement to Captain Charles Elliot, at that time the third of the three Superintendents of Trade. He in his turn drew up a report for the Chief Superintendent, Sir G.B. Robinson. (28) After describing the islands and the origin of the settlement, Elliot proceeded to urge their value as a base for opening up trade 'with the richest part of the Chinese Empire, and with the South coast of Japan'. Moreover, the settlers themselves needed protection, he thought. The whaling vessels which often visited Port Lloyd were manned by lawless crews whose violence

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 (27) F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 153, For Off to Bonham, No.97, 24 Nov 1833, enclosing Stavers to Colonial Office, 10 Apr 1834 and Col Off to Stavers, 16 Apr 1834.

(28) Napier had died in 1834 and was succeeded first by J.F. Davis and then, in January 1835, by Robinson.

and occasional piracy should be suppressed before their 'acts of depredation' on the coasts of Japan incurred the wrath of the Japanese. Robinson, who found Elliot's argument impressive enough to recommend that a naval vessel be sent to investigate the islands, forwarded a copy of this report to the Governor-General of India in February 1835. (29)

The problem of a formal occupation, of course, had to be decided in London. The Foreign Office took no immediate steps in the matter, but the question was raised again later in 1835 by the Colonial Office and Board of Trade. In November the Board of Trade received a petition from two of the original Bonin settlers, Millichamp and Mozaro, asking directly for the recognition and protection of the colony by the British government. (30) The Board consulted the Admiralty and then wrote to the two petitioners to explain that no action could be taken as 'the Island of Bonin is beyond the Limits to which British Cruizers ordinarily go'. (31) This reply, substantially the same as that made to Stavers by the Colonial Office over a year before, was never sent because the addressees could not be found. A few days later the Admiralty announced that a ship was to be sent to the islands from the East Indies station, and the whole correspondence was forwarded to the Colonial Office. (32)

Charles Grant, now Lord Glenelg and head of the colonial

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(29) F.O. China Corres, vol 9, Robinson to Gov-Gen, 21 Feb 1835.

(30) Bd.Trade, Minutes, vol 43, minutes, 13 Nov 1835.

(31) Bd.Trade, Minutes, vol 43, minutes, 27 Nov 1835.
Bd.Trade, Out Letters, (B.T.3), vol 26, Board to Adty, 21
Nov 1835; Board to Millichamp and Mozaro, 3 Dec 1835.

(32) Bd.Trade, Minutes, vol 43, minutes, 11 Dec 1835.
Bd.Trade, Out Letters, vol 26, Bd.Trade to Col Off, 23 Dec
1835.

department, decided that the question was one on which the Foreign Office must be consulted, as the colony, if recognised, would derive its only importance from its proximity to the coast of China. Palmerston made a non-committal reply to his letter. Bonin was far enough from China, he wrote, and its occupation need not prove a source of embarrassment in British relations with that country. (33) Glenelg, however, wanted something more definite than this and on 1 February emphasised that he had no intention of recommending the annexation of the Bonin Islands unless, in the opinion of the Foreign Office, possession of them would be of positive advantage to the China trade. At this, Palmerston revealed that the question had also been raised by the Chief Superintendent in China and that a ship was being sent to investigate. He proposed that the matter be allowed to rest until the result of this visit be known. (34)

It is significant that throughout this correspondence the three home departments concerned not once referred to Japan either in letters or minutes. Consul Charlton, the Canton select committee, Stavers, Millichamp and Mozaro, Captain Elliot, even Sir George Robinson, all regarded the Bonins chiefly desirable as affording or facilitating access to the markets of North China and Japan. The government ignored this aspect of the question. The Colonial Office was concerned only with their value as a colony, the Foreign Office and Board of Trade with the effect annexation might have on the existing trade at Canton. It was a period, of course, when British statesmen viewed

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 (33) Col Off, East Indies, vol 45, Col Off to For Off, 7 Jan 1836; For Off to Col Off, 14 Jan 1836.

(34) Col Off, East Indies, vol 45, Col Off to For Off, 1 Feb 1836; For Off to Col Off, 20 Feb 1836.

with disfavour the idea of acquiring any new colonial territories other than those valuable as naval and commercial centres. One concludes that the commercial prospects of the Bonin Islands were not obvious enough to arouse enthusiasm - a view, judging by the tone of the earlier instructions to Lord Napier, which applied equally to the other small countries of the western Pacific.

Robinson's recommendation had been enough to secure a promise that Captain Quin of H.M.S. Raleigh should visit the Bonin settlement. An attempt was made at the end of 1835, but the Raleigh lost a mast in a typhoon and was forced to put back.⁽³⁵⁾ Other duties intervened to cause delay and it was not until the summer of 1837 that Captain Quin finally reached the islands. He reported at length on their resources and topography. He found no evidence that they were used as a base for piratical excursions into Japanese waters or that they were in any danger from the Japanese, and concluded that no formal occupation was necessary, the appointment of a vice-consul being sufficient safeguard 'in the present infant state of the Settlement.'⁽³⁶⁾ Even this suggestion was not adopted.

Quin made no reference to the prospects of opening a trade with Japan from the Bonin Islands. This was not necessarily because, like Palmerston and Glenelg, he thought this issue unimportant. More probably it was because he knew that a direct ~~xxxxx~~ attempt to break down Japanese seclusion was already in progress.

Late in 1832 a Japanese junk left Owari for Edo and was

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(35) F.O.China Corres, vol 10, Robinson to Gov-Gen, 16 Jan 1836.

(36) F.O.China Corres, vol 21, Quin's report of 9 Aug 1837, encl. in Elliot to For Off, No.58, 4 Sept 1837. Wildes, Aliens in the East, p.202, incorrectly describes the Raleigh as an American sloop.

driven off the coast by a typhoon. Its ~~xxxxxxxx~~ unseaworthy construction - the result of the seventeenth century seclusion laws - ensured that it could not make its way back to Japan, and in January 1834 it was wrecked on the northwest coast of America. Three sailors, Kyuukiti, Iwakiti and Otokiti, the only survivors of a crew of fourteen, were made prisoners by the Indians. News of this reached John McLoughlin, the Hudson's Bay Company's chief factor at Fort Vancouver, who arranged for their release and had them brought to his trading post. These men were, he believed, the first Japanese to have fallen into British hands, and McLoughlin did not wish such an opportunity to be wasted. Rather than send them to the Sandwich Islands to await a ship bound for China, he decided to send them to London in the expectation that the British government would gladly avail itself of such a chance to open a communication with Japan and that 'by these men going to Great Britain they would have an opportunity of being instructed and convey to their countrymen a respectable idea of the grandeur and power of the British nation'. (37)

The three Japanese reached London in June 1835. The Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company at once laid McLoughlin's plan before the government - probably Lord Palmerston, with whom he certainly corresponded on other matters. Judging from the tone of his letter to Fort Vancouver, he seems to have

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 (37) Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Vancouver Fort, Correspondence Books Out (B.223), b.10, McLoughlin to Company, Ft. Vancouver, 18 Nov 1834. (Printed in E.E. Rich, ed. The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-38, pp.128-9).

See also Wildes, op.cit., pp.198-9 and C.M. Drury, 'Early American Contacts with the Japanese', Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVI (Oct 1945), pp.319-21.

received a chilly reply. He commended McLoughlin for his humanity, but rebuked him for putting the Company to fruitless trouble and expense. It would have been better, he said, to have sent the men home via the Sandwich Islands, 'His Majesty's Government not being disposed to open a communication with the Japanese Government thro' the medium of three shipwrecked Seamen'.⁽³⁸⁾ In the end the castaways were sent aboard the General Palmer, whose captain was to take them to Macao and arrange for their return to their own country. The Hudson's Bay Company even had to pay for their passage.⁽³⁹⁾

This was not by any means the end of the story, however. When the General Palmer reached the Canton estuary in December 1835, her captain was faced with the problem of arranging passage to Japan for his three passengers. He called on the Chief Superintendent and sought his help and advice. As a first step, Robinson put the three men under the care of the indefatigable Chinese Secretary, Dr Gutzlaff, who lodged them at his own house and at once began to learn their language. Captain Elliot, now Second Superintendent and impatient with his superior's "quiescent" policy towards China, saw in this another opportunity of extending British influence in the East and perhaps of gaining reputation for himself. He proposed that the castaways be returned to Japan aboard a British warship. The voyage, if undertaken, would have as its ostensible aim nothing more than the return of the three men and the

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 (38) Hudson's Bay Co, London Correspondence, Outward, Official (A.6), vol 23, Company to McLoughlin, 28 Aug 1835.

(39) Hudson's Bay Co, London Correspondence, Outward, General, (A.5), vol 11, Company to Mr Wade, 11 June 1835.

S. Sakamaki, 'Japan and the United States 1790-1853', Trans Asiatic Soc Jap, 2nd Ser, XVIII (Dec 1939), p.13 & note.

envoy entrusted with the mission - Elliot suggested that he might go himself - must be careful to avoid the appearance of any other motives. Even so, with careful handling a correspondence could be started which might in time lead to the opening of trade. Secrecy, of course, must be strictly maintained. Moreover, the ship should go direct to Edo, the capital. The home of the sailors, he thought, was close enough to Edo to enable such a course to be followed without arousing undue suspicion, while to choose the alternative of going to Nagasaki would be to leave the way open for Dutch intrigue. (40)

Robinson claimed to be delighted at finding himself for once in agreement with Captain Elliot. Early in 1836 he forwarded copies of Elliot's memorandum to the Foreign Office and to the Governor-General in India, recommending that a warship should be sent and Elliot put in charge of the expedition. (41) He reported that an American frigate was about to visit Japan (42) and boasted that the possession of the three Japanese gave Britain an introduction which both Americans and Dutch would have given much to possess. It ought not to be wasted. Support could be expected from India, where Elliot was marshalling influential friends to back the project, and Robinson hoped that the Foreign Office would at least approve the immediate steps he had taken to keep the Japanese in Macao and thus preserve the initial advantage Britain had gained.

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(40) F.O.China Corres, vol 14, Elliot to Chief Supt, 25 Dec 1835, encl in Robinson to Gov-Gen, 16 Jan 1836. Sakamaki, op.cit, p.13.

(41) F.O.China Corres, vol 14, Robinson to For Off, No.16, 1 Mar 1836; Robinson to Gov-Gen, 16 Jan 1836.

(42) F.O.China Corres, vol 14, Robinson to For Off, No.16, 1 Mar 1836, presumably a reference to Robert's mission (see intro, pp.48-9).

Elliot and Robinson did not know that a similar plan had already been discussed in London and rejected as beneath the dignity of a British government. Nor had anything happened to change Foreign Office opinion since the previous summer. On the contrary, just before Robinson's dispatch was received, the Quarterly Review had again denounced Japan adventures in the strongest possible terms. In July 1836 it reviewed Doeff's Herinneringen uit Japan, which included a lengthy account of Raffles' attempt to open trade with Japan in 1813 and 1814, and the reviewer accused Raffles of over-optimism in thinking that any change could easily be effected in the trade and policy of the Japanese. He also condemned those who more recently had come to believe something of the same kind. Nothing, said the Quarterly, could be done except by force, and the use of force was morally unjustifiable, for 'some great and sweeping revolution must disorganize [Japan's] government and obliterate her institutions before we can approach her coasts in any other guise than that of invaders of an unoffending, we wish we could add unoffended, nation'.⁽⁴³⁾ In contrast, the Whig Edinburgh Review kept silent about Japan. Since 1831 it had made no comment on that subject, and when eventually it did so in 1838, it was with no evidence of enthusiasm.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Once again there was no important group in London ~~xxxx~~ sufficiently concerned about the Japan trade to bring pressure to bear on the Foreign Secretary. Left thus to make his own decision, Palmerston did not wait for any recommendation from

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 (43) Quarterly Review, LVI (July 1836), pp.436-7.

(44) Edinburgh Review, LXVIII (Oct 1838), pp.46-75.

India. Elliot had been instructed to relieve Robinson, and on 14 September 1836 the tersest of replies was sent to his proposals. Without explanation or preliminary, the new Superintendent was ordered 'to send these men quietly home in any Chinese junk bound for Japan'.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Elliot found it impossible to carry out these instructions, since Chinese junks going to Japan sailed not from Canton but from Chapoo, some six hundred miles distant, and in any case no Chinese dared accept passengers so calculated to arouse the hostility of Japanese officials.⁽⁴⁶⁾ There was an alternative, however. Elliot and Gutzlaff had not been alone in recognising the opportunity offered by the return of the three seamen. C.W.King, an American merchant, and Dr S.Wells Williams, head of the American Board Mission Press, both wanted to visit Japan. When Elliot's plan was vetoed by Palmerston and the official American expedition was abandoned on the death of Roberts, they suggested that these castaways, together with four others who had been sent from Manila, might be returned to Japan in the American brig Himmaleh, shortly expected back from a cruise in the Malay archipelago. Elliot was reluctant to concede to the Americans an advantage which he had hoped to gain for his own countrymen. However, he gave way to their persuasions at last, but only on condition that the three Japanese for whom he was responsible should be given the opportunity of transferring to a Japanese junk when the Himmaleh reached the Loochoo Islands.⁽⁴⁷⁾

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 (45) F.O.China Corres., vol 14, For Off to Elliot, No.18, 14 Sept 1836.

(46) F.O.China Corres., vol 20, Elliot to For Off, No.43, 3 July 1837.

(47) ibid; also C.W.King and G.T.Lay, The Claims of Japan and Malaysia upon Christendom, I, ix-xvi.

It was arranged that Gutzlaff should join the party as interpreter and take charge of the three castaways from London. As he was leaving almost at once aboard H.M.S. Raleigh to visit the Fukien coast and it would then be most convenient for him to sail direct to Loochoo, there was no time to wait for the Himmaleh, so a rendez-vous was arranged at Napa and King hurriedly fitted out another ship, the Morrison, for Japan. A doctor was added to the expedition, and when she finally sailed the Morrison carried medicines, tracts and trade goods in addition to the seven Japanese. King hoped to open an American trade with Japan, and drafted letters asking permission to do so which he planned to present when the castaways were returned to their grateful fellow-countrymen. Finally Edo was chosen as the port of destination to avoid Dutch intrigue and in the hope that the Bakuhu itself might be more open to persuasion than the narrow-minded Nagasaki officials.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Such optimism was to prove ill-founded.

Gutzlaff, as a British official, had to ask formally for permission to accompany the expedition. Since Elliot had no time to refer the request to London, he was forced to grant it on his own responsibility. He had, however, been convinced by the previous correspondence on the subject that the Foreign Office had no wish to be involved officially in any attempt to communicate with Japan. He therefore made it quite clear that while Gutzlaff would be expected on his return to provide a report on any matters of general interest that came to his notice during the voyage, he would technically be on leave of absence and was not to consider himself as serving in any official capacity. He emphasised that the chief consideration must at all times be the safety of the castaways. They were

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(48) S.W. Williams, 'Narrative of a voyage...to Lewchew and Japan', Chinese Repository, VI (Dec 1837), pp. 210-1.
King and Lay, op.cit., I, xvi-xxii.

to be warned of the risk they ran in breaking Japanese laws, and if they chose to remain with the Morrison till she reached Japan, were to be landed with the utmost caution, secretly if possible. 'Generally, in all your proceedings with regard to these Individuals,' he wrote, 'you will bear in mind that their secure return to their own Country is the single object to which His Majesty's Government attach any importance; and I feel assured that nothing would seem less pardonable to Lord Palmerston, than the least disposition to postpone that consideration to any views or purposes whatever'.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Elliot clearly had no intention of risking another rebuke.

At Loochoo the Morrison was the object of much interest and some suspicion. The actions of Williams, whose investigations into Loochoo life and customs were persistent and unwelcome, and of the doctor, who forcibly demonstrated the efficacy of vaccination, might almost have been designed to alarm the officials. The arrival of a British warship - the Raleigh bringing Gutzlaff to join the others - gave the expedition something of the appearance of an international conspiracy. Suspicion was heightened when it was learned that she was to proceed to the Bonins with the probable intention of annexing those islands, and it became certainty when the Loochoo authorities discovered that there were Japanese aboard the Morrison. News of the expedition and of its supposedly hostile intentions was at once dispatched to Japan, and King later maintained that this warning was the main cause of failure.⁽⁵⁰⁾

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 (49) F.O.China Corres, vol 20, Elliot to Gutzlaff, Macao, 21 June 1837, encl in Elliot to For Off, No.43, 3 July 1837.

(50) King and Lay, op.cit, I, 78-111.
 Williams, op.cit, pp.213-29.

With commendable caution the seven Japanese refused to take passage in a Japanese junk, and on 30 July 1837 the Morrison dropped anchor off Uraga at the entrance to Edo Bay. Her arrival was greeted by some firing ashore, thought to be warning guns, but this soon stopped and crowds of Japanese came out to inspect the ship. King wished to communicate with the officials in order to hand over the letters he had prepared, but all his enquiries received the same answer - orders must first come from the capital. At night all visitors went ashore. At dawn the next day shore batteries opened fire on the ship. The Morrison's guns had been dismantled and left behind at Macao in order to emphasise the peaceful nature of her errand, and since she was unable to return the fire there was no alternative but to withdraw.⁽⁵¹⁾ She left Edo Bay pursued by Japanese war junks to try again at Kagosima, a port in the extreme south of Kyuusyuu and capital city of the Satuma fief. There the same reception awaited her.⁽⁵²⁾ On 27 August the expedition returned once more to Macao, having succeeded neither in its public nor in its secret plans.

King maintained that the experiences of the Morrison showed that the time had come for government intervention to protect American shipping. Closing his account of the voyage, he urged that an American naval squadron be sent to Japan to exact guarantees of good behaviour for the future and of better treatment for American seamen wrecked on the Japanese coast. No less a measure could succeed. The insult to the American flag gave sufficient cause and provided 'an occasion too valuable

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(51) King and Lay, op.cit, I, 112-36.
Williams, op.cit, pp.356-63.

(52) King and Lay, op.cit, I, 137-59.
Williams, op.cit, pp.365-75.

to be lost for bringing national influence to bear on the point where private effort...failed to make any impression'.⁽⁵³⁾ Dr Williams, as became his calling, was more moderate. He felt that at least part of the blame must be borne by the whaling crews who had at times attacked the Japanese coast. The expedition, he said, had proved that the Japanese still pursued their policy of isolation without question and without deviation. None the less, and at whatever cost, the missionaries must be prepared to try again.⁽⁵⁴⁾

When Elliot sent an account of the expedition to London, he was able to report that he had once more taken charge of the three Japanese, now apparently permanent exiles, and had found work for them in Macao, thus relieving the public funds of the cost of their upkeep. He forwarded Gutzlaff's report without comment. Gutzlaff was in sympathy with King, and thought the treatment meted out to the Morrison a new and intolerable development of the seclusion policy. Whatever the laws of Japan, he said, her rulers must be constrained to observe the law of nations and not treat all foreigners as enemies. The people themselves seemed friendly and industrious; in fact the government was the only obstacle to the development of friendly intercourse. Should that obstacle prove insurmountable, it would still be possible, he thought, to develop Napa as a centre for illegal trade with Japan - the people of Satsuma, the southernmost fief of Japan which claimed suzerainty over the Loochoos, would certainly welcome such an opportunity. The greatest difficulty would be 'to convince the people of Loochoo, that trade is our sole object and to silence their suspicion of ulterior

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 (53) King and Lay, Claims of Japan and Malaysia, I, 178.

(54) Williams, 'Voyage...to Lewchew and Japan', pp.376-7.

views'. To accomplish this would require a great and prolonged effort. (55)

Palmerston made no comment on this report. He did, however, give his full approval to Elliot's arrangements, and made this the occasion to re-state the policy which he had originally embodied in his instructions to Lord Napier. Collecting information about potential new markets was still to be considered one of the duties of the Superintendency. In particular, should it be known that one of H.M. ships planned a cruise among the islands off the China coast, it would be well if a competent member of the establishment went with her 'in order to collect information as to the Commerce and Statistics of those Islands; their present intercourse with any foreign Nation; and the best means of establishing or increasing the intercourse of British Traders with them'. (56)

There is an apparent contrast between Palmerston's instructions of 1834 and 1838, which looked to the expansion of British trade - even specifically with Japan - as a desirable object, and his failure to take advantage of chances to further that end by annexing the Bonins or by sending a British ship to return the Japanese seamen. The Bonin question has only indirect reference to Japan and can readily be explained. Many Englishmen, Palmerston among them, disliked the prospect of further territorial expansion. Britain seemed to have already in India and Canada more territory than she could efficiently exploit, while the secession of the thirteen colonies still served as a dreadful warning of the ingratitude of

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(55) F.O. China Corres, vol 21, Elliot to For Off, No.58,
4 Sept 1837, and Gutzlaff's report enclosed.

(56) F.O. China Corres, vol 25, For Off to Elliot, No.4,
2 June 1838.

colonists. Only commercial and naval stations were needed in the new age of commercial empire. The Bonins were not, and could never become, a strategic centre of the same value as Cape Colony, Ceylon or Singapore; they were too far from the China coast to be of value in the Canton trade and their significance for the future, problematical as it was, was no argument to overcome a deep-rooted prejudice.

No such consideration entered into the Morrison affair. It is unlikely that the insignificance of the occasion - the return to their homeland of three common sailors - would alone been enough to prevent action had Palmerston seriously wanted it. The fact is that there is no evidence that Palmerston was ever really interested in Japan or even saw it as a distinct and individual problem. His instructions to Napier were couched in general terms such as might have been expected from any Whig Secretary of State. Palmerston himself was less interested in commerce than in questions of boundaries, constitutions and national prestige, while the increasing work of the office can have left him little leisure to plan expeditions for relatively unimportant commercial ends.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Moreover, the affairs of Europe were more important to him than those of the Far East. Until 1839 he gave but little attention to China, though British interests there were both valuable and well-publicised.⁽⁵⁸⁾ It is only natural that Japan should have seemed more remote and even less important. His refusal to

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 (57) H.C.F. Bell, Lord Palmerston, I, 152, 191, 201, 264.

(58) Bell, Palmerston, I, 273-8.

Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, II, 215-8.
 H.B. Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, I, 252-3.

entertain Elliot's proposals is not surprising. It is probable that action would only have been taken on the 1834 instructions if the Japanese relented or pressure had been brought to bear on the Foreign Secretary in England - and the opponents of such action seem to have been more powerful, or at least more vocal, than its supporters.

Palmerston's policy towards Japan - if his attitude can be so described - was one which involved the minimum of political and diplomatic risk. In this it paralleled that of the East India Company before 1834; the end of the monopoly made no immediate difference. Within a few months of the receipt of his latest dispatch on the subject, Canton became the scene of a dispute over opium which precipitated war with China and gave Elliot no opportunity of showing how he conceived his new instructions about the expansion of trade to apply to the Loochoos or Japan. The war itself was to bring a radical alteration in Britain's position on the China coast, and with it, ultimately, renewed interest in Japan.

Chapter II. The China War and Anglo-Japanese Relations:
1839-1844.

The events of the years 1834 to 1838, and especially the preliminaries to the Morrison expedition, indicate that the transfer of responsibility from the East India Company to the Foreign Office had made no marked change in Britain's official attitude to ~~Japan~~ Japanese seclusion. Her China policy, too, had at first remained essentially the same. In China, however, a valuable trade already existed and such minor changes as were caused by the substitution of Crown for Company had far-reaching effects. In the past, arrangements for trade and the settlement of disputes had been effected on both sides through merchants, a method which conformed admirably to the Chinese scale of social and economic values in which trade and traders had a very lowly place. Yet Napier was ordered to announce his arrival to the Canton viceroy. This was, in effect, a claim to diplomatic status as the representative of an equal and independent state, and one which no Chinese official could admit. To the Chinese, all foreign rulers were vassals of the Emperor and their presents came as tribute. The attempt to establish direct official intercourse led to an immediate dispute, and unable to break the resulting deadlock, Napier withdrew to Macao where he died soon after. His successor, J.F. Davis, decided to await further instructions from London and make no attempt to force a decision or even to resume relations with the Chinese until they arrived. ~~THE~~ In the absence of orders from the Foreign Office, this policy of "quiescence" was pursued by the Superintendency for the next two years.

In December 1836 Captain Charles Elliot became Superintendent of Trade. He tried to effect a compromise with the

viceroys, only to be rebuked by Palmerston for failing to maintain the dignity of his office and the Crown. As a result, a number of disputes between the two countries were left ~~unsettled~~ unsettled and relations grew steadily worse. British merchants complained of the restrictions imposed on their movements and of the heavy exactions levied on the trade, while some experienced difficulty in collecting debts due to them from the Chinese. More serious conflict came late in 1838 over the opium question. For some years opium smuggling, a profitable and convenient means of providing funds for outward cargoes of tea and other goods, had been increasing rapidly with the connivance of local officials. The Emperor now determined on a vigorous attempt to suppress the traffic and appointed Lin Tze-hsu as his special commissioner for that purpose. Arriving at Canton in March 1839, Lin at once decreed the immediate confiscation of all opium in foreign hands and instituted a blockade of the foreign factories to force compliance with his demands. Elliot arranged the surrender of all British-owned opium and secured the raising of the blockade, but because of an overwhelming distrust of Chinese legal methods he refused to allow the traders to sign a bond pledging themselves and all their compatriots to refrain from the trade in future. To strengthen his position he removed all British subjects from Canton, first to Macao, then to an anchorage off the island of Hongkong. On the basis of his reports of the affair, the British government prepared to send forces from India to support his actions, but before these could arrive fresh disputes over the question of the bond and the killing of a Chinese in a clash at Hongkong in July, both involving the problem of legal jurisdiction, led to the outbreak of hostilities in the Canton estuary in November 1839.

The campaign began in earnest when British troops and

ships arrived early in the summer of 1840. The Canton estuary was blockaded; Chusan, an island just south of the Yangtse estuary, was occupied; and negotiations were begun with the new Imperial commissioner, Kishen, at the mouth of the Peiho, the river approach to Tientsin and Pekin. These negotiations were transferred to Canton later in the year and in January 1841, after another clash there, Elliot and Kishen signed a convention. China promised an indemnity of six million dollars, conceded the right of direct official intercourse between the two countries on equal terms and ceded Hongkong to Britain, though not in full sovereignty. Elliot, in return, promised the immediate evacuation of Chusan.

This agreement, falling far short of its instructions and expectations, was at once disavowed by the Melbourne government, which recalled Elliot and sent out Sir Henry Pottinger to conduct the war and secure an acceptable peace. Meanwhile Pekin, too, had rejected the convention and re-opened hostilities. But after early failures near Canton the Chinese accepted a truce which lasted until Pottinger's arrival in August 1841. Pottinger moved his forces north, took Chusan, Shanghai, Amoy and Ningpo, and advanced up the Yangtse to Nanking, where he forced the Chinese to accept his terms in August 1842. By the treaty of Nanking and a supplementary agreement signed near Canton in October 1843, Britain secured most of the benefits long sought by her merchants. Hongkong was ceded in full sovereignty; five ports - Canton, Foochow, Amoy, Ningpo and Shanghai - were opened to trade; a fixed tariff was established at a level favourable to the foreign trader; a large indemnity was promised; and Britain was granted partial jurisdiction over her own subjects in China and the right to participate in any other privileges China granted for the future to any foreign power.

The stage had been set, it appeared to many, for a new

phase of British expansion in the Far East. To none did this seem more likely than to the Japanese, and nowhere were British actions in China more eagerly discussed than in Japan.

Since the closing of the country in the seventeenth century the Japanese had if anything grown more suspicious of the motives of foreign visitors. Russian attacks in the north, the Phaeton's visit to Nagasaki in 1808, and occasional clashes with whaling crews,⁽¹⁾ had all been taken as evidence of foreign designs on Japanese territory. In 1825, as a result of one of these attacks and the alarming discovery that in some areas coast-dwellers were regularly providing the whalers with stores, the seclusion laws had been made still more drastic. Thenceforth, all foreign ships approaching the coast were to be driven off without even being given an opportunity of stating their business.⁽²⁾

The power of the Tokugawa, however, was weakening. Economically feudalism was breaking down with the development of a money economy, the evolution of a new merchant class and the growth of towns. The Bakuhu and many of the daimyoo were near bankruptcy and their exactions pressed heavily on the peasants and the lower ranks of the feudal hierarchy, attacking at once their livelihood and their loyalty. At the same time political opposition to the Tokugawa was crystallising. The great tozama lords, direct vassals of the Emperor, had never been fully reconciled to Tokugawa rule, nor had the Court

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(1) See intro, pp.34-5, 47-8.

(2) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si [History of the late-Tokugawa period] pp.76-9. A translation of the decrees appears in Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 528.

nobles, who could not expect a return to their former wealth and privileges while Japan was ruled by a syogun. New intellectual movements were appearing, destined in time to weld the anti-Tokugawa movement into a single whole and determine the nature of its political programme. Two were of particular importance for our purpose. The Wagakusya, or 'native' scholars, stood for the revival of native Japanese learning and traditions as opposed to the Chinese culture which had so firmly held on Tokugawa Japan. Their rivals, the Rangakusya or 'Dutch' scholars, studied Western science and thought, taking their name from the fact that the books for this purpose were introduced by the Dutch through the Desima factory. Both played an important part in moulding Japan's reactions to British Far Eastern policy.

The earlier Wagakusya were emphatically anti-Chinese. In the nineteenth century, however, the ideas of the school were modified by Hirata Atsutane (1766-1840), who effected a partial compromise with Confucian and Buddhist thought, widened the basis of the anti-foreign movement by directing it also against the white races, especially the Dutch and Russians, and preached the divine descent and mission of the Japanese - a creed which not only attacked the basis of Tokugawa power by re-asserting the divinity and authority of the Emperor, but also united most Japanese scholars in a common hatred of all foreigners. His success as a publicist and teacher contributed much to the hardening of traditional Japanese opposition to the opening of the ports. (3)

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(3) Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 490-5.

Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi no mita Sina Mondai' [The China problem as seen by loyalists of the late-Tokugawa period], Kaizo, XX (July 1938), p.167.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Dutch studies had been increasing in Japan since the late eighteenth century, at first with an emphasis on the study of medicine, but soon turning to problems of foreign relations and military science. Special attention was given to methods of countering Russian attacks in the north. (4) It was not until after 1830, and notably after the visit of the Morrison in 1837, that fear of Britain became a major theme in books and pamphlets. Two men, in particular, were responsible for this change of emphasis. One of them, Watanabe Kazan, son of a samurai of the Tawara fief in central Honsyuu, became interested in Dutch studies only after the age of thirty and never mastered the Dutch language. He relied on his friends for translations of foreign books, especially on Takano Tyoo-ei (Nagahide). The latter had originally studied under Siebold but had subsequently abandoned medicine to concentrate on his writing and translating. Together Takano and Watanabe founded a Rangakusya club in Edo, ostensibly to study Western history and geography, but in fact with the secret object of seeking means to strengthen Japan's coast defences against attack by Western nations, an attack they were convinced could not long be delayed. (5)

At a meeting of this club in November 1838, one of the members produced a document he had copied from the Bakuhu archives. It stated that the British warship Morrison was about to visit Japan in order to bring back seven Japanese castaways

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(4) Sansom, Japan, pp.515-6.

Greene, 'Osada's Life of Takano Nagahide', Trans Asiatic Soc Jap, XLI (Aug 1913), pp.469-70, 473.

(5) Ballard, 'A Sketch of the Life of Noboru Watanabe (Kwazan)', Trans Asiatic Soc Jap, XXXII (May 1905), pp.1-3, 6, 11.
Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.402-9, 413-4, 417-8.
Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 559-60.

and that the Roozyuu, the Tokugawa Council Of State, had decided after some debate to permit no relaxation of the seclusion laws in her favour. The exact nature of this document is not clear - it may have been a slightly garbled report of the previous year's visit, of which the Rangakusya had heard nothing - but the members of the club decided that it contained notable errors both of fact and of policy. Having heard of Dr Morrison's work in China, they jumped to the conclusion that he was to head the mission, not knowing that he had died some years before. They felt it necessary to correct the government on this point, as well as to urge it to reconsider what they could only regard as a very dangerous decision. Watanabe produced a pamphlet on the subject but never published it. Takano, however, wrote the famous Yume Monogatari (The Story of a Dream), which was widely read and aroused considerable interest.⁽⁶⁾ It told how he had dreamt of the proposed British expedition, of Britain's great power, of her possessions in America, Africa, India and the East Indies, and especially her fleet - which Takano estimated at over twenty-five thousand ships and a million men! The real object of the mission, he said, was almost certainly to seek trading privileges in Japan. To this end it would be headed by Dr Morrison, a famous scholar and Superintendent of British trade with China, and would come direct to Edo. To drive off so important an embassy would be both unfeeling, in view of its avowedly humanitarian objectives, and unwise, in view of Britain's obvious ability to resent insult; better by far to receive it with courtesy, learn from it all that could be learnt, and

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 (6) Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.421-3, 430-1. A free translation of Yume Monogatari is given in the same book, pp.423-30.

See also Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 560-2.

then refuse all requests for trade both politely and safely.

This veiled attack on the seclusion laws aroused the hostility of the conservative majority among officials and scholars. Some of the latter, especially, who saw in Dutch learning a threat to their own position and privileges, sought an opportunity to discredit Watanabe and Takano and finally succeeded in having both imprisoned and severe restrictions put on the study of Western science. It was a policy the more readily adopted by the Bakuhu for fear that European military techniques, gradually becoming known to the daimyoo through the translations and writings of the Rangakusya, would enable opponents of the Tokugawa to increase their military strength and hence their ability to defy the government.⁽⁷⁾ Watanabe committed seppuku on his release from prison in 1840, but Takano escaped after some years imprisonment and continued his career as translator and pamphleteer till he died resisting arrest in 1850.

With such a background it is not surprising that the Rangakusya were much excited by news of the Opium War in China and that the warnings first enunciated by Takano and Watanabe were repeated after 1840 by many of their friends. One of them, Suzuki Syunzan, an expert in military science, began to urge the strengthening of the national defences, a campaign in which he received the support of Takano after his escape from prison in 1845.⁽⁸⁾ Sakuma Syoozan, a samurai of the Matusiro fief in Sinano province and later a figure of some political importance, also demanded that defence measures be quickly taken,

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 (7) Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.430-42.
 Ballard, 'Noboru Watanabe', pp.12-7.
 Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 562-5.

(8) Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.457-9, 482.
 Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 563-4.

for Japan would be helpless before a British attack and he had little doubt that such an attack would come once the China war had ended. Britain, he thought, would fight for trade however small its value and had an insult to avenge in the treatment of the Morrison. Both Dutch and Chinese reports confirmed the accuracy of such an analysis.⁽⁹⁾

Before long the argument became a familiar one in Japan, and it was not confined to the Rangakusya. The Wagakusya wished most ardently to maintain the traditional policy of seclusion, but many of them admitted the threat latent in Western expansion and even recognised the superiority of European military equipment. Here again the earlier writers saw Russia as the chief source of danger. As early as 1825, Aizawa Hakumin had written that Russian ambitions extended both to China and Japan and that consequently the defence of the two countries constituted a single strategic problem. Others of the school expressed similar ideas, and like the Rangakusya in time transferred their fear and hatred to Great Britain. Satoo Sin-en was a notable example. At the time when Aizawa was writing of defence against Russia, Satoo had been advocating a Japanese expedition to attack China and Manchuria. But after British strength had been so conclusively demonstrated in the years 1839 to 1842, he abandoned these dreams of conquest and turned like others to the problem of defence. To him, too, it seemed clear that Japan would be the next victim of British piracy and aggression.⁽¹⁰⁾

In fact, although they differed radically in the solutions they proposed, the scholars and pamphleteers all agreed

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 (9) Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.485-7.
 Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi', pp.164-6.

(10) Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi', pp.159-62, 166-7.

in viewing the British attack on China as a threat to the independence of Japan. The Opium War seemed a part of Japanese history, heralding as the next stage of European expansion an attack on the country whose uncompromising attitude to foreign trade and intercourse was even more marked than that of China. And there seemed little chance that Japan could resist such an attack with success. As an immediate solution most writers put their faith in continued seclusion backed by increased coastal defences. A minority advocated the adoption of Western ideas and methods as the only sure defence against the West, but it was not of major political importance until after the Perry treaty of 1854.⁽¹¹⁾

Fear of Britain, however, was not to be found only among the scholars and pamphleteers. A number of important daimyoo and some of the Bakuhu advisors were influenced by their ideas. Sakuma's lord, Sanada of Matusiro; Simazu Saihin, a friend of Takano and heir to the Kyuusyu fief of Satuma; Date of Uwazima and others less powerful were numbered among the supporters of the Rangakusya.⁽¹²⁾ Nariaki of Mito, a Tokugawa and a power in the Bakuhu councils, was the acknowledged leader of the seclusion school and like his opponents regarded defence as the most vital problem of the day.⁽¹³⁾ Even officials read Yume Monogatari and some of them began to question the seclusion policy. Mizuno Tadekuni of Etizen, for example, was in favour of receiving the Morrison expedition, while one

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 (11) Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi', pp.156-9, 164, 167.
 Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.139-44.

(12) Greene, 'Takano Meghide', pp.387-8, 461-3.
 Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 557-60.

(13) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.135-8.
 Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 462.

lower-ranking official, Egawa Tarozaemon, petitioned the Bakuhu to the same effect. (14)

For a time it seemed possible that Bakuhu policy would be changed. Mizuno was in power, supported in the Roozyuu by Sanada and Hotta, another daimyoo who favoured some alteration of the seclusion laws. The war in China was clearly going well for Britain. At Edo's request, the Dutch reported regularly on developments there, giving details of the military forces and equipment employed. (15) One of the Morrison castaways wrote from Canton to his countrymen at Nagasaki to warn them that Britain had not forgotten the treatment meted out to that expedition and would certainly demand satisfaction once the China war was over. The letter had been forwarded to the Bakuhu. (16) These varied influences finally took effect. In 1842 Mizuno cancelled the decree of 1825 and substituted new regulations to govern the treatment of foreign ships approaching the coast. No longer was force to be used indiscriminately. Ships in distress of seeking stores and water were to be provided with such of their requirements as were absolutely essential before being ordered to depart, and were only to be fired on if they then refused to go. On the other hand, the decree stated, this was in no way to be regarded as an excuse for relaxing coast defence measures, now more necessary than ever before. (17)

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(14) Greene, 'Takano Nagahide', pp.388, 432.

Ballard, 'Noboru Watanabe', p.12.

Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 529.

(15) The Dutch text of one questionnaire answered by the Desima factory for the Nagasaki authorities is given in Boxer, Jan Compagnie in Japan, pp.179-81.

(16) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.112-3.

Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi', pp.164-6.

(17) For a translation of this decree see Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 530.

His action lost Mizuno the support of Nariaki, who soon began to press for a return to the regulations of 1825. His opposition may well have been decisive in preventing further concessions. Yet even the authority of Mito could not drive the Bakuhu officials to abandon what they thought to be the safest possible compromise, the only plan ~~xxx~~ as they saw it that might save Japan from the fate of China. By informing the world, as they planned to do through Dutch diplomatic channels, that while Japan still had no wish for trade she was prepared to help ships driven to her coasts by stress of weather or lack of stores, they hoped to avert the threatened attack, or at least postpone the crisis until coast defences had been so strengthened as to make an invasion of Japan a hazardous venture not lightly to be undertaken. (18)

Foreign opinion tended to confirm these fears of Britain. The Dutch and Chinese merchants at Nagasaki were Japan's only regular source of information on world events, and neither were likely to view with sympathy or approval Britain's growing power and influence east of Singapore. The Dutch, in particular, had long used their special position in Japan to prejudice the officials against possible competitors. (19) The Opium War seems to have convinced them that it was only a matter of time before Britain demanded trade rights in Japan and that the best chance of retaining some of their influence and privileges there lay in anticipating this demand and taking the lead in opening Japan to world trade. (20) The Desime opper-

(18)
Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.120-5.
Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 462-4.

(19) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.73-6.
Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 521-2.

(20) J.A.van der Chijs, Neerlands Streven tot Openstelling van Japan voor den Wereldhandel, pp.14-21.

hoofd was therefore ordered to inform the authorities that a special mission was being sent from Holland to discuss matters of great importance to Japan, and in the summer of 1844 the Palembang reached Nagasaki with a letter from the Dutch king. The letter recapitulated some familiar arguments. It outlined the course of the Anglo-Chinese war and the settlement which had followed, attributing it, however, not to British aggression but to the need for new channels of trade, itself arising from the industrial progress and rapidly increasing population of Europe. For these same reasons a similar fate threatened Japan. There would now be more ships in Japanese waters than ever before and clashes with them - made less likely but not completely to be prevented by the wise decree of 1842 - might easily lead to a war in which Japan could not avoid defeat. Full safety lay only in opening her ports to trade and fostering friendly relations with the West, a policy in which the Dutch were most willing to assist. (21)

The Palembang was not allowed to go beyond Nagasaki. The letter she brought was forwarded to Edo, where Mizuno Tadakuni was recalled to the Roozyuu to handle the crisis - only to fall from power again shortly after - and the Palembang was dismissed with a promise that a reply would be sent through the Desima opperhoofd. (22) After months of debate an answer was drafted and sent. It admitted the logic of the Dutch king's reasoning, but rejected his advice on the grounds that seclusion

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 (21) For the Dutch text of this letter, with English and Japanese translations, see Greene, 'Correspondence between William II of Holland and the Shogun of Japan, A.D. 1844', Trans Asiatic Soc Jap, XXXIV (June 1907), pp. 104-14, 124-9.

(22) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp. 114-6.
 Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 530-2.

was part of the ancestral laws of Japan and they could on no account be broken. (23) The decision was a triumph for Nariaki, and his ideas continued to dominate Tokugawa policy until the arrival of Perry's squadron in 1853. In fact, the conflict between his supporters and those who wished to open the ports remained a vital strand in Japan's domestic history until 1868; but for the purposes of this study it is sufficient to recognise that whatever their differences both parties agreed in this, at least - that they feared the power and the intentions of Great Britain.

Thus in the years immediately following the Opium War, the Japanese were convinced that Britain was preparing aggressive action against Japan. The same opinion was current in some parts of Europe. (24) British records of the period, however, provide no evidence of any sudden development of interest in Japan. True, the subject was brought to the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers on a number of occasions. Mr John Coppling, who felt strongly about the treatment received by British ships on the Japanese coast wrote to Lord Palmerston in April 1840 to recommend that the forces then employed in China should also be used to punish the authorities at Edo and Kagosima (apparently for firing on the Morrison) and to visit Nagasaki

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 (23) For the Japanese text and English translation of this letter see Greene, 'Correspondence between William II...and the Shogun', pp.121-3, 130-1.

(24) Not only among the Dutch. See, for example, a letter dated Trieste, 10 May 1844, reprinted in the London Times (3 June 1844) from the Cologne Gazette, claiming that preparations had already been made for a British expedition to Japan.

and Hirado. At the latter places, he said, where the same hostility had not been shown, 'instead of chastisement being inflicted on the government stations and officers...an attempt might be made to open a commercial intercourse'. His letter was sent to the Admiralty for communication to the China station, presumably on the grounds that it related to the protection of British shipping and was therefore a naval responsibility.⁽²⁵⁾ Undaunted by his lack of success, Copling wrote again to Palmerston in the following year on this and many other subjects connected with the China war, and then to Aberdeen in December 1842 in a last attempt to divert the forces to Japan before they were dispersed.⁽²⁶⁾ Neither letter received any special attention.

At about the same time the Admiralty, too, was urged to plan the opening of Japan. The idea was put forward by Commander John Cawley, a retired officer who had sailed with Broughton to the North Pacific and Japan in the years 1794 to 1798 and had since interested himself in the whaling grounds off the Japanese coast. No details of his scheme are available as the letter outlining it has been destroyed, but it seems to have had no more effect than those of Copling.⁽²⁷⁾

The authors of these two plans had little influence or authority. There were, however, suggestions for an indirect approach to Japan which might have been expected to carry

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 (25) F.O.China Corres, vol 42, Copling to Palmerston, 2 Apr 1840; For Off to Adty, 11 Apr 1840.

(26) F.O.China Corres, vol 50, Copling to Palmerston, 28 Apr 1841; vol 63, Copling to Aberdeen, 5 Dec 1842.

(27) Admiralty Digests, IND 12200 and 12202, digest of Cawley to Adty, 13 Dec 1842.

W.R.O'Byrne, A Naval Biographical Dictionary (London, 1849), pp.181-2.

greater weight. In February 1840 Mr Huttman, formerly assistant secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society, wrote to Palmerston urging ~~xxxx~~ the occupation of part of Taiwan as a commercial and naval station on the grounds that it would provide easy access to the important tea- and silk-producing areas of China as well as to new markets like Japan. He warned that there was a danger of Britain being forestalled in this by the United States, and his letter was considered sufficiently interesting to be sent to China for the information of the Plenipotentiaries. (28) The question of the European settlement in the Bonin Islands was also revived by consular authorities in the Pacific, one of whom, Acting Consul Simpson, published a pamphlet about the islands in 1843. There were several references to the convenience of their situation for trading with Japan, but none of the correspondence, either private or official, made any concrete proposal for using them for such a purpose. (29)

These brief notices were neither so numerous nor so important as the references to Japan in the years 1834 to 1838. There are no comments on that country in the private papers of Russell or Aberdeen, nor in the surviving Foreign Office memoranda of Lord Palmerston. The Times mentioned Japan only once, in June 1844, and that only in a reprint from the Cologne Gazette.

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 (28) F.O. China Corres, vol 41, Huttman to Palmerston, 17 Feb 1840.

F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 14, For Off to Plenipotentiaries, No.3, 20 Feb 1840.

(29) F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 153, For Off to Bowring, No.97, 24 Nov 1853, enclosing:-

Memo by Consul-General Miller, 20 Sept 1843.

Baker to Wyllie, Sandwich Is, 18 Oct 1844.

Simpson to Clarendon, 1 Oct 1853, encl pamphlet.

Neither the Quarterly nor the Edinburgh Review made any comment on policy. In fact, there is no evidence to show that by 1844 either government officials or the public had in any way changed their attitude to Japan as a result of the China war. There were a few individuals interested in the subject, as there had always been, but they had neither the influence nor the support to force action on an unwilling government. To this extent, at least, we must deny the validity of contemporary Japanese fears.

This, however, is to look only for direct evidence. Modern Japanese historians⁽³⁰⁾ have stated that the danger to their country was rather inherent in the position Britain had achieved in Asia and in the pressure of economic factors making for expansion, than in any conscious design of commercial or territorial aggression directed against Japan. They look, in fact, to the views expressed in the Dutch letter of 1844, not to those of Japanese pamphleteers. Certainly a threat of that kind could be a very real one without being openly avowed or even consciously realised in Britain, but to prove or disprove its existence is an exceedingly difficult task. In order to probe the possibilities - and little more can be attempted - it will be necessary first to examine more closely the new position Britain occupied in China as a result of the Opium War, the policies which had brought about that change, and its implications for the other lands of East Asia. Ultimately, of course, it involves an examination of the whole course of later British policy towards Japan.

One section of British opinion was certainly looking

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(30) Muto, Niti-si koottuu-si, pp.97-8.
 Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.80-2.
 Tutiya, 'Bakumatu Sisi', pp.156-9.

forward to increased opportunities in China and the Far East. Long before 1839 British merchants on the China coast had become convinced ~~xx~~ not only that their trade was but a fraction of what it could be, but that the policy of the Chinese government was all that stood between them and the unlimited wealth to be obtained by access to new markets in the interior and in the north. It followed from this, they believed, that it was the duty of the British government to remove these political obstacles. It must ensure adequate protection for British subjects and property; it must actively support the traders against both Chinese and Western rivals; last but by no means least, it must open the whole of China to trade. And if the policy involved Britain in a minor war, the cost of that war would be nothing to the value of the prize to be won. (31)

In the disputes that preceded war, the British merchants in China and to a lesser extent those in England consistently advocated a stronger policy than that adopted by the government. In 1834, after Napier's death, they petitioned the Crown to open negotiations with China, backed by force if necessary, to remove the restrictions on British trade at Canton and extend it to Amoy, Ningpo and Chusan. (32) In the next few years, despite increasing profits from the illegal opium trade, they complained that prices in general were moving against the foreign traders owing to the activities of the Hong monopoly which handled Chinese trading. The realisation that the Crown had not the same commercial bargaining power as had the Company to set right such an injustice, aggravated their sense of grievance over other and older difficulties. Yet their demands

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(31) Pelcovits, Old China Hands and the Foreign Office, pp.1-7.

(32) Morse, International Relations, I, 147-50.

Costin, Great Britain and China 1833-1860, pp.27-8.

in 1839, after the opium crisis, were basically the same as those of 1834.⁽³³⁾ There were differences among the merchants themselves, certainly. Many of those deeply involved in opium smuggling, for example, preferred to take their profits quietly and avoid any government action that might interrupt trade. They were a minority, however. The majority favoured a firm stand with government support on what they considered the legitimate rights of merchants the world over, and in this they were echoed by Chambers of Commerce at home.⁽³⁴⁾

The actions of Lin and Elliot in 1839 united these conflicting groups in common hostility to the Chinese, and it was not until after the Treaty of Nanking that differences of opinion once more became marked. Some merchants went so far as to express their opposition to the terms of the settlement by refusing to co-operate with Pottinger in drafting the supplementary commercial treaty he negotiated in 1843.⁽³⁵⁾ But the majority were well satisfied. Most of their grievances had been remedied; new ports were open to trade; there was every prospect of greater security of both trade and person; and Britain had acquired the territorial base which they had long thought to be necessary. China's wealth seemed to be within their reach and they looked forward to a period of unexampled expansion and prosperity.

The fact that the results had conformed so closely to the wishes of the "old China hands" does not necessarily mean that they were in a position to control national policy. The

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(33) Morse, International Relations, I, 168-9, 250-2.

(34) Morse, International Relations, I, 250-3.
Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.31-4, 48.

(35) Costin, op.cit., pp.58-60, 105, 113-4.
Admiralty, Secretary's Department, In-Letters (Adm 1),
vol 5496, Cdre Bremer to Adty, Calcutte, 13 Apr 1840.

Foreign Office had not immediately adopted the policy advocated by the merchants. From 1834 to 1839 Palmerston had spared little interest for problems in China. His Foreign Office memoranda for that period chiefly concerned European political events which interested him more than commerce, and even after 1839 his private correspondence rarely mentioned the Opium War. (36)

The policy of "quiescence" pursued after the death of Napier was condoned by him even though he did not originate it. In 1839 he certainly acted decisively when news of the blockade of the factories at Canton and the seizure of the opium provided a definite diplomatic grievance, but even in that he was at first only accepting responsibility for a conflict which Elliot had already made inevitable. He was still not originating policy. Conviction of the economic importance of the issue seems to have come later, after he had consulted expert opinion about the terms which the plenipotentiaries must demand in the final settlement. This consultation gave the Chinese coast merchants and their supporters at home an admirable opportunity to persuade the Foreign Secretary of the accuracy of their estimate of the situation and the policies it required, and judging by his subsequent policy, their arguments achieved much success. (37)

Palmerston's instructions to the plenipotentiaries incorporated most of the merchants' demands. Once settled they were consistently pursued, and when Elliot ignored them in negotiating a compromise agreement in January 1841, his action was

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(36) Bell, Palmerston, I, 264-6, 273-4, 277-9.

(37) Pelcovits, Old China Hands, pp.4-5.

Michie, The Englishmen in China during the Victorian Era, I, 87-9.

at once disavowed and he himself recalled despite some opposition in the Cabinet.⁽³⁸⁾ The Treaty of Nanking which ended the war was concluded under Aberdeen's direction, but its terms were almost identical with those laid down by Palmerston, who claimed credit both for the formulation of policy and for the choice of leaders to carry it out.⁽³⁹⁾ Publicly, he pointed to China as an outstanding example of the benefits the Melbourne government had bestowed on British trade.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In fact, like Pottinger, he had come to accept the "myth" of the China trade as expounded by the China coast merchants - though not without reservations - and while he later tried to put some curb on the activities of those merchants to prevent them from increasing the political difficulties of relations with China, he did not question that the potential value of the trade justified considerable government expenditure to promote its expansion.

Aberdeen became Foreign Secretary in September 1841 and continued substantially unchanged the China policy of his predecessor. He has been accused, most of all by Palmerston,⁽⁴¹⁾ of weakness and poor judgement in his conduct of foreign relations. It is true that he wished to avoid serious disputes with the Chinese and refused to go to extremes in supporting British

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 (38) Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.35-7, 78-9, 89-91.

Morse, International Relations, I, 260-1, 271-6.

Public Record Office, Gifts and Deposits, Russell Papers (G.D.22), vol 4, Palmerston to Russell, 20 and 30 Apr 1841; Minto to Russell, 10 Apr 1841.

(39) Bulwer, The Life of John Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston, III, 119-20, Palmerston to Wm Temple, 6 Dec 1842.

(40) Bulwer, Palmerston, III, 29-30, 76-7.

(41) e.g. Bulwer, Palmerston, III, 113-8, Palmerston to Russell, 14 Nov 1842; and III, 135, Palmerston to Wm Temple, 5 Jan 1844.

pretensions. He was, for example, at first opposed to the annexation of Hongkong as a British colony, though Elliot, Palmerston, Auckland and most of the merchants thought it to be essential. Nor was he subsequently prepared to support British subjects whose desire for trade led them into infringements of the treaty settlement, and in 1844 he approved a decree issued by Pottinger to prohibit British ships from sailing north of the Yangtse, that is to say, beyond the limits of the treaty ports into areas where they might come into conflict with Chinese local authorities.⁽⁴²⁾ Yet Palmerston was equally anxious to control unruly British merchants. In fact the policies of the two men differed chiefly in that Aberdeen was more concerned with commercial affairs and anxious to avoid any disturbances which might injure British trade with China, while Palmerston was more ready to risk temporary disruption of trade when he conceived that national prestige or future interests required it.

Aberdeen was of those who believed in the wisdom 'of not imperilling what we already possessed by striving after more',⁽⁴³⁾ but he was convinced of the rosiness of the prospects opening in China as a result of victory and just as determined as Palmerston not to jeopardise them. He was quite ready to make use of Britain's naval strength on the China coast. In September 1844 he told Peel that he regarded China as an exception to his usual rule against the habitual display of force to support diplomacy. European states did not need to be

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 (42) F.O. China Corres, vol 70, Pottinger to For Off, 24 Oct 1843; vol 86, For Off to Davis, No.63, 6 Aug 1844. Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5530, V/A Parker to Adty, Hongkong, 15 Nov 1843.

(43) Michie, The Englishman in China, I, 163.

constantly reminded of British might at every moment of disagreement, for they were well aware of it already. Not so the Chinese, who had only recently come into contact with it for the first time. 'They have felt our power', he wrote, 'and they must continue to see that we are superior to other Nations, if we mean to retain the ascendancy we have obtained in China'.

(44) It was a sentiment which one would expect Palmerston to endorse.

Apart from this difference of emphasis, the Melbourne and Peel governments differed little in their attitude to China, and both stood in much the same relation to the demands of the merchants. They subscribed to the China coast theory that political rather than economic obstacles were the chief barrier to the extension of British trade, and their policy was aimed at removing those obstacles. On the other hand, they recognised that the "old China hands" were not the only group with a stake in the trade. Merchants and manufacturers in Britain, though equally anxious to see the volume of trade expanded, did not always have identical views on the methods to be employed in attaining that end, and their political influence was of some consequence to a Foreign Secretary who had to justify his policy in the House of Commons. Hence both Palmerston and Aberdeen failed to press matters to extremes when many men on the China coast thought they should have done so.

For some years after 1843, first Aberdeen and then Palmerston decided to concentrate on the enforcement of existing treaty rights rather than the acquisition of new ones.

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(44) British Museum, Aberdeen Papers, vol xxvi (Add Mss 43064), Aberdeen to Peel, 16 Sept 1844.

That course entailed both pressure on an unwilling Chinese government and restraint on the activities of the more ambitious British merchants. It was not a policy of deliberate expansion. On the other hand, the British government had shown itself willing in 1839 to resort to force when convinced of the need for it, and it was already convinced that the prize was worth the effort required to win it. By 1847 it was becoming apparent that the Treaty of Nanking had not brought the enormous wealth that had been anticipated, and though the traders could not control Britain's policy in detail, they could and did persuade the Foreign Office that a new treaty was necessary.. The Chinese would certainly not be willing to grant one without a further appeal to arms. The threat to China was latent but it was recognisable.

The same was not true of Japan. Even if we assume, from events in China, that any marked increase of commercial interest in Japan would lead in time to government action, it is still beyond doubt that by the end of 1844 there was no evidence of such interest. This was logical enough. Up to that date, China still seemed to offer golden opportunities, and there was no reason why British merchants should covet the little-known and (by such accounts as were available) unprofitable market to be found in Japan. Once these earlier hopes were disappointed, then there might be an attempt to seek compensation in the "closed" lands of Korea, Cochin China and Japan. In fact it will be seen that some traders did show signs of ^{evolving} ~~having~~ such ^a plan after 1848. But the majority sought instead new privileges in China, where they still thought the greatest profits were to be made. In so ~~far~~ far as action depended on merchant opinion, indeed, the China war had reduced rather than increased the possibility that Britain would use force to secure the opening of Japan by concentrating attention more than ever on the China

trade. Most traders would probably have welcomed the end of Japanese seclusion, but they did not regard it as a sufficiently important object to call for public comment. Their interest was more likely to be aroused after Japanese ports had been opened, to take the form of demands for the improvement of an existing trade, as it had in China, than of an agitation for the opening of a new one.

There was, however, one apparent danger to Japanese seclusion quite apart from commercial interest. Any clash between British merchants and Japanese officials would probably lead to government intervention as long as the merchants were not obviously in the wrong. And with increasing numbers of ships sailing north to the Yangtse, stress of weather might conceivably drive a few of them to the Japanese coast and so create circumstances in which such an incident could occur. Even so, the danger was relatively slight. Incidents involving whaling vessels had provoked no official protest - though the fate of a merchant ship might arouse more political agitation - while the decree of 1842 had done much to reduce the chance of future clashes despite Japanese hostility to Britain. If the opening of Japan were to depend on some accidental dispute over the ill-treatment of British seamen, it might be indefinitely postponed.

One other new factor of great potential importance has yet to be discussed. The China war had for the first time brought a British fleet into Chinese waters, and the need to protect British rights and interests under the Treaty of Nan-king led to the creation of a permanent China squadron on the East Indies station. Indeed, within a few years the China coast was regarded in London as the most important part of

that station.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The existence of this force was something of a temptation to British representatives in China, diplomats, consuls and merchants alike. They were normally more inclined to hasty action than a government in London answerable to Parliament for all its deeds, and as it took four months to get an answer from England on a question of policy, were sufficiently remote to act on their own initiative. They tended to look on the fleet as ready support for all their actions whenever these brought them into conflict with "the natives". It was, too, an instrument to execute their more ambitious plans for the increase of British wealth and prestige. As early as June 1844 the naval commander on the station recognised and protested against this attitude to his command, and his superiors at the Admiralty were still complaining of the same kind of difficulty four years later.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Moreover, the existence of the China squadron greatly simplified the practical task of organising an expedition to Japan, and by so doing made its organisation more likely. It was to play an important part in subsequent British plans to open that country, but more immediately, in 1845 its activities brought about the first official contact since the Phaeton visit.

One of the navy's chief tasks in the protection of commerce was that of surveying coasts and harbours, the need for which in China had already been felt by Napier in 1834.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The matter became more urgent during naval operations between

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 (45) Admiralty, Secretary's Department, Out-Letters (Adm 2), vol 1605, Adty to R/A Inglefield, 6 July 1847.

(46) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5539, R/A Cochrane to Adty, Hongkong, 13 June 1844.
Russell Papers, vol 7, Auckland to Russell, 23 Feb 1848.

(47) See chapter I, 58-9 and note.

1839 and 1842, and some valuable work had been done by the ships engaged.⁽⁴⁸⁾ But much still remained to do when the peace was signed. Special surveying vessels were already at work in the East Indies and Australia,⁽⁴⁹⁾ and in 1843 it was decided to send another, the Samarang under the command of Captain Belcher, to supplement the work being carried out by the ships of the squadron. Belcher was to be employed under the general direction of the Commander-in-Chief East Indies, in surveying such parts of the China coast as might be considered suitable after consultation with the Superintendent of Trade at Hongkong, and he was warned that he might well meet objections from Chinese officials but was not in any circumstances to use force to overcome them.⁽⁵⁰⁾

In July 1843, when the Samarang arrived at Hongkong, Vice Admiral Parker consulted the Superintendent about her employment. Pottinger, who had just agreed with the Chinese that he would as far as possible prevent British ships from visiting points on the China coast other than those opened by treaty, saw political objections to the surveys suggested by the Admiralty. He said they would serve only to increase 'the groundless panic which has spread concerning our views' among the Chinese. He readily assented, however, to an alternative plan for surveying the little-known islands to the northeast

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 (48) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1597, Adty to R/A Maitland, 30 Jan 1840.

Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5514, V/A Parker to Adty, 17 and 24 June, 26 July, 24 Aug 1842.

(49) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1599, Adty to V/A Parker, 12 and 16 Aug 1841, 29 Mar 1842.

(50) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1600, Adty to V/A Parker, 13 Jan 1843.

F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 26, For Off to Pottinger, No.28, 25 Jan 1843.

of Taiwan, to which British ships might be driven by weather. (51) Parker accordingly transmitted this decision to Belcher, warning him at the same time not to approach the China coast except in an x emergency. (52)

It was nearly two years before Belcher's operations brought him to Japan, though his plan to visit Nagasaki seems to have been known in advance to the Japanese, who were warned by the Dutch as early as 1843. (53) He entered Nagasaki harbour on 6 August 1845 and requested permission through his Chinese interpreter to carry out surveying and purchase provisions during this and future voyages. He denied that his visit had any other purpose. (54) In the course of general conversations with the local officials he learned that they regarded the Morrison's visit as common law-breaking and cited the Phaeton affair of 1808 as the cause of much of the existing feeling against Britain in Japan. They showed great interest in Britain's actions in China, commented on her great power and remarked (somewhat improbably) that they looked forward 'with satisfaction' to the arrival of an official British mission seeking trade relations. (55) Belcher was provided with what stores he wanted and urged to remain until an answer arrived from Edo

(51) F.O.China Corres, vol 68, Pottinger to For Off, No.94, 29 July 1843, enclosing correspondence with Parker.

(52) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5530, Parker to Adty, 16 Nov 1843, enclosing Parker to Belcher, 28 Oct 1843.

(53) London Times, 3 June 1844.
Belcher, Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Samarang, I, 321-3; II, 6.

(54) Belcher, op.cit, II, 1-5.
Muto, Niti-ei kootuu-si, pp.548-51 includes the record of the interrogation.

(55) Belcher, op.cit, II, 7-8, 11, 14, 35.

to his enquiry about future visits - the officials said it was sure to be favourable - but after surveying the harbour under the guise of dredging for shells, he sailed on 10 August before any answer came.⁽⁵⁶⁾ He was later ordered back to England and had to abandon his plans for another visit in the following year.

This visit was not the harbinger of a British diplomatic mission to Japan, though Japanese were quick to think it so and Belcher may have hoped for some such outcome, but it did demonstrate that Japan was no longer so isolated geographically as before, that the islands of northeast Asia were coming within the sphere of Europe's interest - if only as dangers to navigation. The China war, indeed, had materially altered Britain's position in eastern Asia. It had provided a new base for commercial activity and access to new markets. It had caused the creation in China of consular and naval organisations which, though intended as much to control as to assist British merchants, could easily become the instruments of expansion, even aggression, should the wish or the opportunity arise. Because of the war, Cabinet, Parliament, and to a lesser extent the public, had become aware of British interests in China as never before, more ready than in the past to insist on their protection; and while there was no conscious design of political aggrandisement, economic penetration backed by overwhelming military strength seemed likely to threaten China's political independence.

Despite Japanese fears, the position of Japan did not exactly parallel that of China. Once British merchants were

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 (56) Belcher, Voyage of H.M.S. Samarang, II, 7-10, 12, 17.

established in Japanese ports, then, indeed, the Japanese might have to face these same dangers - that would depend on many unpredictable factors. But in 1844 Japan was still closed and the movement to force open her ports had not yet gained momentum even in America. In Britain there was nothing to suggest any significant interest earlier than 1845, while the chance of an accidental clash which might precipitate action was relatively slight. Japanese fears were, however, justified in one respect. Once interest was aroused - and ironically enough knowledge of those fears was to play a part in arousing it - the commercial, diplomatic and naval machinery built up to handle British relations with China could, and probably would, be turned against Japan. One must emphasise in this connection the importance of the fact that the Opium War and treaty settlement in China occurred before the first specific plans to open Japan, not because that necessarily argues a causal connection between the two, but because events in China, striking enough to be "news" for the first time in Britain, conditioned British thinking about all the countries of East Asia; and when finally they did give serious attention to Japan, British statesmen, merchants and officials regarded it not as a new and separate problem, but as one exhibiting the same difficulties - and by implication capable of solution by the same methods - as had already been encountered in China. The attitude first became apparent in 1845, when the Foreign Office prepared secret plans for opening trade with Japan.

Chapter III. Secret Plans : 1845-1848.

Although the Opium War did not immediately raise the question of Japanese seclusion for British statesmen, it was out of the aftermath of that war that there arose the first official plans for opening trade relations with Japan, the first plans, that is, in which the Foreign Office accepted the idea of active intervention. As had also been true of proposals in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the initiative came from the Far East. Specifically, the issue which provided the occasion for these plans was the return to China of the island of Chusan.

Chusan had been mentioned by British merchants in Canton as early as December 1834 as a suitable centre for trade, and in October 1839, when Palmerston instructed Elliot on the conduct of operations and the terms to be exacted from China, he had ordered its occupation as a base for war, to be retained afterwards as a commercial establishment. Elliot himself regarded it as a valuable station offering access to new markets both in China and Japan.⁽¹⁾ Chusan was occupied in July 1840, but it proved unhealthy and in January 1841, in contravention of his instructions, Elliot agreed to evacuate it in exchange for Hongkong. Palmerston did not approve of this action. He believed that even if unhealthy Chusan should at least be retained as security until China had paid the war indemnity, and when Pottinger went out to relieve Elliot ordered him to re-occupy the island, which he did in October 1841. He found it healthier than previous experience had suggested and a useful

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 (1) Costin, Great Britain and China, p.71.

source of provisions for the troops, but despite this improvement he agreed in the Treaty of Nanking that it should be returned to China, together with the island of Koolangsoo off the port of Amoy, once the indemnity had been paid and arrangements completed for opening the new treaty ports to trade. By a subsequent agreement this second condition was dropped. ⁽²⁾

Beginning in 1844, there were several attempts to persuade the British government to retain the island on one pretext or another. J.F.Davis, who succeeded Pottinger as Plenipotentiary and Superintendent, wanted to return Koolangsoo when the last instalment of the indemnity had been paid, but keep Chusan as a pledge that China would fulfil her treaty obligations to admit Europeans to the city of Canton - one of the earliest disputes to arise out of the peace settlement. ⁽³⁾

Though he later withdrew the suggestion under Aberdeen's criticism, Davis had at least based his argument on the terms of the Treaty of Nanking. Others were not so legally inclined. Montgomery Martin, Colonial Treasurer in the Hongkong administration, had a high opinion of the commercial possibilities of Chusan and a poor one of Hongkong. In October 1844 he wrote to Davis to urge the retention of Chusan, emphasising its value as a base from which to open trade with northern China and Japan. Davis rather unwillingly forwarded the report to Lord Aberdeen. He took care, however, to dissociate himself from the views it contained, especially the acid criticisms of Hongkong. ⁽⁴⁾ Meanwhile Martin sent another copy direct to

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 (2) Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.83-90, 95-7, 101.

(3) ibid, pp.115-6, 122-5.

(4) F.O.China Corres, vol 89, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate, 28 October 1844, enclosing Martin's report.

Sir Robert Peel in London, where his proposals were backed up by a letter from the East India and China Association showing some interest in the possibility of opening trade with Japan. (5)

Dr Gutzlaff, Chinese Secretary to the Superintendency, agreed with Martin's assessment of the importance of Chusan, whence, he said, 'with the enterprize which has always marked British Traders, they would...find their way to Japan, and open there a valuable commerce'. But he did not ~~xxxx~~ feel that Britain could with justice make any claim to the island. In view of rumours of French designs on Chusan, however, he thought that while the island must be returned, it would be as well to ensure by agreement with China that it would never be ceded to any other foreign power. This proposal Davis heartily endorsed as much more respectable than 'the flighty, baseless, and impracticable lucubrations' of Montgomery Martin. (6)

In the East the press took up the debate. The China Mail, published in Hongkong and hence inclined to urge the claims of that colony, made frequent attacks on Martin and on the Friend of India which supported his plans. (7) At home the government was not to be convinced that the value of Chusan could justify a breach of treaty. Peel commented that Martin seemed determined to keep the island 'by any means, honest or dishonest - and I suspect would rather prefer the latter'. (8)

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- (5) F.O.China Corres, vol 91, Martin to Peel, 14 Nov 1844; vol 104, London E.India and China Assoc to Aberdeen, 17 Feb 1845.
- (6) F.O.China Corres, vol 101, Davis to For Off, No.151, 15 Oct 1845, and Gutzlaff's letter enclosed.
- (7) e.g. China Mail, 12 Nov and 11 Dec 1845.
- (8) Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVI (Add Mss 43064), Peel to Aberdeen, 25 Aug 1845.

However, Aberdeen dared not altogether ignore the rumours that France was preparing to occupy Chusan as soon as the British forces had been evacuated, though he regarded them as no more than a pretext to ensure its retention as a base. He therefore determined to be wary. He agreed with Peel that the island would have to be restored, but added that Davis must first exact from China some such guarantee as Gutzlaff had suggested. To make the result still more certain, he informed the French ambassador in London that Davis would also be instructed to use force, if necessary, to prevent its seizure in contravention of the Anglo-Chinese agreement.⁽⁹⁾ On these terms Chusan was evacuated in July 1846.

Japan had been mentioned several times during these debates and discussions. XXXXX Martin's letters, beginning in October 1844, had been based partly on the belief that trade with Japan was a desirable object, and none of his opponents had seen fit to contradict him on the point. Moreover, two other incidents early in 1845 kept the subject in Davis' mind. The British consul at the new treaty port of Ningpo had interfered officially in January to prevent the Chinese from returning a Japanese castaway to his own country and later found the man employment at Chusan. His action had been taken entirely on humanitarian grounds, without thought of trade, and was censured as politically unwise by both Davis and Aberdeen,⁽¹⁰⁾ but none the less may have served to remind his superiors of commercial possibilities. A more direct reminder came from

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 (9) Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVII (Add Mss 43065), Peel to Aberdeen, 20 Oct 1845; Aberdeen to Peel, 21 and 28 Oct 1845.

(10) F.O.China Corres, vol 98, Davis to For Off, No.48, 26 Mar 1845, and encls; vol 96, For Off to Davis, No,61, 8 Aug 1845.

Foochow, another of the new treaty ports. There G.T.Lay, an interpreter in Chinese who had been investigating trade prospects, discovered that Foochow was the port through which the Chinese conducted trade with the Loochoo islands, and thus indirectly with Japan, and that British goods were commonly sought by the merchants for that purpose. Moreover, after some study of the Japanese language he thought it possible, from similarities in dialect, that the Foochow district was the original home of the Japanese people. Certainly it seemed very likely that it was a point from which trade relations could readily be established with them. Davis thought this ^{report} was a little sanguine, in which view he was subsequently confirmed by the dispatches of the new consul, Rutherford Alcock, but forwarded it to Aberdeen none the less. (11)

Directly and indirectly, references to Japan were becoming quite common, and it is not surprising, therefore, that it should have occurred to Davis that an attempt might be made to open communication with that country. In May 1845 he wrote a secret letter to Lord Aberdeen. He pointed out that when the last instalment of the indemnity had been paid, probably early in 1846, Chusan would be evacuated, an event which would require the use of a number of transports and part of the navy's China squadron as well as affording an excuse for his own presence there. This force, once assembled, would provide the materials of 'a splendid and imposing mission'. It could easily be diverted temporarily to Edo, only a few day's sail from

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 (11) F.O.China Corres, vol 97, Davis to For Off, No.11, 15 Jan 1845, encl. Lay to Davis, Foochow, 17 Dec 1844; vol 99, Davis to For Off, No.73, 16 May 1845; vol 100, Davis to For Off, No.119, 8 Aug 1845.

Chusan, and there used to open negotiations for a commercial treaty, an object which Davis regarded as 'second only in importance to a Treaty of Commerce with China'. He argued that such a mission would involve little expense or risk:-

'The crisis appears to me most peculiarly favourable to the success of this important experiment; and even in the improbable event of failure we can do no possible injury to our "relations" with Japan, when in fact none whatever exist. The Japanese Government is perfectly well informed as to the results of the late contest with China near its own door, and at the same time that it has witnessed our irresistible success, the lapse of nearly four years, and the restoration of Chusan itself, will have demonstrated that our good faith is not inferior to our power.

I can scarcely imagine the possibility of its doing otherwise than at once seeing the policy of consenting to a Treaty of Commerce, based in substance on the Treaty of Nanking, and introduced to its notice through the medium of an imposing mission, such as the opportunity in question will afford without any additional expense whatever, except perhaps a few presents....' (12)

Gutzlaff knew the Japanese language⁽¹³⁾ and could obtain the assistance of several Japanese natives then in China. Davis himself claimed considerable knowledge of Japan, which he thought would make him a clear choice to head the mission. Finally, he stressed that in order to ensure success strict secrecy must be maintained and adequate naval support provided, asking that the Admiralty be instructed to place a suitable force at the Superintendent's disposal when the time came to carry out the plan.

The references to Gutzlaff suggest that the Chinese Secretary may well have been the source of much of Davis's

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(12) F.O.China Corres, vol 99, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate and Secret, Hongkong, 6 May 1845.

(13) See chapter I, p.67.

information. Certainly he had very similar ideas and a few months later produced a plan of his own even wider in scope.⁽¹⁴⁾ Gutzlaff, too, felt that the defeat of China, to whom all peoples of the Far East were in the habit of looking with awe and respect, would make success probable in Japan if only Britain were to act while the memory of it was still fresh. Japan, he said, feared British attack, and that fear might be put to good use in breaking down the prejudices of the Japanese government - the people and even some of the feudal lords, especially Satsuma, were already anxious for trade. Moreover, the Japanese admired courage and this would breed respect for Britain, while the 'liberal' example set by China would also play its part in bringing about a favourable decision. But Gutzlaff did not confine his plans to Japan. He advocated negotiations with Korea, too, as well as with Siam and Cochin China, envisaging a commercial mission, with himself as interpreter, which would make a grand tour of the Pacific seaboard of Asia. Davis forwarded his report to the Foreign Office, expressing general agreement with the proposals it contained and emphasising that Gutzlaff had no knowledge of the plans which the Superintendent had suggested in May.⁽¹⁵⁾

It was Lord Aberdeen, Foreign Secretary since September 1841, who had to decide what action, if any, should be taken on these recommendations. He had, of course, been subject to some of the same influences as Davis, for the Foochow and Ningpo correspondence had all been sent home in addition to Martin's reports, while the intervention of the London East India and

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 (14) F.O.China Corres, vol 100, Gutzlaff memo of 12 July 1845 in Davis to Aberdeen, Sep. and Confid, 1 Aug 1845.

(15) F.O.China Corres, vol 100, Davis to Aberdeen, Sep. and Confidential, 1 Aug 1845.

China Association must have carried more weight than any of these. Martin came back to England in 1845⁽¹⁶⁾ and continued to bombard the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade and the Prime Minister with letters.⁽¹⁷⁾ Increasingly he concerned himself with the opening of Japan, and early in 1846 offered his services as a 'commercial envoy' for that purpose, though without success.⁽¹⁸⁾ Yet although he managed to air his views in the Press both in England and in India,⁽¹⁹⁾ one is forced to recognise that his campaign did not constitute public pressure on an important scale and cannot be given credit for Aberdeen's decision.

Aberdeen was in some ways predisposed to favour such a plan as Davis had suggested and the arguments he had advanced to support it. The Peel government was anxious to further British trade and improve commercial relations with other countries - Lord Ripon at the Board of Trade had put their policy in general terms when he stated that Her Majesty's Government were 'very desirous of availing themselves of any opportunity of opening new markets for all important Articles of our Manufactures by commercial arrangements with foreign powers upon principles of mutual advantage'.⁽²⁰⁾ This, of course, did not

(16) F.O.China Corres, vol 100, Davis to For Off, No.99, 26 June 1845.

(17) See, for example, F.O.China Corres, vol 107, Martin to Aberdeen, 12 Nov 1845; Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVI (Add Mss 43064), Peel to Aberdeen, 25 Aug 1845; Bd.Trade, Minutes, vol 55, minutes of 29 Aug 1846.

(18) F.O.China Corres, vol 117, Martin to Aberdeen, 22 3 Feb 1846; Aberdeen to Martin, 12 Feb 1846.

(19) London Times, 28 Aug, 2 and 8 Sept 1846.
China Mail, 11 Dec 1845, quoting Indian press articles.

(20) Bd.Trade, Minutes, vol 50, Ripon minute of 23 July 1842.

refer to Japan, where considerably greater difficulties might be expected than in the negotiations undertaken with France, Holland and Brazil. But Davis had pointed out that the risks were small, and it is significant that it was precisely this point that was emphasised in the summary of his letter found in Aberdeen's private papers.⁽²¹⁾ Indeed, the so-called "weakness" of Aberdeen's policy - in China, at least - was little more than a determination to preserve trade relations undisturbed.⁽²²⁾ This emphasis on commercial interests naturally led him to approve the objectives, if not the methods, proposed by Davis.

Even the methods were not entirely alien to his ideas. He was not averse to having a strong naval force on the China coast to support British policy, for when Pottinger and Davis protested against the reduction of the squadron in the summer of 1844 it was strengthened by the Admiralty at Aberdeen's request.⁽²³⁾ This was in spite of a protest from Rear Admiral Cochrane, commanding the East Indies station, that such an increase was neither desirable nor necessary and would only encourage consular officials in their constant appeals to the sanction of force when refused redress for imaginary grievances. Aberdeen himself admitted that such a tendency existed, and that he did not approve of it.⁽²⁴⁾ On the other hand, he went

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 (21) Aberdeen Papers, vol CXXIV (Add Mss 43162), f.69.

(22) This appears clearly in Aberdeen to Davis, 8 Aug 1845 (quoted in Morse, International Relations, I, 374) and 24 Apr 1846 (ibid, I, 375-6).

(23) Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVI (Add Mss 43064), Aberdeen to Peel, 17 Oct 1844.
 Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1603, Adty to R/A Cochrane, No.188, 30 Nov 1844.

(24) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5539, Cochrane to Adty, No.6, Hongkong, 13 June 1844.
Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVII (Add Mss 43065), Aberdeen to Peel, 28 Oct 1845.

so far as to state on one occasion that he considered China a special case, a proper field for the display of military strength during negotiations, the only part of the world in which he wished to maintain 'a greater force than might at first sight have appeared to be necessary'. (25)

Aberdeen, then, replied to Davis in terms of cautious approval. He fully concurred in the importance of opening this immense new field to British commerce, an importance which justified him, he thought, in accepting the risks involved 'more readily than might perhaps...be deemed consistent with strict political prudence'. Somewhat illogically, he added that he did so the more willingly because failure, as Davis had observed, 'could scarcely draw along with it any serious national damage'. The time and manner of the attempt were to be left to the Superintendent's discretion, but Aberdeen was not altogether happy about 'the naval pomp and parade' which Davis seemed to think necessary. It might arouse more fear and jealousy than respect. He thought it as well, therefore, to give the Japanese government previous notice of the expedition, and of its peaceful intentions, in order to avoid any unnecessary clash that might jeopardise the success of the negotiations.

That portion of the Foreign Secretary's dispatch of August 1845 in which he discussed the terms to be secured, demonstrates clearly not only how little the Foreign Office *knew* about Japan but also how much it was influenced by the history of British relations with China. It is therefore worth quoting at length:-

'At this stage of the business, and practically

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(25) Aberdeen Papers, vol XXVI (Add Mss 43064), Aberdeen to Peel, 16 Sept 1844.

uninformed as we are with respect to Japan, it will be unnecessary, not to say impossible, for me to give you any specific directions as to the precise points of the negotiation, or the mode of conducting it. The general object will of course be to establish relations of amity and commerce with Japan; and if the counterpart of our Treaties with China, with such modifications as local circumstances may require, could be accomplished, such a consummation would appear to answer for the present every object which Her Majesty's Government have in view.

Should you be able to effect an entrance into Japan, and find the Government more amenable than we can at present venture very confidently to anticipate, you would of course endeavour to expand as far as possible the advantages secured to us by our Treaties with China, by prevailing on the Japanese Government to open not Five but all the Great Ports of the Empire to our trade, and also secure to British subjects the free exercise of their religion wherever they may think it fit to establish themselves.

Were it deemed possible you might also propose the establishment of permanent political relations with Japan by the fixed residence of an accredited British Diplomatic Agent at the Court....

You will therefore understand that you are to use your own discretion in endeavouring by your best exertions to give effect to your own suggestions; that you are not to seek exclusive advantages of any description, political, commercial or religious, for Great Britain; that you are not to admit any act or expression on the part of the Japanese Government implying superiority on their part or inferiority on ours; but that both parties are to negotiate and constantly to treat each other on a footing of perfect equality; that you are not to commit your Government to any measure, such for instance as the prevention of smuggling on the Coasts of Japan, which may entail entail expence or responsibility on them without any corresponding advantage; and finally that you are to seek to lay on the broad basis of justice and liberality the foundations of our future relations with Japan, and to endeavour to impress both the People and the Government with a sense of our national good faith and integrity at least as much as with that of our Power'. (26)

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 (26) F.O.China Corres., vol 96, Aberdeen to Davis, Separate and Secret, 8 Aug 1845.

The questions of national equality, religious toleration, smuggling and diplomatic representation mentioned here were precisely those already causing difficulties in British relations with China. In drawing thus on British experience there, in viewing possible relations with Japan in the light of that experience, Aberdeen set an example which was followed by his successors when they drafted instructions on the subject to their representatives in the East, and which was reflected in the terms of the treaty ultimately negotiated by Elgin in 1858.

The caution embodied in the Foreign Secretary's dispatch was less extreme than some of the wording suggests. Davis was not ordered to avoid recourse to arms in all circumstances - as Belcher had been, for example ⁽²⁷⁾ - nor to abandon altogether the use of 'naval pomp and parade'. He was simply to avoid giving provocation to the Japanese. Indeed, Aberdeen insisted that the detailed conduct of the mission was left to the Superintendent's discretion. He was even willing to provide the naval escort he had requested, and instructed the Admiralty to issue orders to Rear Admiral Cochrane, the commander on the station, which would leave Davis as far as possible a free hand. ⁽²⁸⁾

As in other details, Aberdeen adhered closely to Davis's suggestions in maintaining the strictest secrecy about the plans. Davis had written his dispatch in his own hand to prevent its contents from becoming known to his subordinates. Similarly, Aberdeen at first decided to send no full powers for negotiations with Japan, not only because they would probably

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(27) See chapter II, pp.104-5.

(28) F.O.China Corres, vol 106, For Off to Adty, Most Secret, 8 Aug 1845.

be unnecessary in a country which knew nothing of European diplomatic usage, but also because there was a danger that information might leak out if too many departments were given access to it. (29) Nor was he content with marking his letter to the Admiralty "Most Secret". He added a paragraph emphasising that the utmost care should be taken to prevent any suspicion of the existence of these plans from becoming public. It appears that even the Board of Trade was not informed in writing until after the government had fallen and Palmerston had succeeded Aberdeen in July 1846. (30)

Though later somewhat relaxed, this secrecy was still being enforced when Aberdeen determined, on the basis of Gutzlaff's recommendations, to add Cochin China to the list of countries with which Davis was empowered to treat. It was designed, of course, to minimise the chance of foreign competition. When the India Board, which had been informed only of the plans for Cochin China, asked to what extent it was intended by "secrecy" to prevent disclosure of the correspondence to the Court of Directors, the Foreign Office replied that the use of the term meant that it was desired 'to keep the whole subject of our projected negotiations in the far East as secret as might be practicable...The truth is, we do not wish it to be known in other countries what plans are concocting here for expanding our commerce and influence in the East'. (31)

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 (29) F.O.China Corres, vol 96, Aberdeen to Davis, Separate and Secret, 8 Aug 1845. The full power was sent a few weeks later - vol 96, same to same, 19 Sept 1845.

(30) The first extant letter is F.O.China Corres, vol 118, For Off to Bd.Trade, 29 Aug 1846.

(31) F.O.China Corres, vol 107, For Off to India Bd, 28 Nov 1845. See also vol 107, India Bd to For Off, 28 Nov 1845; vol 108, Aberdeen to Davis, Sep and Secret, 18 Mar 1846.

Aberdeen's dispatch of 8 August reached Davis in October 1845 and he at once wrote a reply outlining his future plans. ~~(32)~~ He repeated his belief that the time was ripe for such a venture, adducing as additional evidence the friendliness shown towards the Samarang ⁽³³⁾ to show that the Japanese were no longer so rigid as before in their interpretation of the seclusion laws. He had taken the naval Commander-in-Chief into his confidence, and they were agreed that the voyage could not be undertaken until April 1846, by which time the monsoon would have changed and the indemnity been paid. As to the manner of approach, Davis conceded Aberdeen's point that the unannounced arrival of a large force might alarm the Japanese. He proposed, therefore, to send a steamer about one week ahead of the main body with a letter explaining its peaceful and friendly intentions. But he was not willing to reduce the size of the force. 'I do not perceive', he wrote, 'any advantage (but the reverse) in presenting ourselves near the Japanese Capital in such a shape as might lead to our being despised, or perhaps insulted. The appearance of a respectable force is probably the best mode of securing a hearing...' ⁽³²⁾ Davis, it is clear, was not content to be a mere supplicant for trade and went further than Aberdeen in his reliance on the gunboat as an instrument of diplomacy - a fact later of much importance.

The plan was, then, to visit Japan immediately after the evacuation of Chusan. In fact, it was never carried out. The evacuation itself was postponed until July 1846, and in

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 (32) F.O.China Corres, vol 107, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate and Secret, Hongkong, 27 Oct 1845.

(33) See chapter II, pp.104-6.

the interval a number of factors operated to prevent or deter Davis from continuing with the Japan project. As we have seen, the details and time of execution had been left to him and he was sure that only 'a respectable force' would have any real chance of success. At the end of 1845 he became aware of French and American interest in Japan and discovered that their squadrons were about to visit that country, and this more than ever convinced him of the need for a show of strength, not only to impress the Japanese but also to demonstrate British naval superiority over France and the United States. At the same time it was becoming more difficult for him to raise what he considered a suitable escort, and he finally postponed the expedition indefinitely rather than appear with less strength than his rivals.

Ever since the Morrison expedition the United States government had been under increasing pressure from official, merchant and missionary sources to send a mission to Japan. In February 1845 Congress passed a resolution urging such a mission on the administration and in April the Secretary of State authorised Everett, the new U.S. commissioner to China, to carry it out. Everett left the United States to take up his post but was forced to land at Rio de Janeiro owing to ill-health, where he transferred his instructions and credentials for Japan to Commodore James Biddle, with whose squadron he was taking passage. Biddle continued the voyage and eventually arrived at Macao in December 1845. (34)

Davis first reported on the mission in March, when Biddle was at Hongkong. A few weeks later he was able to get much fuller information through Gutzlaff, who agreed to translate

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(34) Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.225-8.

the full power taken over from Everett - though he refused to lend the American commodore either of the two Japanese living with him to act as interpreter to the expedition, on the grounds that he could not dispense with their valuable services even for a brief period. Thus Davis learnt that Biddle would be sailing for Japan early in May 1846 with two ships and was pleased enough to hear it, for the American's experience might prove useful in shaping the British negotiations. He now planned to leave for Chusan late in May and proceed thence to Japan. (35)

At this stage Davis was not much disturbed by the thought of competition, either American or French. The French had been showing interest in the Loochoos since 1844 and had installed a missionary there, possibly to learn the language in readiness for any future embassy to Japan. The commander of the French warship Alcmene had asked for trading privileges in the islands and announced that Admiral Cecille would soon come to Napa to put the demands into the form of a treaty. (36) But in April 1846 this visit had still not taken place, though Davis reported in May that Cecille as well as Biddle had left for Japan. (37)

It was only the question of naval strength that made these events significant to British plans respecting Japan.

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 (35) F.O.China Corres, vol 110, Davis to For Off, No.44, 22 Mar 1846; vol 111, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate and Secret, 10 Apr 1846.

(36) Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 533-6.
 Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.222-4.
 Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.116-8.

(37) F.O.China Corres, vol 112, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate and Secret, 24 May 1846.

Late in 1845 Cochrane, with Admiralty approval, had decided to divert part of his squadron to Borneo to make an attack on the pirate strongholds which threatened the shipping lanes in south-east Asia and to support the Sultan in his efforts to maintain friendly relations with Great Britain.⁽³⁸⁾ The task proved longer and more difficult than he expected. The Chusan expedition was held up waiting for Cochrane to return from the south, and by June 1846 Davis was complaining that more ships were being withdrawn from the China coast, further weakening what he already thought to be an inadequate force there. Only a frigate and three brigs remained, not enough to fulfil the treaty stipulation that a British warship be stationed permanently at each of the open ports.⁽³⁹⁾ His protest was upheld by Palmerston and the Admiralty,⁽⁴⁰⁾ but little could be done. The lack of naval strength was not confined to the East Indies station. It was due principally not to lack of ships but to Parliamentary estimates too small to permit the manning of such as were available, and it was already felt to be handicapping the new government in its conduct of foreign relations in many parts of the world.⁽⁴¹⁾

In June Davis determined to proceed with the evacuation of Chusan as soon as the transports were ready and without waiting for Cochrane. This would make his force much less

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 (38) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1603, Adty to R/A Cochrane, No.148, 7 Oct 1845 and No.170, 24 Nov 1845.

(39) F.O.China Corres, vol 112, Davis to Aberdeen, Sep. and Secret, 24 May 1846; Davis to For Off, No.85, 23 June 1846.

(40) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1604, Adty to Cochrane, No.6, 5 Oct 1846 and No.22, 29 Oct 1846.

(41) Russell Papers, vol 5, Auckland to Russell, 8 Sept 1846; Minto to Russell, 10 Sept 1846.

impressive, but he still planned to visit Japan 'should time and circumstances render the same advisable'.⁽⁴²⁾ It was after his arrival at Chusan, as he reported to Aberdeen on his return, that he changed his mind and decided to postpone the Japan expedition to a more suitable opportunity. He had already been disturbed by the lack of naval support and Cochrane's failure to return in time. At Chusan he received information (which later proved to be false) that Biddle and Cecille were to join forces for negotiating with Japan, and this news was decisive. Between them the French and American commanders could probably muster five ships, two of them large, a much greater force than Davis could hope to raise on the China coast; and to follow them in such circumstances, it seemed to him, would be to lose dignity. He chose rather to await the result of their visit, as by waiting until the following spring he could benefit by their experience and at the same time give Cochrane the opportunity of gathering a more sizable force. If they succeeded, then he would succeed if his mission looked as powerful. If they failed, the Japanese would be less inclined to add to their enemies by quarrelling with a strong British squadron. There were other reasons, too. Failure in Japan would lower British prestige in China, where fresh disputes had just broken out over the right of entry to Canton, and it would be better for others to fail if any must. Moreover, he said, 'we have acquired in the East generally a character for encroachment, and if the French and Americans should

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 (42) F.O.China Corres, vol 112, Davis to For Off, No.85,
 23 June 1846.

See also F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 59, Davis to Capt Talbot,
 No.101, 20 June 1846.

for once be willing to share this with us, the participation is calculated to do us no harm'. (43)

Although Biddle and Cecille did not go together to Japan, their visits were equally fruitless and did nothing to make Davis change his mind about postponing his own mission. Cecille visited Loochoo in June 1846 to press the French demand for a trade agreement - which was refused - and then went to Nagasaki to show the flag. He was treated with the customary incivility and left after only forty-eight hours. Davis heard a garbled version of the story, but it was enough that he knew of Cecille's failure. (44) Biddle reached Edo Bay on 20 July 1846 and asked whether Japan had yet decided to open her ports; if so, he said, he was authorised to settle the terms on which American ships were to use them. Seven days later he received a formal refusal of his request couched in most disrespectful terms. Moreover, when he went aboard a Japanese junk to receive the Bakuhu letter he was pushed back into his boat by a Japanese sailor. Anxious to avoid conflict, as his instructions enjoined, Biddle accepted an apology and made no attempt to see that the sailor was punished, but the incident did much to weaken the effect originally produced by the obvious power of his ships. (45)

Davis had fairly complete and accurate information

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(43) F.O.China Corres, vol 113, Davis to Aberdeen, Separate and Secret, Hongkong, 6 Aug 1846.

(44) F.O.China Corres, vol 114, Davis to Palmerston, Separate and Secret, 15 Oct 1846; vol 115, Davis to For Off, No.185, 28 Dec 1846.

(45) Wildes, Aliens in the East, pp.229-32.
China Mail, 15 June 1848, containing Biddle's official report dated 31 July 1846.

about the American failure,⁽⁴⁶⁾ and the nature of it seems to have had considerable effect on his own plans. He made no further reference to his earlier idea that American failure would make the Japanese less inclined to offend Britain too. He turned instead to other plans for trade expansion, particularly those for opening trade with Cochin China which had been drawn up as a result of Gutzlaff's memorandum. On 24 November he wrote to the new Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, to announce his intention of sailing there in the spring, setting aside the earlier project in favour of this new one which he regarded 'as much more likely to be attended with success than the mission to Japan, in which the Americans have lately so entirely failed'.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Although he did not say so explicitly, Davis may well have decided to abandon the Japan mission altogether, for he never thereafter raised the subject again. Had Aberdeen still been at the Foreign Office (as Davis thought when he wrote his dispatch in August), there would have been no reason to expect objections, for while he might have demurred at the reasons given for postponement, he had shown himself willing to leave the execution of the plan to the Superintendent's discretion. The Peel government, however, had fallen. Palmerston had become Foreign Secretary in July 1846, and it was for him to take the decision. His public criticism of Aberdeen's 'over-gentle policies' during the previous five years had made it clear that his return to office would mean a sharp change in policy,

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 (46) F.O.China Corres, vol 114, Davis to Palmerston, Sep and Secret, 15 Oct 1846; vol 134, R/A Seymour to Adty, 20 Dec 1846 in Adty to For Off, 13 Mar 1847.

(47) F.O.China Corres, vol 115, Davis to Palmerston, Separate and Secret, 24 Nov 1846.

in China as elsewhere. By the beginning of 1847 he was taking a strong line there, supporting Davis in the use of threats to obtain redress for British injuries in Canton, despite protests from some of the China merchants who feared a stoppage of trade.⁽⁴⁸⁾ He was not the man, in fact, to fear Japanese opposition or the rivalry of Western states.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Moreover Martin still continued his appeals to the Foreign Office and newspapers were publishing his views,⁽⁵⁰⁾ an additional reason, though not an important one, for expecting Palmerston to insist on strong action in Japan as in China. Yet he did not do so.

The fact was that Palmerston was much more susceptible than Aberdeen to the arguments used by Davis. When Davis reported in August his decision to postpone the Japan expedition because he could not raise enough force to match the French and American missions, he was appealing - though the dispatch was addressed to Aberdeen - to all Palmerston's rooted prejudices. It was just because he would not give way to Western rivals or Japanese opposition that Palmerston approved⁽⁵¹⁾ not only the postponement but the reasons given for it. For the same reason he later approved the decision to go instead to

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 (48) Bell, Palmerston, I, 330, 349, 354-5.

Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.126-31.

(49) For Palmerston's comments on relations with U.S.A. and France at this time, see, for example, Russell Papers, vol 5, Palmerston to Russell, 2 Feb and 8 Dec 1846.

(50) F.O.China Corres, vol 118, Martin to Palmerston, 26 and 28 Aug 1846.

London Times, 28 Aug, 2 and 8 Sept 1846.

London Daily News, 18 Dec 1846 (reprinted in China Mail, 8 Apr 1847).

(51) In the dispatch For Off to Davis, No.43, 10 Dec 1846 (F.O.China Corres, vol 108).

Cochin China.⁽⁵²⁾ Like Davis, he was prepared to act only if naval support were available on an adequate scale. It would continue to be impossible to provide it until Palmerston - or some other Foreign Secretary - decided that the Japan mission was important enough to be given priority over some of the other duties required of the China squadron, and in 1847 there seemed little likelihood of any such decision.

On the other hand there was not likely to be much opposition to the abandonment of the scheme. A number of newspapers had reported that plans were being made, but few actively supported the idea. Most of the agitation, such as it was, could be traced to Montgomery Martin, who although a member of the East India Company's Court of Directors had little political influence. The Edinburgh Review remained silent, while the Quarterly came out against all such proposals as decisively as it had in the past. This time it agreed that there would be advantages in an open communication with Japan if the ports were opened by the Japanese themselves or privileges were granted to 'an amicable commercial mission'. But if, as seemed more likely, the Japanese feared and hated Britain enough to refuse all friendly overtures, then, it said, 'we know not by what law of nations we can insist on a reversal in our favour of the code of an empire which never itself has indulged in acts of aggression. We doubt, indeed, whether either menace or violence could lead to any result more satisfactory than they would deserve...' (53)

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(52) F.O. China Corres., vol 121, Palmerston to Davis, Separate and Secret, 25 Jan 1847.

(53) Quarterly Review, LXXVIII (June 1846), pp.21-2.

There were other considerations which served to prevent both Palmerston and Davis from reviving the Japan plans during 1847. The naval force continued too weak for such an undertaking. The Navy was barely adequate to its task in home waters and was certainly not strong enough to permit of reinforcements for overseas stations, while Auckland at the Admiralty was generally opposed to the idea of putting naval vessels at the beck and call of every consul.⁽⁵⁴⁾ In April and July 1847 Palmerston had insisted that the force on the China coast be maintained at full strength and the Admiralty had issued orders to Rear Admiral Inglefield that he was to do his best to see that this was done, even at the cost of leaving inadequate reserves on the rest of the East Indies station.⁽⁵⁵⁾ None the less, by December Davis was again commenting on the weakness of the squadron. In view of the state of relations with China, he requested the Senior Officer at Hongkong to concentrate all available ships there, where they would be more useful than if scattered in the treaty ports, but this was only a temporary expedient. Early in 1848 he again asked for reinforcements, pointing out that the number of sloops had been allowed to drop below the minimum of five laid down as essential two years before.⁽⁵⁶⁾

During this period relations with China were engaging

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 (54) Russell Papers, vol 6, Auckland memo on Naval Means, Admiralty, Dec 1847; vol 7, Auckland to Russell, 23 Feb 1848.

(55) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1605, Adty to Inglefield, No.94, 30 Apr 1847 and No.136, 6 July 1847.

(56) F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 69, Davis to Capt McQuhae, Canton, 13 and 17 Dec 1847.
F.O.China Corres. vol 140, Davis to For Off, No.27, 12 Feb 1848 and No.38, 26 Feb 1848.

most of the Superintendent's attention. While Aberdeen was still in office there had been serious differences with the Chinese over the right of foreigners to enter the city of Canton, and acting on his instructions to avoid an open break, with its consequent ill effects on trade, Davis had agreed in April 1846 to postpone exercise of the right for a period of two years. The local population remained hostile, however, and in July, while Davis was at Chusan, fresh riots broke out as a result of the provocative acts of some British merchants and brought him hurrying back to Hongkong. Palmerston determined to take a strong line with both the Chinese government and the British merchants. Davis received ~~XXXX~~ instructions to this effect in March 1847, and almost ~~xx~~ simultaneously was told of a fresh attack on a British party at a village near Canton. He demanded immediate reparation, and when this was not forthcoming proceeded to occupy the forts on the Canton estuary and river, forcing the Chinese to submit to his terms. After an interval of comparative quiet during the summer, further incidents occurred in the autumn, culminating in December in the murder of six more British subjects. Again Davis prepared to use force, but was stopped this time by instructions from Palmerston. The Foreign Secretary had not entirely approved of the events of the previous spring, when Davis, on the strength of orders telling him to act firmly, had felt himself entitled to resort to arms without attempting to refer home, and accordingly now instructed him that in future he was to take no such action without the prior approval of the Foreign Office. (57) This prevented open hostilities, but disputes

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(57) For the disputes over Canton see:-

Morse, International Relations, I, 376-91.

Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.125-33.

continued at intervals in 1848 and 1849.

One is forced to assume that it was the relationship between the two factors of naval weakness and conflict with China that caused the continued postponement of the Japan project. Certainly the usually well-informed China Mail asserted that this was so on a number of occasions. In one article it went so far as to say that naval support could have been made available if the commanders of the squadron had not preferred using their ships to collect head-money in Borneo and that the plan would have been carried out if Great Britain 'had ever been fortunate enough to have entrusted her interests...to anyone who did not look steadily and exclusively to his own fortunes'.⁽⁵⁸⁾ However, we have seen that the shortage of ships was real enough - if one accepts Davis's premise that only an impressive and powerful mission had any hope of success - and the fact that no attempt was made to utilise the periods of quiet in China to renew the Japan venture suggests that of the two factors, naval weakness was the more important.

Davis, as the originator of the plan, had nothing to gain by abandoning it and perhaps some reputation to lose. There is nothing to show that he had changed his mind about the desirability of opening Japan or that his views on the methods to be employed had altered in any way. On Aberdeen's departure from office, the Superintendent wrote to him privately to express admiration for his peace policy and thank him for 'those lessons of moderation and justice' contained in his official dispatches.⁽⁵⁹⁾ But even allowing for a natural desire

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 (58) China Mail, 2 Mar 1854; see also issues of 27 Aug 1846 and 10 Oct 1850.

(59) Davis to Aberdeen, 28 Sept 1846, quoted by Costin, Great Britain and China, p.126.

to please his new master, Davis's opinions and methods seem to put him closer to Palmerston than to Aberdeen as a diplomat. It was Davis who insisted on 'naval pomp and parade' for the Japan mission despite Aberdeen's objections. It was Davis who incurred even Palmerston's displeasure for too ready a recourse to arms against Canton. In the spring of 1847, when Captain La Pierre, the new commander of the French squadron on the China coast, punished the Cochin Chinese for insults to the French flag by sinking all five of the war junks which dared to oppose him, Davis wrote to congratulate him in terms which reveal much of his attitude to the peoples of East Asia and the "diplomatic" methods to be used in relations with them:- 'C'est ainsi qu'on est quelquefois obligé d'exiger le respect des peuples demi-sauvages envers les Nations civilisées de l'Occident. On commence par détruire à coups de Canon les barricades de la barbarie; puis s'ensuivent la Religion, le Commerce, avec leurs résultats'.⁽⁶⁰⁾ To a man of such views, lack of suitable naval escort might well seem sufficient reason for abandoning a diplomatic mission to another of these 'peuples demi-sauvages'.

Just as it was the energy of Davis which led to the plan for opening Japan, so it was his decision to postpone it that governed the later actions of the Foreign Office. Aberdeen had been sufficiently interested to make suggestions, not all of which were accepted, but had not contradicted the Plenipotentiary's decisions on a matter about which he presumably had better information than was available in London. Palmerston, too, was content to approve the decisions taken by Davis

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 (60) F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 69, Davis to Capt La Pierre, Hongkong, 26 Apr 1847.

- proof enough that he did not object to them, for when he disagreed in other matters he said so promptly and unmistakably. At no time did he show any inclination to take the initiative. When the decision to postpone the voyage had been taken, he was satisfied with keeping the way open for it to take place at some future date. In February 1847 the Dutch minister in London informed him that the Japanese had decided in 1843 to notify the various countries of the West through Dutch diplomatic channels of their resolution to keep their ports closed to all but Dutch and Chinese merchants, and explained that this communication had not been made before because only recently had there seemed any prospect of British action. Palmerston refused to accept such intervention. Without admitting the existence of any plans to open Japan, he declined to be bound by representations from any other agency than the Japanese government itself. (61)

It was quite in accord with this attitude that Palmerston should provide S.G. Bonham with authority to negotiate with Japan and Cochin China (62) when appointing him to succeed Davis early in 1848. Bonham received instructions to encourage trade with Japan through the Northern Ports - that is, the treaty ports to the north of Canton - but was not specifically ordered to visit that country. The initiative for such a move must come if at all from the Superintendent of Trade:-

'As regards Japan and Cochin China, however,...you

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 (61) F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 68, For Off to Davis, No.29, 22 Feb 1847, enclosing:- Count Schimmelpennick to Palmerston, 19 Feb 1847; Palmerston to Count Schimmelpennick, 22 Feb 1847.

(62) Davis had tried without success to secure a treaty with Cochin China in 1847.

may be guided by the opinion you may form in China as to the probable advantage to be derived from an attempt at negotiation with the Governments of those Countries. You will always bear in mind, that Her Majesty's Government, if they should enter into relations with those Countries, desire nothing more than what is required for free commercial intercourse on mutually advantageous terms; they seek no political influence...and have no desire to acquire territory in either of those Countries...' (63)

The plans of 1845 set the keynote for future British policy towards Japan. The circumstances of their origin and the reasons which led to their indefinite postponement throw light on some of the general characteristics of that policy. It was based demonstrably on British policy in China as exemplified in and after the Opium War. That is not to say that it arose from the extension of British power or any aggressive designs in the Far East in quite the way the Japanese imagined. Had there been any irresistible economic pressure operating to extend British commercial interests from China to Japan, it would presumably have been reflected in the attitude and demands of the mercantile interests in Britain and the China ports. Yet these, though they lent their support to the project when they knew of it, had not originated the plans or caused their initiation by any public demand. On the contrary, the affair had been wholly a matter of government action. The initiative had come from a British official serving in the East; his decisions had governed the postponement of action; and to his successor a similar discretion had been given. And it had been constantly denied, by both Whigs and Tories, that Britain sought political or territorial advantages.

The China war had certainly played a part in the story.

~~THESE~~ That the plan arose out of the aftermath of that war is incidental and proves nothing; more significant is the fact that the war had put Britain into a position in which such plans could be made with hope of success. There had been constant references to the effect of British victories in China on the attitude of the Japanese and this had been urged as the chief reason for making the attempt. It seems, indeed, that Japanese reactions to British power, becoming known to the West, were a more potent factor than that power itself in turning British attention to Japan. Once the first step had been taken, that is, once it had been decided to attempt the opening of Japan, the China war, as the most conspicuous expression of British aims and methods in the Far East, had a more important influence. Not only had it caused the creation of the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ diplomatic and naval machinery necessary to execute that policy, but it had also given British statesmen and diplomats a consciousness of power, a model of the methods by which it could be exercised and a blueprint of the objectives which it might be used to obtain.

Davis's policy had one notable disadvantage - dependence on naval support prevented action altogether when the force available seemed inadequate. The instructions to Bonham did nothing to alter that circumstance, heralded no change in British policy. The initiative for action would continue to rest with the Superintendent of Trade, and until he decided for whatever reasons that the moment was opportune to revive the Japan project, or until the opinion of the merchants became sufficiently defined and vocal to demand action by the government which would transfer the initiative to London, there was little prospect that Japan would be opened by British diplomacy.

Chapter IV. New Influences on British Policy: 1848-1854.

By the time of Bonham's appointment to Hongkong in January 1848, the plans for a treaty with Japan had been allowed to lapse. Palmerston's instructions left it to Bonham to decide not only when but whether any attempt should be made to put them into effect.⁽¹⁾ It was unlikely, therefore, that the Russell government⁽²⁾ would take any further steps unless stimulated into activity by outside pressure of some kind, either in the form of foreign rivalry or of fresh plans proposed at home or in China. While the Board of Trade, to quote Russell's words, 'would give up anything to promote trade',⁽³⁾ and the Cabinet was convinced of the importance of commercial relations with other countries, the government still did not accept the view that 'all considerations of a higher nature...be sacrificed to the pushing our manufactures by any means into every possible corner of the Globe'.⁽⁴⁾ Indeed, the conduct of foreign relations entailed rather the solution of immediate and practical problems than the application, irrespective of circumstances, of a number of abstract principles - a view to which

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 (1) See chapter III, pp.134-5.

(2) The Russell government remained in power until February 1852, though Palmerston resigned and was succeeded at the Foreign Office by Granville in December 1851.

(3) Russell Papers, vol 8, Russell to Baring, 15 Oct 1849, with reference to Newfoundland fisheries.

(4) Public Record Office, Gifts and Deposits, Granville Papers, (G.D.29), vol 18, Granville to Russell, 12 Jan 1852, in a general statement of British foreign policy drawn up at the Queen's request.

Russell himself subscribed⁽⁵⁾ - and no Foreign Secretary was likely, unprompted, to create new work for himself by planning missions to a country as remote as Japan, in which the prospects for British trade were to say the least doubtful.

Palmerston, Foreign Secretary until December 1851, had never shown enthusiasm for the Japan plans. Since June 1847, moreover, he had known a good deal about the failure of the seventeenth century English factory there,⁽⁶⁾ and this knowledge, combined with frequent references in dispatches and elsewhere to the marked drop in Dutch trade with that country, armed him against too ready a belief in the prophecies of the few enthusiasts who saw in Japan a vast new market for British goods. In October 1849 a Mr Wray of Clapham wrote to him to propose the establishment of a British colony in the island of Sagalien. He urged in the strongest possible terms its value as a strategic base from which to forestall, resist or counteract American designs on Japan, and as a centre from which trade could be carried on with Japan and other parts of northeast Asia. Neither argument moved Palmerston. Wray's letter was sent to Bonham for comment, but when Palmerston found that the Superintendent had no helpful information to offer, he promptly vetoed the suggestion that a ship be sent to explore and investigate.⁽⁷⁾

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 (5) Granville Papers, vol 18, Russell to Granville, 29 Dec 1851, when informing him of the Queen's wish that a foreign policy 'programme' be drawn up.

(6) See F.O.China Corres, vol 135, India Bd to For Off, 18 June 1847, with extracts from the East India Co records, pointing out that the generous privileges of which Martin often spoke were revoked by Hidetada in 1615.

(7) F.O.China Corres, vol 163, Wray to Palmerston, 15 Oct 1849; vol 152, For Off to Bonham, No.100, 20 Oct 1849; vol 159, Bonham to For Off, No.183, 28 Dec 1849; vol 164, For Off to Bonham, No. 22, 25 Feb 1850.

Bonham was no more likely than Palmerston to revive the Japan project. He was a cautious administrator whose experience lay not in trade or diplomacy but in the government of the East India Company territories of southeast Asia. He was nearing the age of retirement and disinclined to seek out new and difficult problems to solve. He, too, had seen the papers about the earlier Japan factory.⁽⁸⁾ Moreover, he was much occupied with his duties as Governor of Hongkong,⁽⁹⁾ and while he did eventually find time to visit the treaty ports to the north of Canton as his instructions enjoined, he made no subsequent reference to that part of them that ordered him to enquire whether it might be possible 'to open through any of them a more direct commerce with Japan'.⁽¹⁰⁾

Japan, however, was sometimes brought to his notice. About a year after Bonham's arrival at Hongkong, another British surveying ship paid a visit to that country. In May 1849 H.M.S. Mariner was ordered to survey the Edo Bay area and sailed from Shanghai after engaging Otokiti, one of the Morrison castaways, as interpreter.⁽¹¹⁾ The last days of May and the first week of June were spent surveying Sagami Bay and the harbours of Uraga and Simoda, but the Japanese officials were urgent in their protests and their requests for her departure, and on 7 June she left Japan for China without having obtained

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 (8) Forwarded in F.O.China Corres, vol 138, For Off to Bonham, No.11, 19 Feb 1848.

(9) F.O.China Corres, vol 143, Bonham to For Off, No.35, 24 May 1848.

(10) F.O.China Corres, vol 138, For Off to Bonham, No.1, 11 Jan 1848.

(11) Halloran, Wae Yang Jin, p.74. For Otokiti's earlier history see chapter I, pp.65-74.

permission for any more extended surveys.⁽¹²⁾ Since the instructions to the Mariner have not been found, it is not clear whether the visit had any ulterior motives, but certainly Commander Matheson had no diplomatic duties. The Foreign Office had no advance knowledge of the visit.⁽¹³⁾ Bonham claimed that he only 'heard by accident' after the Mariner returned to Shanghai⁽¹⁴⁾ and reported the matter in case it should be taken up by 'the Mercantile Interests' at home. He did not think Matheson's report of much value - no opportunity had been given for the consular service to be represented on board - for it served only to show that there was little prospect of the Japanese receiving a diplomatic mission 'should H.M. Government have any intention of sending one'.⁽¹⁵⁾ He obviously had no intention of reviving the scheme on his own initiative.

Some of Bonham's subordinates in China did show a certain interest in Japan. Dr Gutzlaff, the Chinese Secretary, whose active concern with the subject dated from the Morrison expedition, gave a lecture on Japan to the Geographical Society when on leave in London in January 1850.⁽¹⁶⁾ Occasionally he

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 (12) For an account of the visit see Halloran, Wae Yang Jin, pp. 78-93 and a summary of Matheson's report in F.O. China Corres, vol 156, Bonham to Addington, 26 July 1849.

(13) F.O. China Corres, vol 162, Adty to For Off, 23 June 1849, enclosing R/A Collier's report of 17 Apr 1849 on future movements of ships on the China station, made no reference to ~~apparently~~ sending the Mariner to Japan, and Admiralty approval was only given after the event (Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1608, Adty to Collier, No. 208, 2 Nov 1849)

(14) F.O. China Corres, vol 156, Bonham to Addington, 26 July 1849.

(15) ibid.

(16) F.O. China Corres, vol 171, contains notes on this lecture, dated 28 Jan 1850.

mentioned Japan in his correspondence.⁽¹⁷⁾ Kyuukiti, another of the Morrison castaways, was long employed in the Chinese Secretary's office, and when early in 1849 he threatened to resign unless his pay were increased, Gutzlaff strongly supported his request, not only ^{because} Kyuukiti was efficient, but also because his services would be invaluable in the event of an expedition to Japan. The argument persuaded Bonham to grant the desired increase of salary.⁽¹⁸⁾

Two other interpreters of the China establishment were also interested. Wade, who eventually succeeded Gutzlaff as Chinese Secretary, translated part of a Chinese work dealing with Japan, though it contained little that was new.⁽¹⁹⁾

Harry Parkes began to learn the Japanese language while interpreter at Shanghai, and encouraged by the promise of increased pay as a reward for success, continued his studies for some years despite difficulties caused by the illiteracy of his teacher and lack of time and books.⁽²⁰⁾ But there is no evidence that any of these men attempted to persuade Bonham or Palmerston to take steps to put an end to Japanese seclusion.

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 (17) F.O.China Corres, vol 182, Gutzlaff to Palmerston, private, 30 Jan 1851, for example, refers to the dwindling Dutch trade.

(18) F.O.China Corres, vol 153, Bonham to For Off, No.15, 2 Feb 1849 and encl.
F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 97, Bonham to Gutzlaff, No.10, 3 Feb 1849.

(19) But it did give a fairly accurate account of the relationship between Emperor and Shogun. The translation was forwarded to London in F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 107, Bonham to For Off, No.103, 28 Sept 1850.

(20) F.O.China Corres, vol 129, Davis to For Off, No.159, 27 Aug 1847 and encl; vol 138, For Off to Bonham, No.29, 19 Apr 1848; vol 159, Bonham to For Off, No.173, 14 Dec 1849; vol 182, Parkes to Hammond, Amoy, 14 July 1851.

Others outside the consular service did make such attempts, however. Among them was Dr Bettelheim of the Loochoo Naval Mission. The mission was founded by naval officers who had at various times visited the Loochoo Islands in the course of their duties. In 1845 they decided to send a medical missionary there, not only because it was a likely field for the propagation of Christianity, but also because a foothold in the Loochoos might make it possible to introduce Christianity into Japan or at least enable a missionary to learn enough of the Japanese language and customs to be ready for the first opportunity of entering that country.⁽²¹⁾ The man chosen for this task was Dr Bettelheim, a Hungarian Jew by birth, who arrived with his family at Napa, chief port of the islands, in the spring of 1846. From the beginning he proved a problem to the Superintendency at Hongkong. Though actually controlled by Japan through the Satuma fief of southern Kyuusyu, the islands were nominally subject to Chinese suzerainty, and the Chinese soon protested to Davis against Bettelheim's presence there and visits by British warships. Davis, with Foreign Office approval, refused to accept responsibility for the missionary's activities and maintained the right of British warships 'to proceed wherever their friendly objects or intentions may carry them'.⁽²²⁾ But his successor was soon to find that the doctor's own demands for protection could cause more trouble than Chinese protests.

In February 1849 a British ship was wrecked in the Loochoos and her master appealed to Rutherford Alcock, consul

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 (21) F.O.China Corres, vol 106, H.Clifford (Hon Sec, Loochoo Naval Mission) to For Off, 28 Aug 1845 and encl.

(22) F.O.China Corres, vol 123, Davis to For Off, No. 13, 28 Jan 1847; vol 121, For Off to Davis, No.45, 25 Mar 1847.

at Shanghai, for assistance in bringing away her crew and whatever could be salvaged from the wreck. In March H.M.S. Mariner was sent to the islands, taking with her vice-consul Robertson, who with Matheson, the Mariner's commander, soon found himself involved in Bettelheim's disputes with the islanders. On 7 March, after doing all that was possible at the wreck, they received a letter from Bettelheim requesting their assistance. At the same time the Loochoo officials asked that the missionary be taken away. The Mariner proceeded to Napa, where Bettelheim met her to complain of his treatment, chiefly of restrictions on his contacts with the islanders and a number of other petty annoyances. He refused the passage to Shanghai offered him by Commander Matheson. Instead he asked for Matheson's intervention with the local officials. The latter, however, repeated their request for his removal, arguing that his maintenance was a heavy burden on the resources of so small and poor a country, and when Matheson pointed out that they had not complained of any illegal acts on Bettelheim's part to justify his removal, they gave him a letter for the British government which reiterated the arguments advanced during the discussion. Bettelheim, in his turn, entrusted Matheson with a petition to Parliament asking that naval vessels might occasionally visit the islands to give him protection. (23)

In his report of the voyage, Robertson emphasised that by writing to the British government the island officials had created an opportunity for further intercourse. In particular they had made possible an indirect approach to the valuable

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(23) Halloran, Wee Yang Jin, pp.10-2, 23-30.

F.O.China Corres, vol 155, Bonham to K For Off, No.58,

4 May 1849, encl Robertson's report of 19 Mar 1849.

trade of Japan. 'Loochoo is in itself a nothing', he wrote, '...but its connection and communication with Japan is of so important a character, as to warrant a belief that in the event of an arrangement for the residence of Foreigners...Napa would become the mart of Japan for foreign as it is now for home Trade, offering as it does a "Neutral Ground" which the Japanese may not be unwilling to take advantage of, and opening a new and important feature in our relations with that distant and sealed part of the world'. Gutzlaff, to whom Bonham referred for advice, supported Robertson's optimistic views and urged support for Bettelheim in his 'advanced post toward the Japanese Empire', but the cautious Bonham contented himself with forwarding the papers to the Foreign Office and asking for instructions. ⁽²⁴⁾ Less than three weeks later he reported that Commander Glynn of U.S.S. Preble had visited Napa and received another request for Bettelheim's removal, which had also been urged on him by the Japanese at Nagasaki. ⁽²⁵⁾

Before Bonham's dispatch reached London the Foreign Office had already heard of the Mariner's visit to Looschoo and had asked the Admiralty to arrange for occasional visits to the islands. ⁽²⁶⁾ Robertson's report, however, seemed to indicate that more might be achieved without much difficulty. In August it was decided to try to open trade with the Looschoos. A letter was drafted in reply to that of the Napa officials, thanking them for their help to British seamen and recommending

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 (24) F.O.China Corres, vol 155, Bonham to For Off, No.58, 4 May 1849 and enclosed reports from Robertson and Gutzlaff.

(25) F.O.China Corres, vol 155, Bonham to For Off, No.75, 24 May 1849.

(26) F.O.China Corres, vol 162, For Off to Adty, 23 June 1849. Bonham's dispatch was not received until 24 July.

Bettelheim to their protection. In almost childish English it explained that Britain and Loochoo each produced commodities of value to the other which could be exchanged to the advantage of both, and expressed the hope that the Loochoo authorities would send a friendly reply permitting trade to be carried on.⁽²⁷⁾ This letter was sent to Bonham, and acting on the instructions which accompanied it,⁽²⁸⁾ he arranged for a warship to deliver it to Napa and at the same time show Bettelheim such attention as would 'raise him in the estimation of the Loochoo authorities'. He took care, nevertheless, not to give the doctor the impression that he could use this naval support for his own ends.⁽²⁹⁾

A reply was received from Loochoo early in 1850, identical in its arguments with that made to the French request for trade in 1846.⁽³⁰⁾ It rejected the offer of trade on the

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 (27) F.O.China Corres, vol 160, draft, For Off to Authorities of Loochoo, 10 Aug 1849.

(28) F.O.China Corres, vol 152, For Off to Bonham, No.63, 10 Aug 1849.

(29) F.O.China Corres, vol 159, Bonham to For Off, No.168, 27 Nov 1849.

F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 97, Bonham to Capt Massie (S.O. Hongkong), No.121, 20 Nov 1849; Bonham to Bettelheim, No.122, 21 Nov 1849.

Bonham's letter to Bettelheim originally offered him the warship's support for 'any Service which you may request', but he altered this in draft to read 'any Service...of which your lonely position may make you stand in need'.

(30) For the reply to France see Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 533-6. Murdoch here and Kobayasi (Bakumatu-si, pp.118-9) maintain that Satuma later got secret permission from the Bakuhu to open trade through Loochoo but did nothing because the French request was not renewed. This refusal of the British request suggests that not lack of opportunity but Japanese opposition - from Nariaki of Mito, for example - was the real reason for doing nothing.

grounds that far from having a surplus of goods for export, the islands had barely enough for their own needs and had found it exceedingly difficult to supply food and stores to the few ships which had visited Loochoo so far. Moreover, it said, the laws of Japan were severe in their prohibition of trade and if the islanders broke them they might find themselves cut off from that country, on which they depended for many necessities. Finally the letter catalogued once again the objections to Bettelheim's presence. Forwarding it to London, Bonham added on his own account that Bettelheim had been able to gain no information which might confirm or refute the argument against trade, nor indeed 'to advance the interests of Commerce or to propagate the Christian Religion in any way whatever'. However, he was in no personal danger, except such as arose through his own lack of discretion, and had been advised to act with moderation. (31)

Palmerston, like Bonham, showed no further inclination to press the matter of trade or of a possible connection with Japan. During the next two years his attitude to Bettelheim was simply that as a British subject abroad he was entitled to his government's support, a policy on which he insisted in other, more famous cases despite opposition in the Cabinet. In July 1850, at his request, fresh instructions were sent by the Admiralty to ensure the occasional visit of a warship to Napa. (32) In the autumn H.M.S. Reynard called there and was

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 (31) F.O.China Corres, vol 165, Bonham to For Off, No.14, 9 Feb 1850, enclosing the Loochoo reply, dated 28 Dec 1849.

(32) F.O.China Corres, vol 173, For Off to Clifford (Loochoo Naval Mission), 2 July 1850; For Off to Adty, same date. Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1609, Adty to R/A Austen, No.70, 4 July 1850.

given another petition asking for Bettelheim's removal,⁽³³⁾ which provoked Palmerston into an angry reply implying that unless the missionary received better treatment the visits of British warships might become less friendly.⁽³⁴⁾

Bonham found some difficulty in forwarding these letters. After an unsuccessful attempt to send them by junk from Foo-chow, he finally arranged for a warship to take them early in 1852. T.T.Meadows, one of the interpreters in Chinese, was to deliver them in order to ensure that the object of the mission was clearly understood by the islanders and not distorted by Bettelheim, who had acted as interpreter on previous occasions⁽³⁵⁾ - an arrangement which spoke ill for Bonham's faith in human nature! Meadows report was hostile to Bettelheim. It described him as imprudent and dictatorial and warned that he would undoubtedly obtain 'a virtual dictatorship in the principality' unless the Foreign Office was particularly cautious as to the manner in which it supported him.⁽³⁶⁾

Granville, continuing the policy laid down by Palmerston,

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(33) F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 110, Bonham to Cdr Cracroft (H.M.S.Reynard), No.76, 10 Sept 1850.

F.O.China Corres, vol 170, Bonham to For Off, No.122, 29 Oct 1850 (received London 19 Dec 1850); vol 183, Adty to For Off, 13 Jan 1851.

(34) F.O.China Corres, vol 182, drafts, For Off to Loochoo, 2 Jan and 11 Feb 1851. The first, written on receipt of Bonham's dispatch, was mild in tone, but the second, after receipt of the Admiralty letter, was more threatening.

(35) See chiefly F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 124, Bonham to Cdr Ellman, Separate, 17 Nov 1851; vol 140, Bonham to Bettelheim, No.6, 12 Jan 1852.

F.O.China Corres, vol 187, Bonham to For Off, No.3, 12 Jan 1852.

(36) F.O.China Corres, vol 188, Meadows to Bonham, 26 Feb 1852 in Bonham to For Off, No.34, 9 Mar 1852.

wrote to Loochoo in January 1852 to commend the better treatment Bettelheim was apparently receiving,⁽³⁷⁾ but showed no other interest. Bettelheim, however, had not yet given up hope of interesting the government in his single-handed crusade against Japanese seclusion. In September 1852 he wrote personally to Palmerston, now out of office, to appeal in almost lyrical terms for his support - 'one more jewel there is, a Koh-i-noor, waiting to be enamelled in the crown of your imperishable glory, the Emancipation of Japan'.⁽³⁸⁾ The accompanying petition to Parliament argued in more sober style. The Japanese prohibition of trade, said Bettelheim, could best be broken down by obtaining a promise of religious toleration, for the two ideas were closely linked in the Japanese mind; in fact 'the political position of Loochoo is so particularly favourable for doing it good and so prominently fit for any undertaking regarding Japan that it would be doubly neglecting a special providence not to attempt both at once'.

Bowring, now Superintendent of Trade, was unmoved by this special pleading. He took the opportunity to observe that Bettelheim's purpose seemed to be 'to engage Her Majesty's Government in a Missionary Crusade' and rebuked Bettelheim himself for his presumption.⁽³⁹⁾ Palmerston sent the letters to

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 (37) F.O. Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 23, Addington minute of 1 Jan 1852.

F.O. China Corres, vol 195, draft, For Off to Loochoo, ~~17 Jan 1852. This letter was eventually sent by junk from Foochow.~~
 17 Jan 1852. This letter was eventually sent by junk from Foochow.

(38) F.O. China Corres, vol 195, Bettelheim to Palmerston, Napa, 19 Sept 1852.

(39) F.O. China Corres, vol 199, Bowring to For Off, No.14, 21 Jan 1853.

F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 154, Bowring to Bettelheim, 22 Jan 1853.

Clarendon, but the new Foreign Secretary took no action. Indeed, there was no further attempt to support or encourage Bettelheim in any way.

So far as they concerned plans for opening Japan, Bettelheim's efforts to arouse interest had been singularly unsuccessful. Bonham had been indifferent, Bowring openly contemptuous. Palmerston, after a brief flicker of interest in trade, had concentrated on what he felt to be the more important task, the support of a British subject in a remote and hostile country. His successors had been reluctant to take action even for that end. No public interest had been aroused, nor had other missionary societies attempted to follow the doctor's example, and though Bettelheim continued to live at Napa, his later work met with little more success - despite which fact the Japanese ultimately erected a monument in tribute to him.

Another enthusiast who tried to bring pressure to bear on the government used methods better calculated to influence the Foreign Office. Montgomery Martin had first become interested in the Japan trade through his attempt to secure the retention of Chusan as a British naval and commercial station. In the years 1845 to 1847 he had made great efforts to interest the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade and Parliament in his plans. He had written to the Times, had interviews with Aberdeen and Palmerston at the Foreign Office, with Dalhousie and Clarendon at the Board of Trade, but all to no effect.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Plans to negotiate with Japan were then already in existence, though Martin did not know it.

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 (40) See chapter III, pp.109-11, 114-5 and F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Martin to Palmerston, 22 Mar 1849.

At the beginning of 1849, since nothing had been done meanwhile, Martin re-opened the subject in a correspondence with the Board of Trade. He recommended 'a tentative commercial mission' with credentials from the Board of Trade rather than a full-scale diplomatic embassy. Moreover he preferred that it be carried out by a single well-equipped but unarmed ship, visiting Korea, Cochin China and Siam as well as Japan. In Japan, he said, it should request a return to the privileges of 1613 - Martin ~~xxxxx~~ believed them still to be in force - and emphasise the peaceful character of Britain's previous relations with Japan and the purely commercial nature of her interest in China. Letters from the Queen must be provided, of course, but used only in the last resort. Every care must be taken that there be no hint of a connection with the East India Company, whose territorial expansion was 'well known and dreaded', nor with the Superintendency at Hongkong, which was still generally regarded in the countries bordering China as being connected with the Company. (41)

Labouchere at the Board of Trade was impressed by the importance of opening commercial relations with these countries and by the support given to the scheme by Sir Henry Ellis, formerly a member of the Amherst embassy to China and of the Board of Control. He looked up the papers concerning the 1845 plans and consulted Palmerston, suggesting that more information would be required before deciding whether such an attempt would have a better chance of success than 'a mission of a more ostentatious character'. (42) Martin also wrote to the Foreign

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 (41) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Martin memo of 5 Jan 1849 in Bd Trade to For Off, 10 Jan 1849.

(42) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Bd Trade to For Off, 10 Jan 1849; also Labouchere to Eddisbury, 5 Jan 1849.

Secretary. He argued that much might be gained while little could be lost by the course he proposed, and urged the importance of forestalling foreign rivals, especially the Americans, and of strengthening Britain's position in the East against what seemed an inevitable attack.⁽⁴³⁾ Since no reply was forthcoming in the next few weeks, he wrote again on 16 March. He pointed out that in getting the Board of Trade to take the initiative in the matter, he had been following the advice given him by Palmerston in 1847, and was now anxious for a definite decision on his plans.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The reply he received a few days later was disappointing. The Foreign Office clerks had done some research into Japan's natural resources⁽⁴⁵⁾ and the results had suggested that trade with Japan would not be as valuable as Martin thought. On 20 March the permanent undersecretary wrote to him to say that Palmerston believed the proposal to be one 'of much importance and requiring very mature consideration', but was not immediately willing to recommend that action be taken on it.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Faced with this refusal, Martin decided that political pressure might succeed where private argument had failed. He had already arranged to visit the chief cities of northern England to interest manufacturers in his plans, and now determined,⁽⁴⁷⁾

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 (43) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Martin to Palmerston, 3 and 7 Feb 1849; Bd Trade to For Off, 7 Feb 1849.

(44) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Martin to Palmerston, 16 Mar 1849.

(45) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, For Off memo on Japan trade, 17 Jan 1849 (based on the accounts of Kaempfer, Siebold and Thunberg).

(46) RM F.O.China Corres, vol 161, For Off to Martin, 20 Mar 1849.

(47) F.O.China Corres, vol 161, Martin to Palmerston, 22 Mar 1849.

with Board of Trade consent, to continue with this tour. He did more than make enquiries of the manufacturers, however. From the beginning of April, a steady flow of memorials from the commercial organisations of the north began to reach the Foreign Office and Board of Trade, marking the stages of Martin's itinerary. All of them recommended that 'a tentative commercial mission' be sent to Japan, Korea, Cochin China and Siam; most recapitulated Martin's previous arguments, often ~~XX~~ word for word; some mentioned Martin by name and one, that from the Manchester Commercial Association, dispensed with detail and argument on the grounds that Martin had already expounded them to Lord Palmerston.⁽⁴⁸⁾ There can be no doubt, in fact, whence came the inspiration for this sudden expression of mercantile opinion. Probably for that reason, Palmerston refused to be impressed by it. To all the petitioners he sent the same discouraging reply, that 'the matters to which your memorial relates are of much importance and requiring very ~~XXX~~ mature consideration, and that Her Majesty's Government have not yet seen their way sufficiently clear to have been able to come to any decision on the subject'. In fact, nothing was to be done. Martin had achieved no more by an indirect than by

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 (48) The petitions to the Foreign Office were :-

F.O. China Corres, vol 161, Merchants and Manufacturers of Halifax of 12 Apr 1849 (reply, 17 Apr); Merchants of Huddersfield, undated (reply, 18 Apr); Manchester Chamber of Commerce of 27 Apr (reply, 30 Apr); Manchester Commercial Association of 28 Apr (reply, 4 May):

vol 162, Sheffield Company of Cutlers of 5 May (reply, 11 May); Borough of Bradford of 21 May (reply, 23 May); Merchants of Birmingham, undated (reply, 11 June).

Those from Halifax, Huddersfield, Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield and Birmingham ~~were~~ also sent to the Board of Trade (see Bd Trade, Minutes, vol 58, minutes of 14 and 30 Apr, 15 May, 16 June 1849).

a direct approach. Nor was any further attempt made to urge the scheme's adoption, and it is a measure of how artificial was the interest Martin aroused that none of the chambers of commerce or other organisations involved chose to press the matter at the time or, as far as can be discovered, ever raised the subject again.

Despite the memorials of 1849, British merchants were not interested in Japan. Most of them were convinced that in China there lay a vast unexplored source of trade and riches from which they were barred only by political difficulties, by the policy of an obstructionist Chinese government. Hence they felt justified in calling on the British government to support them, even to the point of war, in their efforts to secure access to that fabulous - and largely mythical - market. Until 1858, at least, the Foreign Office also believed in the potentialities of the China trade.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Neither merchants nor statesmen had the same ideas about Japan. Though ardently propagated by a few individuals, the "myth" of the Japan trade had not caught the imagination of the merchants generally, whether because they were pre-occupied with China or because such evidence as was available did not support extravagant hopes. The Foreign Office was equally indifferent. Bettelheim and Martin, for all their efforts, had failed to persuade Palmerston to take action, and that in a matter which one might have expected to arouse his interest. It is true that the Foreign Office had recognised, and continued to recognise, that the opening of Japan was desirable in principle, but it is also true that it had relatively full information on Japan's resources and past trade, nearly all of it unfavourable to commercial prospects.

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 (49) Pelcovits, Old China Hands, pp.1-5, 11-4.

Although it is not a point on which direct evidence is available, this seems to provide the most logical explanation of the government's inaction.

Certainly there was still no sign of government action by February 1852, when the Russell ministry came to an end. Plans for negotiations were technically only postponed. Yet when Lord Malmesbury succeeded Granville and the Foreign Office drew up a statement to show him what matters were still pending in the department, reference was made to the negotiations to be opened with Siam but not to those with Japan.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Clearly some new stimulus would be required to revive them.

The year 1852 saw a new development which was greatly to influence British policy towards Japan. By the beginning of that year it was generally known that the United States planned to send an expedition to secure a treaty with Japan and speculation about the mission's nature and exact objects was soon widespread. The China Mail of Hongkong, which despite its feud with Montgomery Martin had long favoured the dispatch of a British mission to Japan,⁽⁵¹⁾ was among the first to publish an account of the American expedition. In October 1851 it printed an article from the New York Journal of Commerce announcing (somewhat prematurely) that Commodore ^{Aulick} had already sailed to make the attempt.⁽⁵²⁾ Thereafter, until news of

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 (50) Granville Papers, vol 20, State of Business, Foreign Office, 25 Feb 1852. The same is true of a similar statement, also in this volume, drawn up when Palmerston handed over to Granville in December 1851.

(51) For its earliest statements see chapter III, pp.110, 132. Occasional articles had appeared since 1847, e.g. China Mail, 10 Oct 1850 and 13 Feb 1851.

(52) China Mail, 23 Oct 1851.

Perry's success in 1854, it carried frequent (and often contradictory) reports culled from European, Indian and American papers, in which the chief topic of discussion was whether Perry would have authority to use force, whether he would find it necessary to do so, and ~~xx~~ above all, whether he would be justified in using it. Most of the Indian papers quoted by the China Mail thought - perhaps hoped - that he would not depend only on persuasion to gain his ends. It was an attitude to which the China Mail itself objected most strongly.⁽⁵³⁾ It could see no casus belli in the exaggerated stories about the treatment of shipwrecked sailors, nor any justice in using Japanese castaways for such selfish political ends, thereby subjecting them to considerable personal danger on their return to Japan.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Admittedly it was difficult, if not impossible, to see how success could be achieved without the use of force. Nevertheless, it said, no nation had the right to force trade on another, and 'the vindication of such proceedings...ought to rest on better grounds than any of the excuses and political sophisms hitherto put forward'.⁽⁵⁵⁾

In Britain, Bentley's Miscellany had views similar to those of the China Mail, and expressed them in an article which also criticised British policy in India and China.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Other magazine articles, on the other hand, agreed that the United States had a right to interfere, though they did not openly advocate the use of force.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The Times occasionally printed American newspaper reports asserting Perry's intention of

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(53) e.g. China Mail, 13 May and 17 June 1852.

(54) China Mail, 18 Nov 1852.

(55) China Mail, 17 June 1852.

(56) Bentley's Miscellany, XXXI (1852), pp.545-52.

(57) e.g. Lawson's Merchants' Magazine, I, 1 (May 1852).

resorting to cannon if no other argument prevailed, while its American correspondent, apparently on the grounds that the Anglo-Saxons were a master-race and had a duty to bring 'besotted Oriental nations...into the ranks of civilization', went so far as to predict that the United States would 'shortly enact the same gunpowder drama England played in '42 with China, and ...do it with less moderation'.⁽⁵⁸⁾ This was not an avowed editorial policy, however. It was left to the Edinburgh Review to defend such views, albeit more soberly expressed. In October 1852 it outlined recent ~~XXXXXX~~ Western contacts with Japan and recommended the Japanese to grant Perry's requests, since they could not hope to resist his modern armaments. It continued - 'The compulsory seclusion of the Japanese is a wrong not only to themselves, but to the civilised world... The Japanese undoubtedly have an exclusive right to the possession of their territory; but they must not abuse that right to the extent of debarring all other nations from a participation in its riches and virtues. The only secure title to property, whether it be a hovel or an empire, is, that the exclusive possession of one is for the benefit of all'.⁽⁵⁹⁾ ~~XXX~~ One wonders whether the Review would have been equally willing to apply such a principle to British domestic politics.

It is clear that the Perry expedition aroused a good deal of public interest in Britain and her overseas possessions. The frequency of articles in the Times is an approximate guide if not to public opinion, at least to what the editors thought was interesting to their readers. In 1846 and 1847, when Martin was first urging his plans in England, there were altogether

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 (58) London Times, 8 Apr 1852. See also issues of 19 and 20 Apr 1852, 18 May 1854.

(59) Edinburgh Review, XCVI, 196 (Oct 1852), p.383.

three references to Japan in that paper. In the next four years there were none at all. In 1852 the number rose to eleven. This is not an impressive total, it is true, if one were to compare it, for example, with the number of references to China, but it ^{is} nevertheless a sign of wider interest, especially when taken in conjunction with the fairly frequent magazine articles written about the American mission. On the other hand, we must be careful not to assume that this interest was necessarily an influence on British policy. Only the China Mail thought fit to urge the British government to follow the American example. There was no concerted campaign to that end, and the ~~xxxxx~~ widely differing views expressed in other articles sharply reduced the effect of the whole. Indeed, in formulating its policy towards the expedition the Foreign Office was subject to no significant outside pressure.

We have already seen that Commodore Biddle's attempt to establish contact with Japan in 1846⁽⁶⁰⁾ had not served to prompt Britain into emulation. On the contrary, it contributed to the abandonment of existing plans by adding one more reason for making the British mission an imposing one, requiring a force for which the necessary warships were not available. Biddle's failure, again, tended to confirm the Superintendent and the Foreign Office in their belief that nothing could be done in Japan without adequate naval support. Their reaction to other American and Russian attempts prior to the Perry expedition was equally cautious.

Early in 1849 Commander Glynn of U.S.S. Preble left Hongkong for Japan. His ostensible purpose was to secure the release of fifteen seamen from the American whaler Lagoda who

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 (60) See chapter III, pp.122-7.

were known to be prisoners of the Japanese, but Bonham knew that more was intended. Gutzlaff had agreed to translate the letters carried by the commander, and these showed that in addition to the release of the seamen Glynn planned to seek permission to establish an American consular agent in Japan and obtain from the Japanese the promise of some place or island near Edo for use as a coaling station on the proposed new steamship route between San Francisco and Shanghai.⁽⁶¹⁾ Reporting this to Palmerston, Bonham said he expected Glynn to take 'strenuous steps' to attain his ends, but made no suggestion that he might follow the American's example. Like Gutzlaff, he apparently believed that Britain would share in any privileges Glynn obtained.⁽⁶²⁾

Palmerston made no comment on this report, though he forwarded it to the Board of Trade,⁽⁶³⁾ nor on Bonham's later dispatch which outlined the results of the visit. Glynn obtained the release of the American seamen but failed in his other objects, and his anger at the treatment he received at Nagasaki led Bonham to expect that the United States would send a more powerful expedition to Japan to demand explanations and satisfaction. Still, the mission had produced some interesting information. H.N.Lay, son of a British consul in China, had gone on the voyage as interpreter and reported to Bonham on his return that the Japanese 'started back with terror' at every mention of Britain. The released prisoners, according to Gutzlaff who interrogated them, said that Japan anticipated attack

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 (61) F.O.China Corres, vol 153, Bonham to For Off, No.20,
 14 Feb 1849, encl copies of Glynn's letters.

(62) ibid and enclosure Gutzlaff to Bonham, 11 Feb 1852.

(63) F.O.China Corres, vol 162, For Off to Bd Trade, 12 May 1852.

by Britain, and despite a hesitant faith that she would be protected by the winds on 'praying to the idols', feared a fate like that even then being suffered by China.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Judging by their failure to comment on this, Bonham and Palmerston had no immediate intention of giving substance ~~xx~~ to these fears.

Since these reports of the Preble visit, arriving in London immediately after Martin's attempt to organise 'a tentative commercial mission', failed to move the Foreign Office to action, it was not likely that Russian plans would do so. In the autumn of 1852 the Russian minister in London informed Malmesbury that his government hoped to enter into commercial relations with Japan. It therefore intended to send Admiral Poutiatine to the Pacific to secure a treaty and at the same time keep an eye on Perry's movements, and was informing the British government of the plan in the belief that it held similar views on American activities in that area. Malmesbury's only reaction was to instruct Bowring to give Poutiatine every assistance.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This was consistent with the Foreign Office attitude to the Biddle and Glynn attempts. It was equally consistent with the policy which Malmesbury had by this time formulated towards the Perry expedition.

The subject of this new expedition was first raised officially by Dr John Bowring, British consul at Canton, who was acting as Superintendent of Trade in 1852 during Bonham's

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(64) F.O. China Corres, vol 155, Bonham to For Off, No. 74, 23 May 1849, encl reports from Lay and Gutzlaff, both dated 22 May 1849.

(65) F.O. China ~~XXXXX~~ ^{Emb Arch} copy of de Seniavine to Brunnow, vol 159, For Off to Bowring, No. 56, 29 Oct/1852, encl
Poutiatine was no more successful than Biddle and Glynn: see Eckel, 'A Russian Expedition to Japan in 1852', Pac NW Quarterly, XXXIV, 2 (Apr 1943), pp. 159-67.

absence in London on sick leave. Bowring had been appointed to Canton in 1847 by Lord Palmerston, who knew him as a political supporter and thought him both able and agreeable. (66)

He was a man unlike Bonham in many ways. Where Bonham was cautious, Bowring was adventurous, even rash. His background lay in trade (in the West Country woollen industry) and politics. He was a friend of Cobden and Jeremy Bentham and had been Member of Parliament for Bolton for several years in addition to performing a number of commercial missions for the Board of Trade in Europe and the Middle East. He was, in fact, in every way more likely than Bonham to press for a British mission to Japan.

As Bowring's promotion was only temporary, he was not given quite the same authority as Bonham. It was necessary for him to have powers to negotiate with China, for they might be needed at any time, but the instructions and full powers for Japan were not transferred to him. (67) Consequently he was unable to take any immediate action when he learnt that Perry was gathering a large squadron in readiness to go to that country. In May 1852 he reported to the Foreign Office such facts as he had been able to obtain and urged that the possibility of opening commercial relations with Japan must also be 'a matter of much interest to Great Britain'. In the circumstances, he suggested, it would be as well that he be provided with the necessary authority and instructions to negotiate with Japan and be authorised 'under certain contingencies' to use them. (68)

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(66) Bulwer, Palmerston, III, 18, Palmerston to Wm Temple, 1 Nov 1836.

(67) F.O.China Corres, vol 186, For Off to Bowring, No.1, 19 Jan 1852.

(68) F.O.China Corres, vol 189, Bowring to For Off, No.26, 18 May 1852.

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Lord Malmesbury, who had been Foreign Secretary since the end of February, had already been urged by a private correspondent to follow or forestall the Americans in Japan for fear that Britain should lose her markets in the East to American competitors. He had returned only a formal acknowledgement to the letter, adding noncommittally that the ~~xxxxxxx~~government was 'much occupied with the question of the advancement of British commercial interests in Siam and the neighbouring countries'. (69) Bowring's dispatch, which arrived in July 1852, required a more specific answer. It was not, however, the one Bowring hoped to receive. He was ordered to report on the progress and results of the American expedition, but was given no power to negotiate because Bonham already had it and would probably return to duty before any action was needed. Malmesbury certainly had no intention of competing with Perry. 'Her Majesty's Government', he wrote, 'would be glad to see the trade with Japan open; but they think it better to leave it to the Government of the United States to make the experiment; and if that experiment is successful, Her Majesty's Government can take advantage of its success'. (70)

What was implied in this dispatch was more openly stated by Malmesbury in his instructions to Bonham in December 1852 when the latter was about to return to China. The government had still not decided what to do about Japan. Bonham was told that he must continue to collect information and report to the Foreign Office anything that would help it to determine the course to be pursued by Britain in the event either of

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 (69) F.O. China Corres, vol 196, R. Sprye to Malmesbury, 6 Apr 1852; For Off to Sprye, 15 Apr 1852.

(70) F.O. China Corres, vol 186, For Off to Bowring, No. 30, 21 July 1852.

Perry's success or of his failure. Moreover, though he had been given full authority to negotiate with Japan, there seemed no reason to anticipate such urgency as would prevent him first referring home for further instructions. Meanwhile he should make his actions conform to the view that 'as the Government of the United States, though nearly as much interested as this Country in the opening of the Trade with China, kept aloof while the British operations which resulted in that arrangement were in progress, so Her Majesty's Government should equally maintain an expectant position in regard to the proposed operations of the United States against Japan'.⁽⁷¹⁾ The Foreign Office, far from regarding American action as cause for disquiet, expected to profit by it. Japan was clearly not important enough to justify international competition. Indeed, the wording of the dispatch in general showed that to Malmesbury the opening of Japan was at least as important for its possible effect on the policy of the Chinese government as for the immediate commercial advantages it might bring in Japan itself.

Bowring and Bonham continued to report on the progress of the American ^{expedition} throughout 1852, 1853 and the early part of 1854. Bowring had begun with a fairly accurate account of Perry's objects before receiving Malmesbury's instructions. He gave it as a prevalent opinion that the Japanese, relying on the rivalries of the Powers, would resist by force of arms if faced by only a single aggressor, but would open their ports peacefully, albeit reluctantly, in face of joint action.⁽⁷²⁾ His report on

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 (71) F.O.China Corres, vol 186, For Off to Bonham, No.29,
 16 Dec 1852.

(72) F.O.China Corres, vol 192, Bowring to For Off, No.99,
 18 Aug 1852.

Japan's trade⁽⁷³⁾ contained little that was new and nothing to suggest that its value existed in fact rather than in prospect. Bonham's reports, as one would expect, were largely factual.⁽⁷⁴⁾ However, on Perry's return from his first visit to Japan in 1853, Bonham interpreted the six months' grace given to the Japanese as a sign that the Commodore, having no authority to use force and realising that without it he could accomplish nothing, had 'prudently left the matter in abeyance' until he could obtain fresh instructions.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Reports such as this were not likely to change British policy.

From December 1852 these reports were being received by a new government. Aberdeen was Prime Minister, Palmerston Home Secretary and Russell Foreign Secretary, though the latter was succeeded at the Foreign Office by Clarendon in February 1853. Clarendon had a difficult task. Aberdeen, Russell and Palmerston all continued to take an interest in foreign affairs, but did not always agree either among themselves or with Clarendon. In Europe, disputes with Russia over Turkey engaged more and more of his attention, while he was hoping that in China the Taiping Rebellion might 'be turned to the best account' for increasing British privileges.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In fact, so great was the 'scramble and pressure' at the office, he told Russell, that

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 (73) F.O.China Corres, vol 194, Bowring to For Off, No.176,
 24 Dec 1852.

(74) F.O.China Corres, vol 201, Bonham to For Off, No.35,
 7 May 1853; vol 202, same to same, No.49, 12 June
 1853; vol 212, same to same, No.11, 17 Jan 1854.

(75) F.O.China Corres, vol 204, Bonham to For Off, No.85,
 9 Aug 1853.

(76) F.O.Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 23, Clarendon to Addington,
 private, 8 May 1853. Malmesbury had expressed a similar
 hope in F.O.China Corres, vol 186, For Off to
 Bonham, No.29, 16 Dec 1852.

it sometimes prevented things being done 'with the reflexion they require'. (77)

Clarendon, with so much to engage his attention, made no attempt to revise Malmesbury's instructions about the Japan expedition. The only new question he raised in 1853 was that of Perry's move to establish a coaling station in the Bonin Islands, a point not covered in the instructions issued by Malmesbury but approached very much in the spirit of Malmesbury's policy. As early as April 1853 the Admiralty had informed the Foreign Office that the Americans were planning to acquire an island base in Chinese or Japanese waters. (78) Nothing more happened about this until October, when Alexander Simpson, formerly a British consul in the Pacific, wrote to Clarendon to call attention to a press report that Perry had purchased a site for a coaling station in the Bonins and point out that these islands were properly British territory. (79) Two weeks later a dispatch confirming the news was received from Bonham. He, too, believed the islands to be British, and had so informed Perry. However, as Perry himself said, the fact would not invalidate the purchase of land there, and Bonham suggested that the British government had best make a formal occupation of the group if it wished to retain its rights. His own opinion was that they were too barren to support a large population and possession of them would not be any great advantage. (80)

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(77) Russell Papers, vol 11, Clarendon to Russell, 24 Sept 1853.

(78) F.O.China Corres, vol 207, Adty to For Off, 15 Apr 1853.

(79) F.O.China Corres, vol 209, Simpson to Clarendon, 1 Oct 1853.

(80) F.O.China Corres, vol 204, Bonham to For Off, Separate, 17 Aug 1853.

The Admiralty confirmed that Beechey had claimed the Bonins for Britain in 1827⁽⁸¹⁾ and the Colonial Office produced a collection of papers relating to the discussions of 1834,⁽⁸²⁾ but neither expressed any opinion about future policy. The Foreign Office sent the papers to Bonham in case they should be of value in any negotiations he might undertake with Japan, and told him that Britain was not at that time prepared to enforce her rights in the islands, though she might wish to do so should any other country try to develop a permanent settlement there.⁽⁸³⁾ Bonham showed Simpson's letter to Perry. The commodore doubted the validity of the British claim, but said that it mattered little who had sovereignty over the islands as long as they remained open to all as a harbour of refuge for shipping. In this view both the Foreign Office and Colonial Office concurred,⁽⁸⁴⁾ having no wish to create new difficulties in Pacific waters.

It was January 1854 before Clarendon gave serious thought to the question of Japan. Bonham had decided to retire and Bowring, then on leave in England, was to be appointed to succeed him. Addington, who had been permanent under-secretary since 1842, drew up at Clarendon's request a ~~long~~^{long} memorandum outlining the instructions it would be necessary to give the

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 (81) F.O.China Corres, vol 209, For Off to Adty, 27 Oct 1853;
 Adty to For Off, 31 Oct 1853.

(82) F.O.China Corres, vol 209, For Off to Col Off, 4 Nov 1853;
 Col Off to For Off, 22 Nov 1853.

For the discussions of 1834 see chapter I, pp.60-5.

(83) F.O.China Corres, vol 198, For Off to Bonham, No.97,
 24 Nov 1853.

(84) F.O.China Corres, vol 212, Bonham to For Off, No.4,
 4 Jan 1854, encl correspondence with Perry;
 vol 220, For Off to Col Off, 7 Mar 1854;
 vol 221, Col Off to For Off, 11 Apr 1854.

new Superintendent. He considered that as Bowring was now to receive a permanent appointment, he must be given the full confidence of the government and commissioned to go to Siam and Japan as well as to Peking. There was scope for his energy in those places even though it would be necessary to restrain 'his excess of vitality and zeal'. In China, the under-secretary believed, joint action with France and the United States would be the best course, but in Japan British policy should wait on the result of Perry's visit. If he succeeded, then Bowring should be sent 'properly accompanied by Ships of War' to obtain privileges similar to those granted America. If he failed, 'it might be better to wait awhile'. With these sentiments Clarendon agreed. (85)

The instructions to Bowring, as finally approved in February 1854, emphasised that trade with China was the object to which the Superintendent's attention 'must be most particularly directed' and that Bowring must not on any account leave China to carry on negotiations elsewhere unless he felt completely sure that British interests would not suffer by his absence - an order which from the beginning weighted the scales against a visit to Japan. Subject to that proviso, he was authorised to take any suitable opportunity of opening commercial relations with Siam, Cochin China and ~~the~~ Japan. Of these, he was told, Japan offered unquestionably the most important opening for trade. He was to be guided by the results of the American expedition and open negotiations if he saw 'a reasonable probability' of success, but the exact terms he should try to obtain were left to his own judgement and local knowledge.

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 (85) F.O. Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 24, Addington minute of 12 Jan 1854; Clarendon minute of same date.

There were, however, a few points on which the Foreign Office would insist :-

'But in any Treaty you may conclude you will be careful to provide for British Jurisdiction over British Subjects- for the interpretation of the terms of the Treaty by the British version- for the power of revision at the expiration of a stated time- and for participation in all the benefits which now or hereafter may be conceded by the Japanese Government to Foreign Nations. It will be necessary also, as far as possible, to stipulate for religious privileges'. (86)

The Foreign Office was still thinking of Japan in terms of British relations with China. In 1845 Aberdeen had instructed Davis to concentrate in Japan on those matters - opium smuggling, national equality and diplomatic representation at the capital - which were then, or just had been engaging his attention in China. (87) In 1854, when he was about to open negotiations for treaty revision in China and after considerable difficulties about the interpretation of existing treaties with that country, Clarendon, too, seemed automatically to assume that the same problems would arise in Japan.

Bowring was only too ready to see 'a reasonable probability' of success in Japan. In April 1854 he heard that Perry had succeeded in getting Japanese agreement to terms based on China's treaties with the West, and although the American convention had still to be signed, began to make plans to leave Hongkong. He would have gone at once had it not been that there were for the moment no ships available to escort him. He felt it unwise to go without 'a respectable armament', a force such as that to which Perry attributed his own success, while on

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(86) F.O. China Corres., vol 210, For Off to Bowring, No.3,
13 Feb 1854.

(87) See chapter III, pp.117-9.

so important an occasion Great Britain 'must not be shabbily represented'.⁽⁸⁸⁾ A month later these difficulties had been overcome and he was almost ready to sail. Sir James Stirling, Commander-in-Chief on the China station, had agreed to provide the ships and offer passages to representatives of the three principal British commercial firms in China. Of these, Mr Beale of Dent and Company at Shanghai had already accepted.⁽⁸⁹⁾ There was nothing urgent to keep Bowring in China since negotiations with the Chinese had broken down, so he decided to transfer the Superintendency to Shanghai after the arrival of the mail and proceed thence to Japan.⁽⁹⁰⁾

While Bowring was waiting for the mail at Hongkong, the first news of Perry's success reached London.⁽⁹¹⁾ Edmund Hammond, Addington's successor as permanent under-secretary, at once drafted a letter to the Admiralty to inform them that Bowring had already received instructions to go to Japan when opportunity offered; that Perry's success afforded that opportunity; and that Stirling, if he had not already done so, should be ordered to provide as large a force as he could spare, since the size of the American and Russian squadrons in Japanese waters made desirable 'a certain degree of pomp'. This did not

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 (88) F.O. China Corres, vol 213, Bowring to For Off, No.3,
 18 Apr 1854.

(89) The others invited were Jardine Matheson and Co, Lindsey and Co.

(90) F.O. China Corres, vol 213, Bowring to For Off, No.46,
 24 May 1854.

(91) F.O. China Corres, vol 212, Bonham to For Off, No.54,
 5 Apr 1854, reporting that Perry had succeeded but giving no details of his treaty except that it was probably modelled on the British treaty with China, reached the Foreign Office on 30 May 1854. Bowring's dispatches arrived some weeks later.

mean that the government wished to use force. On the contrary, said Hammond, 'the Admiral will...abstain from any act of hostility against Japan unless forced to have recourse to it, for self-defence; he will not blockade, or intercept the communications of the Japanese; but he will make it clearly understood that any forbearance which he may show in resenting injury will be only temporary and until he can report to and receive orders from his Government'.⁽⁹²⁾ Clarendon agreed in general with this draft but apparently did not approve of the use of threats made ineffective by the necessity of referring to London. He struck out most of the last paragraph, amending it to read 'unless forced to have recourse to it for self-defence or for the punishment of insult', thereby giving the admiral greater freedom of action, since he presumably had the power to determine what constituted self-defence or insult. There was also a point which Hammond had neglected. The French wished to join Britain in negotiations with Japan and Clarendon thought it 'on every account desirable to comply with their wish'.⁽⁹³⁾ The amended draft was accordingly held up for a few days until the necessary arrangements had been made with Paris, but on 8 June it was sent to the Admiralty and a copy forwarded to Bowring with instructions to co-operate with the French plenipotentiary on the visit to Japan.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The Admiralty made difficulties, however. War had broken out with Russia earlier in the year, and although the conflict was likely to be ^{largely} European, the Foreign Office and

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 (92) F.O. Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 24, Hammond minute of 4 June 1854.

(93) ibid, Clarendon minute of same date.

(94) F.O. China Corres, vol 221, For Off to Adty, 8 June 1854.
 F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 169, For Off to Bowring, No.69, 8 June 1854, enclosing correspondence with Paris.

Board of Trade had asked that Stirling be ordered to protect British shipping from the Russian Pacific squadron based on Siberia and Kamchatka. (95) The Admiralty now asked whether the fresh orders about Japan were to supersede those already given Stirling about the Russian squadron. (96) Clarendon wasted no time in revising his instructions. He had never considered the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Japan to be sufficiently important to justify the slightest risk to the British position in China, and had certainly never intended that it be attempted at the expense of the protection of British shipping in time of war. To the Admiralty he confirmed that the capture of the Russian squadron was the first and most important task. To Bowring and the French government he wrote that he saw no immediate prospect ~~that~~ of Stirling being able to go to Japan. (97) As a result of this decision, the Admiralty sent Stirling a copy of the Foreign Office letter of 8 June but warned him that his first duty was to watch and if possible attack the Russian squadron. All other objects must be considered as subsidiary to this, and the Japan mission must only be undertaken 'when there shall no longer be any danger...to Her Majesty's possessions or to British Trade'. (98)

Bowring and Stirling had meanwhile come to much the

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 (95) F.O.China Corres, vol 220, Adty to For Off, 13 Jan 1854;
 For Off to Adty, 30 Jan 1854.

F.O.Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 24, Clarendon minute of
 14 Jan 1854.

(96) F.O.China Corres, vol 221, Adty to For Off, 9 June 1854.

(97) F.O.Miscellaneous, Ser II, vol 24, Clarendon minute of
 10 June 1854.

F.O.China Corres, vol 220, For Off to Bowring, No.83,
 20 June 1854; vol 221, For Off to Adty, 24 June 1854.

(98) F.O.China Corres, vol 222, Adty to Stirling, No.103,
 28 June 1854 in Adty to For Off, 3 July 1854.

same conclusion. Standing instructions for the East Indies station already emphasised that the China coast was to be considered the most important part of that station and that 'the first and paramount duty' of the squadron was the protection of British lives and property there.⁽⁹⁹⁾ In the spring of 1854 there appeared to be a number of potential threats to those lives and property. One arose from the Taiping Rebellion which had broken out in south China in 1850, for by the end of 1853 the rebel forces had advanced down the Yangtse to the neighbourhood of Shanghai, and fighting had taken place in and near that city. Since the British settlement was threatened, the China squadron had to be prepared to protect it. To this was added the danger of hostilities with Russia, and in the early months of 1854 both Stirling and Bowring kept anxious watch on the movements of Poutiatine's ships.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

News of the outbreak of war reached China at the beginning of June, by the very mail for which Bowring was waiting before leaving for Shanghai and Japan. It had a decisive effect on his immediate plans. He still had to go to Shanghai, for the Taiping crisis demanded his presence, but Stirling no longer felt able to provide ships for the Japan mission and it had to be abandoned. It was a decision which both regretted the less since they had by then received fuller information about the Perry treaty. Far from being the equivalent of the British treaties with China, they thought, it was of little commercial

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 (99) Admiralty, Supplementary (Adm 13), vol 4, Standing Instructions, E. Indies Station, 17 Jan 1853, transferred to Stirling when he assumed command in 1854 (see Adty to Stirling, 16 Feb 1854, also in this volume).

(100) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5629, Stirling to Adty, 15 and 29 Apr 1854.
 F.O. China Corres, vol 213, Bowring to For Off, No.13, 20 Apr and No.23, 3 May 1854.

value and had been granted with the utmost reluctance by the Japanese. They claimed to have no goods to exchange, a statement many of the American officers felt to be substantially correct. The outlook was not encouraging and the necessity of postponing the mission, Bowring said, would at least give the Foreign Office time to consider the provisions of the Perry treaty and issue any fresh instructions that might be necessary. (101)

Bowring informed the French minister, de Bourboulon, that he had abandoned the plan to go to Japan. In September he decided to attempt the apparently easier task of negotiating with Siam, taking with him the presents which had originally been intended for that country, but which he had more recently proposed to use in Japan. (102) Clarendon's approval of his decision to postpone the Japan expedition arrived a few weeks later. (103)

Once again British policy towards Japan had been subordinated to other and more pressing interests. The plans made in 1845 had been abandoned because it had proved impossible, in view of the China squadron's other commitments, to raise the imposing naval force which Davis thought indispensable to success. Between 1848 and 1851, despite several

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(101) F.O.China Corres, vol 214, Bowring to For Off, No.59, Shanghai, 15 June 1854.

For Stirling's views see F.O.China Corres, vol 222, Adty to For Off, 7 Sept 1854: Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5629, Stirling to Adty, No.44, 30 June 1854.

(102) F.O.China Corres, vol 215, Bowring to For Off, No.113, 22 Aug 1854; vol 216, Bowring to For Off, No.137, 8 Sept 1854.

(103) F.O.China Corres, vol 211, For Off to Bowring, No.124, 20 Sept 1854.

attempts to arouse the government's interest, nothing had been done to revive those plans. This was partly because the Foreign Office did not think them of real importance, partly, perhaps, because Bonham himself never recommended such action. The announcement of the Perry expedition had brought new interest but no new plans. Malmesbury had decided to adopt only 'an expectant position', not this time because of the lack of naval strength which had so weighed with Davis and Lord Palmerston, but as a matter of policy, deliberately chosen and specifically stated..

It was not until the appointment of Bowring that definite plans had been made to take advantage of Perry's success. With news of that success, an attempt had been made to put the plans into operation. However, the Foreign Office under Clarendon was still dominated by the idea that nothing less than an honour guard of warships would enable a British diplomat to succeed in negotiations with Japan. Since the Taiping Rebellion and the Crimean War, ~~xxxxxx~~ both bringing new threats to British lives and shipping in China, made it first difficult and then impossible to detach a squadron for such a purpose, the mission was postponed - in theory until the spring of 1855. In practice, long before that time Sir James Stirling took matters into his own hands.

Chapter V. The Stirling Convention : 1854-1855.

Although Bowring, with the knowledge and concurrence of the naval Commander-in-Chief, had abandoned his plans for going to Japan, the months of September and October 1854 found Sir James Stirling at Nagasaki engaged in negotiations with the officials there. His objectives differed radically from those Bowring had been instructed to secure and his results were disappointing to almost everybody but himself. He negotiated, moreover, without the authority or even the knowledge of the Foreign Office, and consequently had no diplomatic status. None the less, his were the first formal Anglo-Japanese negotiations of the nineteenth century. As such they must be treated in detail.

For the same reason, Japanese policy now becomes of direct importance in Anglo-Japanese relations. It is therefore necessary, before discussing the origin and course of Stirling's negotiations, to consider the political background in Japan itself. Of particular importance are Japanese reactions to the Perry expedition, in that they conditioned Japanese ~~xxxxxxxx~~ policy towards Great Britain.

Fear and suspicion of Great Britain had not died out in Japan since the Opium War,⁽¹⁾ nor had controversies over the course to be adopted should Britain seek to establish trade relations. But after 1852 the immediate issue was the much-heralded American expedition. Abe Masahiro, who had entered the Roozyuu (or Council of State) in 1843 on the fall of Mizuno Tadakuni, had now become the acknowledged head of that body. Almost

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 (1) For an account of Japanese opinion in this earlier period, see chapter II, pp.82-91.

equally influential, however, was Nariaki of Mito, former head of the most powerful of the ~~THE~~ Tokugawa branch families and an unyielding opponent of any attempt to relax the seclusion laws. He had quarrelled with Tadakuni over the edict of 1842 which modified the treatment to be accorded to foreign ships visiting the Japanese coast, and as a result had been forced out of politics for a time. Abe, realising that Nariaki's influence with the feudal lords was still very great and that a permanent breach with the Mito house would seriously weaken the political position of the Bakuhu, was far from satisfied with this situation and as soon as his own position was fairly secure began ^{to} seek a rapprochement.

Perry's arrival in 1853 was the signal for Abe to intensify his efforts. He knew - and explained to Nariaki - that the Bakuhu was too weak, militarily and economically, to adopt any policy that might lead to war, for war could end only in crushing defeat for Japan. Nariaki, on the contrary, had long held that however weak Japan might be, the opening of the ports and the beginning of foreign trade would only serve to weaken her still more, would make it ever easier for the foreign barbarians to acquire and consolidate political and economic ~~power~~ domination over the country. From that position he could not be moved by any arguments Abe could advance. (2)

Abe decided to accept Perry's letter in 1853 largely because by so doing he would gain a further six months in which to effect some compromise with Nariaki and his supporters. In the meantime he did his best to commit the Bakuhu to nothing that might arouse the hostility of the daimyoo. Caution was

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(2) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.162-3, 169-74.

~~HM~~ Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi [Complete History of Japan], III, 704-6.

Satow, Japan 1853-1864, or Genji Yume Monogatari, pp.5-8.

the keynote of his policy. When the Dutch had warned him in 1852 that the American expedition was to be sent, they had advised him that the safest course would be to make concessions not only to the Dutch but to all foreign nations, especially that of conducting a limited trade at Nagasaki. Abe was not convinced, partly because he was still ignorant of American power, partly because his advisers were ~~xxxx~~ suspicious of Dutch motives. (3)

The sight of Perry's squadron in 1853 and the promise that a more powerful one would appear in the spring of 1854 convinced Abe of the reality of American power and of the need for concessions, but the weakness of the Bakuhu's political position in Japan itself made it very ^{difficult} for him to grant a treaty in face of inevitable and widespread domestic opposition. He decided, therefore, to circulate copies of the American letter and seek advice as to the answer he should make to its demands. This was in itself a confession of weakness, but he hoped that the replies to his circular would have enough in common to suggest a policy ~~x~~ capable at the same time of placating the Americans and gaining the support of most of the daimyoo. In this he was disappointed. The replies did, indeed, have much in common, but on balance they served only to increase his difficulties.

In a long memorandum, Nariaki showed himself unshaken in his views, despite the confidential and alarming information on Japan's defences and finance with which he had been provided. He repeated his belief that trade had no value to Japan. To open the ports, he said, would be to increase the national

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(3) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.150-4.

Gubbins, The Progress of Japan 1853-1871, pp.52-4.

weakness, to invite the same fate as had befallen China, and might even bring revolt at home. On the other hand, a programme of intensive defence preparations, including the purchase and manufacture of Western-style guns and ships, together with an announcement that Japan would resist all foreign encroachment, would at once raise morale and increase the popularity of the government.⁽⁴⁾

In opposition to Nariaki stood two men of considerable importance. One of them, Hotta Bittyu-no-kami, a member of the Roozyuu and former colleague of Mizuno Tadakuni, had long advocated relaxation of the seclusion laws. His opposition was therefore to be expected. The other was Ii Naosuke, head of one of the most important hudei fiefs, and since it was on these fiefs that the Bakuhu traditionally relied for political and military support in time of need, his opinion was bound to carry great weight. Naosuke found that the views of his own retainers largely coincided with those of Nariaki, and his first reply to the Bakuhu letter consequently emphasised the need for defence preparations and the proscription of Christianity.⁽⁵⁾ Abe, who had reason to doubt its sincerity, promptly requested a more detailed statement. Naosuke now took the opportunity of ignoring his advisers and urging his personal views, which had been formed by his experience as an official actively concerned with coast defence and by the influence of Nakagawa

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 (4) Dai Nihon Komonzyo - Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo [Old Japanese Documents - Documents on late-Tokugawa Foreign Relations], I, 509-22, Mito Nariaki to Bakuhu, 14 Aug 1853.

(5) Satoh, Agitated Japan: the life of Baron Ii Kamon-no-kami Naosuke, pp.43-6.
 Akimoto, Lord Ii Naosuke and New Japan, pp.84-8.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 74-6, Ii Naosuke to Bakuhu, 12 Sept 1853.

Rokuroo, one of his retainers. He recommended that the ports should be opened to provide the coal, stores and other assistance required by American ships and that the Japanese themselves should engage in trade overseas, not so much for the profit to be made from the trade as because it would provide the means of creating and training a powerful navy. This navy, in turn, would enable Japan later to close her ports again with some prospects of success.⁽⁶⁾ In fact Naosuke agreed with Nariaki as to ends, but differed sharply from him as to means.

The majority of the daimyoo sided with Nariaki rather than with Ii Naosuke. Nariaki's son, titular head of the Mito fief; Matudaira Etizen-no-kami; ~~xxxx~~ and the head of another Tokugawa branch house, that of Owari, were all three adamant in their decision to refuse the American requests.⁽⁷⁾ The important tozama lord of Tosa opposed any kind of trade, even as a temporary measure,⁽⁸⁾ ~~xxx~~ as also did Mizuno Dewa-no-kami and the oometuke and metuke, though Mizuno wanted some relaxation in the harsh treatment of ship-wrecked seamen.⁽⁹⁾ Like the

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 (6) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 255-9, Ii Naosuke to Bakuhu, 1 Oct 1853. (There is a translation of this letter in Gubbins, Progress of Japan, pp.285-8).

(7) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 307-10, Tokugawa Tyuunaigon (of Mito) to Bakuhu, 1853, 8th month (3 Sept-2 Oct); I, 674-8, Owari Tyuunaigon to Bakuhu, 1853, 7th month (5 Aug-2 Sept); II, 52-71, Matudaira ~~xxxxxx~~ Etizen-no-kami to Bakuhu, 9 Sept 1853.

(8) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 311-2, Matudaira Tosa-no-kami to Bakuhu, 1853, 8th month (3 Sept-2 Oct).

(9) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 1-2, Mizuno Dewa-no-kami to Bakuhu, 4 Sept 1853; II, 27-30, Oometuke and metuke to Roozyuu, 6 Sept 1853.

Oometuke and metuke (see intro. pp.11-2) were often consulted by the Roozyuu on questions of policy, and usually at least one was appointed to the special commissions formed to handle foreign relations or defence.

metuke, Matudaira Kaga-no-kami and his heir Tikuzen-no-kami urged that peace be preserved,⁽¹⁰⁾ while an important group, including Simazu of Satuma, Hosogawa Ettyuu-no-kami, Matudaira Oou-no-kami and a number of Bakuhu officials, came closer to Naosuke's position in that they recommended that conflict must by some means be delayed until Japan had time to prepare for war and was in a position to expel the barbarians by force.⁽¹¹⁾ A few were even optimistic enough to suggest that it might be possible to make use of the jealousies of the Western Powers, to grant privileges to Russia in return for help against the United States, or to both in return for help against Britain and France.⁽¹²⁾

We do not possess copies of all the replies to Abe's circular, and this makes it difficult to get a full picture of the ideas of the daimyoo, hatamoto, samurai and officials of Japan. However, volumes I and II of Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo contain texts or summaries of over seventy letters on the subject. Not all are addressed to the Bakuhu; some are incomplete; some are "second thoughts" and others are signed by more than one man. Thus statistical analysis is neither easy nor very trustworthy, but some points do emerge from a study

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- (10) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, II, 30-1, Matudaira Kaga-no-kami to Bakuhu, 6 Sept 1853; II, 108-9, Tikuzen-no-kami to Bakuhu, 17 Sept 1853.
- (11) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, I, 636-8, Matudaira Satuma-no-kami to Bakuhu, 2 Sept 1853; II, 211-3, Hosogawa Ettyuu-no-kami to Bakuhu, 28 Sept 1853; I, 639-42, Matudaira Oou-no-kami to Bakuhu, 2 Sept 1853; I, 603-12, Zinzya-bugyoo, Mati-bugyoo and others to Roozyuu, 26 Aug 1853.
- (12) e.g. Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, I, 566-78, Matudaira Mino-no-kami to Bakuhu, 21 Aug 1853; II, 213-30, Mizuguti Hooki-no-kami and his son 水口徳次郎 to Roozyuu Matudaira Izumi-no-kami, 30 Sept 1853.

of these letters. There was a general feeling that defence preparations were of prime importance, and over forty of the replies made this point. A similar number opposed any kind of trade. Very few chose war as a deliberate policy, though several thought it inevitable, but nearly one-third urged the necessity of avoiding it - and these often the same men who refused to countenance any concessions about trade. Of those who were prepared to make concessions, only a handful advocated a bold trade policy: Most thought trade must be restricted - either to a period of a few years, or to a single port, or both - or regarded it as a temporary expedient to gain time for military preparations.

Underlying all the conflicting advice were a few basic assumptions. The great majority believed that to the West trade was no more than an excuse for territorial expansion, that it had no value in itself, and that it should therefore be forbidden if at all possible.⁽¹³⁾ The real question at issue was not whether seclusion was desirable, but whether it was practicable. On this point there were major differences of opinion, and it seemed to Abe, who had to think of internal as well as external dangers, of the danger of revolt as well as the danger of war, that whatever course he chose would meet with considerable opposition. His reference to the daimyoo had simply underlined his problem, not solved it.

To the Bakuhu officials, who best knew that Japan was in no condition to face war abroad or revolt at home, the choice seemed to be between the impossible course of resistance to American power and the unwelcome and probably dangerous one

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(13) Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 708-10.
Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.175-7.

of offending Nariaki. A bolder statesman might have grasped the nettle - as Ii Naosuke eventually did in 1858. Abe and the Roozyuu preferred to temporise, to concede as much as they were forced to concede and nothing more. The first evidence of this appeared late in 1853 when the Russian admiral Poutiatine came to seek treaty relations with Japan. His request was refused on the grounds that national opinion would not permit alteration of the laws however necessary it might be, and he was told that several years must pass before Japan could be brought to accept such a change.⁽¹⁴⁾ Since Poutiatine left without further discussion, it was presumed that he accepted this decision and that Abe's policy was being justified by success.

Perry proved a more difficult proposition. Despite all the efforts of Japanese diplomacy, he succeeded in securing much of what he had come to ask, and while his treaty was criticised in Europe and America as a small return for the expenditure of much effort, it was still more violently attacked in Japan. The Perry convention confessedly represented a defeat for Bakuhu policy, not a change in it. Whatever the private opinions of the Roozyuu, the agreement was officially branded as the least which would have served to ward off a threatened attack,⁽¹⁵⁾ and was certainly not intended to prepare the way for more extended relations with the West. Within a few months fresh instructions were issued to the Nagasaki bugyoo re-asserting and re-emphasising the laws which forbade Christianity and prevented Japanese from going overseas. Indeed, military forces were put at his disposal to ensure that foreigners as well

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 (14) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.193-5.

(15) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VI, 73-4, Roozyuu to Ometuke and metuke, 5 May 1854.

as Japanese observed them. (16)

It is true that the Bakuhu gave orders that privileges similar to those granted Perry were to be extended to Russia if she sent Poutiatine back to demand them (17) and that those orders were worded in such a way as to suggest the probability of their future application to other countries. But that was no more than safety required. It did not mean that Stirling would be any more welcome a visitor than Perry had been, or that he would be offered better terms. Indeed, such was the reluctance of the Bakuhu that he was unlikely to obtain even the same terms unless he was prepared to demand rather than solicit them.

Stirling did not seek better terms than Perry - not with respect to trade, at least. Just as it had been primarily the Crimean War, by making fresh demands on British naval shipping, which had led Sir John Bowring to abandon his plans for negotiations with Japan, so it was the war which gave Stirling ~~the~~ occasion to go to that country. The Russian squadron which he sought was known to be in the vicinity of Japan, perhaps sheltering in a Japanese port. This was in itself sufficient reason for a visit. Moreover, in any operations directed against the Russian bases in Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk, the use of Japanese harbours, if only to obtain fuel and stores, would clearly be of immense value to British warships. Such facilities

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 (16) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 163-4, Syoogun to Nagasaki bugyoo, 24 Aug 1854; VII, 164-6, Roozyuu to Nagasaki bugyoo, 24 Aug 1854.

(17) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, V, 294-6, Russia oosetu-kakari to Roozyuu, 23 Mar 1854 and Roozyuu minute; VI, 192, Roozyuu to Russia and America oosetu-kakari, 23 May 1854.

could only be secured by permission of the Japanese government, and one might reasonably argue that negotiations to obtain them fell within the scope of Stirling's duties.

Stirling claimed in his report that this was his only reason for negotiating with the Nagasaki officials.⁽¹⁸⁾ We must ask, however, whether the evidence supports this claim, for his convention is very similar to that concluded by Perry, who went with very different motives. Did Stirling also hope to secure commercial privileges? Some of his officers thought he did, and their views have often been repeated since.⁽¹⁹⁾ Certainly he knew that a commercial treaty had been planned. Though he was careful to point out that he did not receive Admiralty instructions about taking Bowring to Japan until after the convention was signed,⁽²⁰⁾ his close co-operation with Bowring earlier in the year⁽²¹⁾ invalidates any claim of total ignorance. On the other hand his dispatches, both before and after the convention, consistently demonstrate his lack of interest in trade. Like Bowring, he held that Perry's treaty had no commercial value, that it had accomplished no very great result and that the British expedition had best be postponed to a more favourable moment. He had added, however, that Perry probably achieved

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 (18) Parliamentary Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.219-20, Stirling to Adty, No.71, 26 Oct 1854.

(19) Tronson, Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan...in H.M.S. Barracouta, p.8.
China Mail, 22 Mar 1855, quoting a letter from an officer of the squadron.
 The most recent statement of this view is in Eckel, 'The Crimean War and Japan', Far Eastern Quarterly, III, 2 (Feb 1944), p.111.

(20) F.O.China Corres, vol 217, Stirling to Bowring, 16 Nov 1854. Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5657, Stirling to Graham, private, 27 Oct 1854.

(21) See chapter IV, pp.167-8, 171-2.

all that was possible in the circumstances and thought the agreement might lead eventually to further concessions. (22)

Stirling advanced the same defence of his own convention. The wording of his official report suggests that to him, at least, trade was an ultimate rather than an immediate object of British relations with Japan. (23) Robertson, in charge of the Superintendency at Hongkong during Bowring's absence in Shanghai, quoted the admiral's opinion as being 'that at present the effecting a commercial treaty with Japan would be impossible, and that foreign nations must be content to break ground, first of all, with the admission of a friendly intercourse'. (24) In a private letter to the First Lord, Stirling even claimed that Japan was 'far more important in a Political than in a Commercial sense'. (25)

If Stirling's testimony were the only evidence available, it could, perhaps, be dismissed as the defence of a man who had failed to obtain trading privileges and anticipated criticism on that account. But the story of the negotiations bears out his statements. At no time did he attempt to insert commercial clauses either in the convention of 1854 or in the ~~exchange~~ exposition of its terms drawn up at the exchange of ratifications in 1855.

Stirling arrived at Nagasaki on 7 September 1854 with

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(22) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5629, Stirling to Adty, No.44, 30 June 1854.

(23) Parl. Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.219-20, Stirling to Adty, No.71, 26 Oct 1854.

(24) F.O.China Corres, vol 216, Robertson to Hammond, No.53, 28 Oct 1854.

(25) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5657, Stirling to Graham, private, 27 Oct 1854.

his flagship H.M.S. Winchester and three other ships, and at once communicated with the local bugyoo.⁽²⁶⁾ He had already provided himself with an interpreter for this purpose. Stirling could not make use of any of the consular interpreters who had been learning Japanese, because his was not a diplomatic mission, but there were several Japanese castaways in China who spoke some English and might therefore serve instead. Three of these had been on the Morrison in 1837⁽²⁷⁾ and had since been in British service. The two most intelligent had worked in Gutzlaff's office at Hongkong, but one was dead⁽²⁸⁾ and the other had resigned from government service in 1852.⁽²⁹⁾ The third, Otokiti, had settled at Shanghai. He had acted as interpreter to the Mariner in 1849 and was subsequently hired

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(26) The bugyoo was the official appointed by the Bakuhu to control the administration of Nagasaki and the foreign trade conducted there.

The 1854 negotiations between Stirling and the bugyoo have been described in G. Fox, 'The Anglo-Japanese Convention of 1854', Pacific Hist Rev, X, 4 (Dec 1941), pp.413-20, an article based largely on Admiralty sources and containing useful bibliographical information. The chief British sources are to be found in a Foreign Office Confidential Print (in Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640), which contains all the papers from Stirling's report given in Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2014 and 2077), pp.209-35, and in addition some passages and papers omitted from Parl Papers, especially a Diary of Negotiations kept by the Admiral's Secretary, Capt M.J. Currie (hereafter cited as Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs).

(27) See chapter I, pp.66-74.

(28) According to the statement made to Japanese officials at Hakodate by Rikimatu, a castaway who also worked at Hongkong until employed as interpreter to Cdre Elliot's squadron in 1854-5. See Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzvo, X, 70-2, Japanese minutes of meetings between Elliot and Hakodate bugyoo, 28 Apr-2 May 1855.

(29) F.O.China Corres, vol 190, Bowring to For Off, No.47, 18 June 1852.

as gatekeeper to Mr Beale of Dent and Company, the merchant who accepted Stirling's offer to accompany the Japan expedition early in 1854 when it was expected that Bowring would undertake it.⁽³⁰⁾ Since Stirling was at Shanghai when planning his own later visit, it was natural enough that he should engage Otokiti. Unfortunately, Otokiti was not well qualified for his task. He could read and write kana, the phonetic script of Japanese, but not the more difficult kanji used by officials. Thus although copies in kana were sometimes provided for his benefit,⁽³¹⁾ he was of little help in translating the letters and other papers exchanged between Stirling and the bugyoo.

The Japanese at Nagasaki were no better equipped for communicating in English. Their official interpreters had begun the study of that language early in the nineteenth century and attained some proficiency in it, but thereafter they had worked largely at Edo and interest at Nagasaki had waned.⁽³²⁾ By the time of Stirling's arrival the officials there were forced to admit that they had no means of writing in English and could therefore give only verbal replies to his letters.⁽³³⁾ However, Donker Curtius, the Dutch Superintendent at Desima, knew English well enough to translate the admiral's letters into Dutch, and this made it possible for the Dutch-speaking

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 (30) See chapter IV, pp.139-40, 168.

Tronson, Voyage to Japan, p.15.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzvo, VII, 506-10, Nagasaki bugyoo to Roozyuu, 22 Oct 1854, summarising Otokiti's own account of his career.

(31) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 13 and 18 Sept, 15 Oct 1854.

(32) Sakamaki, 'Japan and the United States', pp.87-9, 104-7.

(33) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), p.221, extract from Diary of Negs, 9 Sept 1854.

interpreters attached to the bugyoo's office to translate them into Japanese. This method was normally used during the negotiations. (34)

Yet the Japanese interpreters, according to foreign observers of the next few years, (35) were not entirely reliable even when using Dutch, the western language which they knew best. Their vocabulary, doubtless efficient enough for normal purposes, was archaic and included few of the terms used in treaties and diplomatic negotiations. Those at Edo had made serious errors in translating the Bakuhu reply to Perry in 1853, (36) so it is not surprising that there should ~~xxxxxxx~~ have been mistakes in both translating and interpreting during Stirling's negotiations in 1854. Certainly ^{Otokiti} was not likely to prevent them. As it transpired, the mistakes made were important enough to alter the whole course of the negotiations, and they began with Stirling's first communication to the bugyoo.

Immediately on his arrival, Stirling sent ashore a letter addressed to the Governor of Nagasaki, the title by which he knew the bugyoo. It informed him officially of the outbreak of war with Russia, which was being conducted vigorously and with success, and added a warning about Russian

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(34) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 14 Sept and 13 Oct 1854.

The Japanese translations in Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo are all marked as having been translated into Dutch by Curtius.

(35) e.g. Alcock, Capital of the Tycoon, I, 101-2.
Harris, The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris, pp.352, 374-5, 490.

(36) Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 700-1.

designs on Japan. In carrying on the war in the China seas, it stated, British squadrons would have frequent occasion to visit the coasts and ports of Japan 'in order to prevent the Russian ships of war and their prizes from making use of those ports, to the detriment of the interests of Great Britain and her allies'. Britain had no desire to give offence to Japan, however. This made it essential that Stirling be informed 'of the views and intentions of the Japanese Government with respect to the admission into its ports of the ships of war of the belligerent parties in the present contest', and he consequently asked the bugyoo to inform him of Japanese policy in the matter, 'not only in reference to the port of Nagasaki, but also in regard to all other ports and places within the Japanese territory'. (37)

European diplomats might have thought this high-handed, but would probably ^{have} recognised that Stirling sought something like a declaration of "benevolent neutrality". To Japanese officials such a conception, based as it was on European usage of which they were ignorant, would have been puzzling enough in its simplest form. In fact they were never given the opportunity of understanding it. By the time it had been translated first into Dutch and then into Japanese, the letter had acquired a new and very different meaning. The Japanese version (38) was not a request for information about Japanese policy.

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 (37) The important paragraphs of this letter (Stirling to Gov Nagasaki, 7 Sept 1854) appear in Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.220-1.

(38) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 214-7.

A more accurate translation (origin unspecified) appears in Japan, Gaimusyoo Tyoosa-bu [Foreign Office Research Section], Niti-ei Gaikoo-si [History of Anglo-Japanese Relations], I, 35-7.

It stated rather that Stirling intended to make use of Japanese ports in prosecuting the war against Russia and had come to seek - perhaps even "demand" - the Japanese government's permission to do so. It even distorted his wish to avoid any act 'which may justly give offence' to Japan into a veiled threat that war might follow should his request be refused.⁽³⁹⁾ The translation was a vague document, it is true, and open to several constructions. But their later correspondence leaves no room for doubt that the ~~Edo~~ bugyoo and the Roozyuu took it to be a request for the immediate opening of all Japanese ports to British ships.

The Roozyuu had been warned by the Dutch during the summer first that Bowring, then that Stirling, was coming to negotiate.⁽⁴⁰⁾ No special instructions had been issued, however. The Nagasaki bugyoo had standing orders on the subject of foreign relations which permitted him to settle only matters of detail on his own responsibility. Major points were normally to be referred to the appropriate oosetu-kakari,⁽⁴¹⁾ an official

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 (39) The translation of this letter is discussed in more detail in my article 'The language problem in the Anglo-Japanese negotiations of 1854', Bulletin School of Oriental and African Studies, XIII, 3 (1950).

(40) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 39-63, Curtius to Bakuhu, 30 July 1854; VII, 147-50, report brought by Dutch ship, 1854, 7th month (25 July-23 Aug).

(41) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VI, 511, Roozyuu to Nagasaki, Uraga and Simoda bugyoo, 1854, 6th month (25 June-24 July).

Before 1859, instead of creating a department of government to handle foreign affairs, the Roozyuu appointed a special commission to conduct negotiations with each Western envoy who came to seek a treaty. Members of these commissions retained their usual official titles (e.g. oosetuke, kanzyoo-bugyoo) prefixed by the name of the Western country concerned and the phrase oosetu-kakari. Thus the Russia oosetu-kakari kanzyoo-bugyoo was the kanzyoo-bugyoo responsible for discussions with Poutiatine.

specially charged with the conduct of negotiations, but no oosetu-kakari had been appointed to negotiate with Britain and the bugyoo accordingly applied direct to the Roozyuu for instructions as to what reply he should make to Stirling.

On 9 September the bugyoo forwarded a translation of Stirling's letter to Edo, together with some observations of his own on the difficult situation ~~xxxxxx~~ it had caused. To grant such privileges to Britain, he said, might endanger Japan's relations with Russia. On the other hand, a flat refusal might provoke Stirling into using force. In this dilemma there seemed only one possible course, to offer Stirling the use of one or two ports - Nagasaki and Hakodate, perhaps, since both were already being used by foreigners - in the hope that this would be enough to avert conflict. (42).

The Roozyuu were equally quick to see the danger of offending Russia. On 21 September, only fourteen days after the date of Stirling's letter, instructions were sent from Edo to the bugyoo and metuke at Nagasaki appointing them to conduct the negotiations. They were to refuse Stirling's request in its existing form on the grounds that to grant it would be to break faith with Russia and other friendly countries, thereby, perhaps, arousing their active hostility. Every effort was to be made to get him to withdraw or modify his demands. He could be granted the use of Nagasaki and Hakodate for the provision of wood, water and other supplies and for effecting repairs; if he pressed the point, then Simoda could be opened for the same purposes. On no account were any other concessions

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 (42) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 247-50, Nagasaki
bugyoo to Roozyuu, 9 Sept 1854.

to be made. (43)

The Roozyuu's instructions eventually formed the basis of Stirling's convention, but they were, of course, largely irrelevant to the subject of his letter. There was to be much discussion before he could be brought to consider them. Meanwhile, at Nagasaki, he was growing impatient at the delay. On 27 September he informed the bugyoo that he had waited twenty days for an answer to his letter, and since none had been forthcoming, now proposed to go to Edo and demand one from the government there. The prospect greatly alarmed the bugyoo, who begged him to remain another ten days and offered as a reward for compliance better facilities for the recreation of the seamen and for the purchase of stores. (44) Stirling agreed with some show of reluctance. He took the opportunity of re-iterating that his purpose was quite unlike that of previous visitors to Japan. They, he said, were 'mendicants soliciting some relaxation in the laws', while he came 'asking for nothing and unwilling to accept anything but an answer to a question arising out of the war'. (45) The message, of which there is no trace in the Japanese records, does not seem to have influenced the actions or opinions of the bugyoo.

On 3 October arrangements were made for the admiral to

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(43) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 250-3, Roozyuu to Nagasaki bugyoo, 21 Sept 1854.

(44) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.221-2, Stirling to Gov Nagasaki, 27 Sept 1854; extract from Diary of Negs, 28 Sept 1854.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 338-42, Nagasaki bugyoo to Roozyuu, 28 Sept 1854.

(45) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 30 Sept 1854.

land next day for his first meeting with the bugyoo, Mizuno Tikugo-no-kami. Otokiti, at the request of the Japanese and under Mizuno's personal guarantee of safe conduct, was to be interpreter. In this capacity, too, he left much to be desired. His English seems to have been no better than that of Rikimatu, interpreter to Commodore Elliot's squadron, of whom it was said that he 'rendered the substance of all conversations in such patches and shreds that it was an exercise of ingenuity to sew them together'.⁽⁴⁷⁾ However good his Japanese, it is quite certain that Otokiti succeeded in perpetuating the mistaken idea of Stirling's purpose which the Japanese had already acquired from the translation of his original letter.

The most important mistakes in interpreting were made during the meeting of 4 October. Once the polite preliminaries were over, Mizuno invited Stirling to make a general statement of his views about the arrangement he had come to effect. The moderate tone of Stirling's answer surprised him, so much so that he said he saw 'some little difference' between this oral statement and the meaning of the letter as it had been translated to him. At his request, the admiral went into greater detail. According to Captain Currie's summary of the speech, he said that 'in wartime neither the ships of Russia nor of England should be allowed to come into the ports of Japan to refit and supply themselves with stores, to enable them to go out and capture the merchant-ships of their enemy'. So long as the Russians were not allowed to use Japanese ports for such purposes, Stirling was prepared to forbid his own ships to do

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(46) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 3 Oct 1854.

(47) Whittingham, Notes on the late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia, pp.228-9.

so, though he insisted on their right to visit Japan to ensure that the Russians were not in fact so using its ports. (48)

This record is a summary not a verbatim report, but it was read by Stirling before being forwarded to the Admiralty and we can assume that it represented accurately the substance of what he said. Otokiti, however, was as little at home with the English of diplomatic usage as were the Japanese. The speech as he translated it, and as it appeared in the Japanese record of the interview, (49) was very different in meaning. Minor discrepancies between the two versions were such as could occur in any two independent summaries of a given speech - and we cannot assume that Currie was necessarily accurate in detail - but there were major errors in the Japanese which can only be accounted for as the result of faulty interpreting. Stirling had attempted a simple (and slightly biased) definition of what was forbidden to belligerents in neutral ports in time of war. That is to say, he had insisted that use of Japanese ports for refitting, storing ship and harbouring prizes must be denied to both Russian and British ships. In this statement lay the crux of the matter. As Otokiti translated it, the ban applied only to actual fighting in Japanese ports. He represented Stirling as claiming the right to exercise all the other privileges he had listed - those relating to stores, repairs and prizes - and as demanding, in effect, a treaty which would grant them to Britain to the exclusion of Russia. (50)

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(48) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 4 Oct 1854.

(49) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyc, VII, 379-80, Japanese minutes of conference, 4 Oct 1854.

(50) See my article 'The language problem in the Anglo-Japanese negotiations of 1854', B.S.O. & A.S., XIII, 3 (1950).

Had Stirling's speech reached the bugyoo in its original form, it would have confirmed his suspicion that the letter had been mistranslated. It might well have led him to withhold Edo's offer to open Hakodate and Nagasaki, since he knew it to have been authorised with the greatest reluctance. As it was, Otokiti's version of the speech substantially confirmed the Japanese translation of Stirling's letter and left the bugyoo in no doubt that Britain sought the use of all Japanese ports for her operations against the Russians. He therefore explained that only one or two ports could be opened for the purposes mentioned because suitable facilities did not exist at all. It was a reply which followed logically enough in the Japanese record, but made nonsense to Stirling. The latter, however, saw where the difficulty lay. He said he had explained himself 'as well as could be done through imperfect interpretation',⁽⁵¹⁾ and offered to write another letter in an attempt to make his ideas clear. This offer was accepted and the meeting broke up for the day.

Next day, in pursuance of his promise, Stirling sent ashore a written statement of his views. At the close of the 4 October meeting, Mizuno had revealed that he had been officially empowered to treat, a fact which he had studiously concealed - and at one point even denied - during the foregoing discussions. Stirling therefore put his new letter into the form of a draft convention. In summary, its provisions were as follows :-

Article I. The warships of Great Britain and her opponents in this and future wars are to be excluded from Japanese ports and waters except as herein provided.

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 (51) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 4 Oct 1854.

Article II. The warships of Britain and other Treaty Powers are to be admitted to Nagasaki and two other ports, but in time of war are not to effect repairs, obtain supplies of munitions, bring in prizes or remain over fourteen days.

Article III. If the ships of one belligerent contravene Article II, the other may demand their expulsion.

Article IV. British ships in Japan are to observe port regulations, but are to be entitled to equal privileges with those of any other friendly nation.

Article V. This agreement is to be in force until 1 September 1855, and may then be 'extended, modified or wholly annulled' as agreed between the representatives of the two signatories. (52)

This document was Stirling's third attempt to explain his wishes, and in English it makes them abundantly clear. Yet it made no apparent difference to the bugyoo's policy. Responsibility for this seems to rest once again with the translators, though less certainly so than before. Article II embodied the point on which previous misunderstandings had centred, and in the existing Japanese translation⁽⁵³⁾ Article II contains one all-important mistake. The negative is omitted from the second part of the article, with the result that it reads so as to permit ships to make repairs, obtain supplies and harbour prizes in Japanese ports, instead of forbidding these activities like the English text. In Japanese the change requires only the omission of a single character, and taken in isolation this could easily be dismissed as a clerical error, not necessarily a contemporary one. But taken in conjunction with the bugyoo's reply and the mistakes that had already been made, it seems

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(52) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 5 Oct 1854.

(53) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 386-90, translation of Stirling's draft convention of 5 Oct 1854.

more likely that the change was due either to mistranslation or to a deliberate attempt on the part of the translator to "correct" the document to conform with the ideas already credited to Stirling.

Stirling received a reply to this draft on 9 October, when he went ashore for his second conference with Mizuno. It stated that as the admiral was understood to seek harbours in which his ships could effect repairs and obtain supplies, Nagasaki and Hakodate would be opened for these purposes. They were not, however, to be used for war in any way. Fighting was not to be permitted in them, nor could the bugyoo 'entertain any matters relating to questions of war'. He could not agree to the proposal to treat all nations alike, since intercourse of long standing created a natural bias in favour of some - presumably a reference to the Dutch and Chinese who had long traded at Nagasaki. Finally, he objected strongly to the idea that the convention might be altered again at the end of a year. (54)

When Stirling had been given time to peruse this reply, discussion of it began. Mizuno repeated in the conference room most of the points he had made in writing, emphasising his determination not to 'meddle with war'. He made it plain that he was prepared to open Hakodate and Nagasaki to both warships and merchantmen - Stirling throughout had referred only to warships - and that while the ports were only to be used to obtain essential supplies, the Japanese would not distinguish between emergencies caused by stress of weather and

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 (54) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, VII, 408-10, Nagasaki bugyoo to Stirling, 9 Oct 1854.

Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.222-3, extract from Diary of Negs, 9 Oct 1854.

those arising from naval warfare. Faced with this offer, Stirling abandoned his attempts to persuade the Japanese that he sought a strictly military arrangement. He decided to accept Mizuno's reply as a basis of discussion, and the rest of the conference was spent in working out the details of a convention.

There were no new difficulties. It was quickly agreed that Nagasaki and Hakodate were to be opened on the conditions already suggested, the former at once, the latter after fifty days. No other ports were to be used except in cases of extreme distress. At both open ports Japanese laws and regulations must be observed, but masters would have jurisdiction over their own seamen. Mizuno asked that British ships be provided with written evidence of nationality, Stirling that a clause be added guaranteeing Britain use of any ports opened to other foreign countries in the future. After some discussion they agreed that the convention, once signed, should be final, subject only to ratification, and by late afternoon, when the meeting ended, the convention had assumed in outline a form acceptable to both parties. (55)

The agreement was still ~~still~~ oral, however, and had yet to be committed to paper. To speed up this process and supplement existing arrangements for interpreting, Stirling had recourse to a member of the flagship's crew who spoke a little Dutch and could thus, with Otokiti's help, check some of the work of the Japanese translators. By this means a number of minor errors were corrected. (56)

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 (55) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 9 Oct 1854.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 410-8, Japanese
 minutes of conference, 9 Oct 1854.

(56) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 10 and
 11 Oct 1854.

The bugyoo was first to prepare a draft convention on the new lines, and this was received and translated on 11 October. It omitted the most-favoured-nation clause which Stirling had proposed, and amplified the arrangements about port regulations by providing that any serious infringement would lead to the closing of the ports, but was otherwise in accordance with the decisions taken two days before. The officials who brought it stated that Mizuno was not authorised to make any further concessions. Subject to Edo approval, however, he was willing to accept an additional article permitting Britain to use all ports that might be opened in future. Stirling accordingly promised to prepare a new draft by the following day, incorporating such an article but otherwise holding as closely as translation would permit to the Japanese proposal. (57)

Stirling's fresh draft, dated 12 October, contained six articles. Article I provided for the opening of Hakodate and Nagasaki for repairs and supplies; Article II for the dates at which they were to be opened and for the observance of port regulations by all British ships. Article III forbade the use of any other Japanese ports except by ships in distress. Article IV laid it down that British ships would conform to Japanese laws and that seamen breaking those laws were to be punished by their own captains (without any mention of closing the ports). Article V was a most-favoured-nation clause, though the existing privileges of Dutch and Chinese were specifically excluded from its operation, while the final article provided that ratifications were to be exchanged at Nagasaki within twelve months of the signing of the convention. In an accom-

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 (57) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs,
 11 Oct 1854.

anying letter, Stirling emphasised that the last article was normal European usage and the most-favoured-nation clause ~~xxx~~ must be included because 'an English officer must not sign, and his Government would not ratify, any engagement whatever which would place British subjects in Japan in a worse position than Americans, or those of any other nations'. (58)

There were still a few changes to be made. Next day Japanese officials came off to the Winchester to arrange a meeting ashore for 14 October and to discuss Stirling's draft. At their insistence, Article I was made more specific by detailing the purposes for which the two ports were to be opened - 'effecting repairs, and obtaining fresh water, provisions and other supplies of any sort they may require for the use of the ships' - and in Article III it was made clearer that only immediate danger would justify entry to any other Japanese port. Finally, the bugyoo's "penalty clause" was re-inserted into Article IV, providing that the ports would be closed if captains or 'high officers' broke the laws. (59)

On the morning of 14 October Stirling went ashore for the final meeting. He found the bugyoo still a little unhappy about the wording of the convention. Mizuno objected that Stirling's version of Article I would permit ships to obtain supplies almost without restriction, whereas his own intention was to limit them to real necessities. The English text was eventually changed to read 'supplies...they may absolutely want'

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 (58) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 12 Oct 1854. Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 425-7 gives the translations of Stirling's letter and draft.

(59) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 13 Oct 1854.

instead of 'they may require'. A similar difficulty over Article III was explained satisfactorily as a simple difference of idiom between the two languages. Articles IV, V and VI were accepted unchanged, but Mizuno wanted to add a sentence to the latter which would prevent changes being made in the arrangement by future visitors. Stirling suggested a plain statement that thereafter the convention would not be altered, but this did not quite meet the objection. Eventually they agreed to add a new Article VII, stating that once the convention was ratified, 'no high officer coming to Japan shall alter it'.⁽⁶⁰⁾ This later caused much criticism in Britain, as many people assumed that it blocked any future negotiations on the subject of treaty revision. In fact the English phrase 'no high officer' was no more than the interpreter's translation of a Japanese word⁽⁶¹⁾ meaning 'commander of a warship', and Mizuno's intention, therefore, was not so much to make the agreement perpetual as to make it binding on all British ships, including those not under Stirling's command.

The convention was drawn up and signed the same day, Stirling signing the English text, Mizuno and the metuke Nagai Iwa-no-Zyoo signing the Japanese. The two documents were not identical. The arrangement of articles in the Japanese text differed slightly from that in Stirling's version, nor were they numbered, which made them more difficult to identify. In the last article, the Japanese word sensyoo did not have quite

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 (60) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 14 Oct 1854. Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 430-9, Japanese minutes of conference, 14 Oct 1854.

The English text of the convention is given as Appendix A, pp. 296-7.

(61) Sensyoo. The characters are Ueda Daiziten (American edit.) numbers 9675 and 2425.

the same connotation as the English 'no high officer'. But the most important difference lay in Article V, which had been passed over without discussion at the final meeting. Stirling's copy entitled British ships to equal treatment with those of other countries in ports then open or thereafter to be opened, only excepting the privileges already enjoyed by the Dutch and Chinese. Mizuno's copy, on the other hand, omitted all reference to Dutch and Chinese and to ports already open, so that it limited British participation to future privileges conceded by Japan to other countries.⁽⁶²⁾ As was to be expected, this later proved a source of dispute.

Stirling had already agreed to make arrangements to provide British ships visiting Japan with some form of written identification - though in this connection he had consistently used the term 'merchant ships', while the Japanese intended warships to be included, another cause of future disagreement. Before leaving Nagasaki he asked for and obtained a copy of the port regulations his ships were to observe under the terms of the convention, being referred to Hakodate for any that might be in force at that port. The Nagasaki regulations consisted largely of prohibitions. Ships on arrival were to anchor in the outer harbour and await instructions; they were to fire no guns in harbour, nor send away boats for surveying or other purposes; no foreigner was ~~KPM~~ to land on any of the islands, engage in trading or communicate with private boats; finally, all business was to be conducted through the officials.

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 (62) Appendix A, pp. 296-7, gives the English text of the convention and shows the differences in meaning between that and the Japanese version. The Japanese text in Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 439-41 corresponds with the copy given to Stirling, to be found in Foreign Office, Protocols of Treaties, Japan, I (F.O.93/49-1).

In an accompanying letter, the bugyoo enjoined observance of these rules, adding that all wood, water, food and other supplies needed by ships must be requisitioned through his office, not bought in the town. However, he promised that if a ship made a long stay, arrangements would be made for her crew to exercise on one of the islands in the harbour. (63)

The fact that Stirling accepted these regulations without question⁽⁶⁴⁾ is additional evidence that ~~XXXXXX~~ he had no intention of arranging trade. Indeed, the whole story of the negotiations demonstrates that he went to Nagasaki in 1854 simply to negotiate an agreement which would assist his operations against the Russian squadron. That the convention in its final form differed in many respects from that which he had planned was due chiefly to the work of the interpreters. Stirling's preliminary request for information was distorted into a demand for the opening of all Japanese ports. On the basis of that distortion the Roozyuu drew up instructions for its negotiator, instructions to which the bugyoo firmly adhered, ignorant of - or perhaps even choosing to ignore - the admiral's attempts to introduce other ~~xxxxxx~~ issues into the discussions. It is true, of course, that the Japanese expected Stirling to demand terms at least equal to those obtained by Perry. This preconceived idea, combined with ignorance of European diplomatic usage, undoubtedly contributed to the mistakes of the translators, but it is clear that their linguistic knowledge was not adequate to the task of translating documents as they found

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 (63) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Diary of Negs, 18 Oct 1854.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 455-8, Nagasaki
bugyoo to Stirling, 18 Oct 1854, encl Port Regulations.

(64) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), p.225, Stirling to Gov Nagasaki, 19 Oct 1854.

them rather than as they expected them to be. Otokiti, Stirling's own interpreter, probably laboured under the same misapprehensions about the purpose of the expedition, and was certainly no better equipped to correct them.

At the meeting of 9 October, when he received the Japanese counter-proposal, Stirling realised⁽⁶⁵⁾ that the Japanese were willing to go further than he had asked in the matter of opening ports. Considering their whole attitude sufficient guarantee against Russian use of their ports - which he could in any case prevent by force once Nagasaki and Hakodate were open to him - he decided to negotiate on the basis they proposed. He was well satisfied with the result. Not only did the convention open two ports for British use, he reported to the Admiralty, but also, 'although it makes no sort of provision for commercial intercourse, it affords the means of cultivating a friendly understanding with the Government and People of an extensive Empire, whose Neutrality in War and Friendship at all times, are matters of vital importance to British Interests in the Adjacent Seas'.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The Japanese, if not equally satisfied, were at least thankful at having reduced what they believed to have been Stirling's demands. They had opened not all, but only two of their ports, and that under the strictest regulations.

Stirling was almost alone in his enthusiasm for the

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 (65) According to his own statements. See Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.219-20, Stirling to Adty, No.71, 26 Oct 1854; F.O.China Corres, vol 216, Robertson to Hammond, No.53, 28 Oct 1854.

(66) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.219-20, Stirling to Adty, No.71, 26 Oct 1854.

convention. Despite widespread criticism of it⁽⁶⁷⁾, however, the Foreign Office decided to ratify, and the ratifications were sent to Stirling in January 1855 to be exchanged at Nagasaki by himself or Commodore Elliot, with instructions to do everything possible to ensure that the English and Japanese texts agreed.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The question of identification documents for British ships was referred to the Admiralty and Board of Trade. They decided that merchant ships could show their registers, specially stamped with the royal arms and that warships needed no special identification, and in May Stirling was instructed to deliver copies of the registers to Japan and make suitable explanations about naval vessels.⁽⁶⁹⁾

While he thus had sound reasons for revisiting Japan and had every intention of doing so, the admiral still had no power to conduct formal diplomatic negotiations. Nor did he much wish to do so. He knew, of course, that his convention was being severely criticised. Bowring had written to him that 'the terms of the Convention and the Harbour regulations attached thereto are such, as it would have been impossible for me to have accepted under the instructions I have received from Her Majesty's Government'.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The China Mail was, and remained, consistently hostile.⁽⁷¹⁾ This Stirling had expected,

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(67) British reactions to the convention are treated in more detail in chapter VI, pp. 224-31.

(68) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), p.226, For Off to Adty, 26 Dec 1854; pp.226-7, same to same, 25 Jan 1855; pp.227-8, Adty to For Off, 27 Jan 1855.

(69) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.228-9, For Off to Adty, 22 May 1855.

(70) F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 167, Bowring to Stirling, No.120, 27 Nov 1854.

(71) e.g. China Mail, 2 Nov 1854, 9 Aug 1855.

since he had made no provision for trade. More important to him was the fact that Japanese ports were being used by his ships as bases for operations against the Russians and that during 1855 the resources of those ports, and especially of Hakodate, were being steadily developed to that end.⁽⁷²⁾ It was difficulties arising in this connection that Stirling wished to go back and adjust, not questions of trade.

The Japanese were determined to keep strictly to the letter of the treaties they had made. In February 1855 the Roozyuu issued a statement denying rumours current in Japan that the Americans were to be allowed to trade at Nagasaki. As late as September of that year they were publicly affirming a hope that it might eventually be possible to revoke the agreements already concluded,⁽⁷³⁾ and although this was strictly propaganda for internal consumption, the actions of the officials at the treaty ports were carefully regulated to avoid contradicting it. At Simoda, visited chiefly by American ships, the bugyoo produced two sets of port regulations. One, as severe as those handed to Stirling at Nagasaki, was for the ships of countries to whom the port was open. The other, no more than a direct order to depart, was to be handed to all other ships. The arrangement was modified slightly some weeks later, but chiefly to introduce regulations applicable to ships of non-Treaty Powers which came on official business, not to

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 (72) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5657, Stirling to Adty, No.42, 15 Apr 1855; No.55, 2 July 1855; No.74, 1 Oct 1855. Eckel, 'The Crimean War and Japan', pp.117-8.

(73) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, VIII, 391-2, Roozyuu to America oosetu-kakari, kaiboo-kakari, Simoda and Hakodate bugyoo, 5 Feb 1855; XII, 288-9, Roozyuu to various daimyoo, 23 Sept 1855.

relax the restrictions on trade or intercourse. (74)

At Hakodate, much used by the British squadron in 1855, conditions were at first no better. After the conclusion of the United States treaty, the Hakodate bugyoo had been notified that the port was to be opened. He was instructed to refer any disputes to Edo and warned to be strict in his supervision of foreign visitors, especially in enforcing the laws prohibiting trade and Christianity. In the following spring he was ordered to extend the same treatment to the British. (75) This he did, but the visits of so impressive an array of British warships during the summer, and the constant protests of their commanders, seem to have worn down his resistance. By the early autumn, British visitors to the port were commenting that although their treatment still left much to be desired, it was at least very much better than it had been earlier in the year. (76)

Nagasaki was the least satisfactory of the open ports. There, like Canton in China, the old habits of officials died hard, and they clung obstinately to the port regulations they had given Stirling. The summer of 1855 saw no improvement. British officers complained that the treaty had made no difference to the restrictions on their actions, that their protests

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 (74) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, IX, 390-5, Simoda bugyoo to Roozyuu, 1855, 2nd month (18 Mar-16 Apr); XI, 266-72, same to same, 15 June 1855.

(75) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, appendix pp.7-8, Syoogun to Hakodate bugyoo, 7 Sept 1854; pp.8-11, Roozyuu to Hakodate bugyoo, 7 Sept 1854; IX, 246-8, Hakodate bugyoo to Roozyuu, 4 Apr 1855 and Roozyuu minute thereon.

(76) London Times, 13 Oct 1855.
Whittingham, Expedition against the Russian settlements, pp.160-5.

were of no avail. The treaty, they said, was a dead letter. (77)

In September 1855 Commodore Elliot arrived at Nagasaki with his squadron, determined to obtain better treatment for his ships and men. Since he had an interpreter, Rikimatu, a Japanese castaway from Hongkong, he demanded an interview with the two bugyoo, Arao Iwami-no-kami and Kawamura Tusima-no-kami. Both were present in the port in anticipation of Stirling's arrival with the ratification of the previous year's convention. The meeting took place on 24 September and Elliot, confident in the support of seven warships, at once took an aggressive tone in complaining that the treatment of ships at Nagasaki was very much worse than that at Hakodate. The bugyoo pointed out that each port made its own regulations and Stirling had agreed to abide by them. Elliot next objected to the ban on landing, since some crews had been in harbour for thirty days without being allowed exercise ashore. Once again he was referred to the terms of the convention. Thereupon, greatly incensed by the attitude taken by the two bugyoo, the commodore launched into an acrimonious discussion of their interpretation of the treaty, especially of their insistence that all stores must be obtained through the officials, which resulted, he said, in the supply of goods poor in quality and insufficient in quantity. He threatened that unless this circumstance were changed, he would be forced to report to his government that the Japanese were breaking the treaty. But his anger had no effect. The bugyoo, too, regretted the strictness of the regulations. None the less, they had no power to alter either laws or treaty, and must in duty bound enforce them to the best of their ability. With this deadlock the discussion ended, on

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 (77) Tronson, Voyage to Japan, pp.153-4, 159.
 Whittingham, op.cit, pp.216-7.

terms of rather distant friendship. (78)

Thus it was left to Stirling to make fresh arrangements. He had already decided to do so some months before, in May 1855, when he visited Nagasaki to inform the bugyoo that he had been authorised to ratify the convention. He had said then that he would return himself or send a ship to exchange ratifications as soon as the Japanese ^{were} ready, but that first there were some questions of interpretation which he wanted settled. He demanded an interview with the bugyoo, threatening to go to Edo if it were not granted, and moved his squadron into the inner harbour on the grounds that the outer anchorage was not safe in existing weather conditions. (79) The bugyoo had little choice but to arrange a meeting.

The promised meeting took place ashore on 16 May, and dealt chiefly with the question of ratifications. Stirling allowed the Japanese to copy the Dutch translation of the British ratification, and agreed to return on 1 October, by which time they would have been able to check it and would be ready for the ceremony of exchange. (80) This was all innocuous enough. Next day, however, he sent ashore a draft of the regulations he proposed to issue to British ships. They were, he emphasised, to clarify not to amend the convention, but to the Japanese they contained some ominous novelties. They affirmed that British ships must carry suitable papers of ident-

(78) Whittingham, op.cit., pp.225-31.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, XII, 301-28, Japanese minutes of conference, 24 Sept 1855 (2 versions);
XII, 334-6, Nagasaki bugyoo to Roozyuu, 25 Sept 1855.

(79) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, 幕府, X, 191-2, translation, Stirling to Nagasaki bugyoo, 13 May 1855;
X, 219-22, translation, same to same, 15 May 1855.

(80) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, X, 279-84, Japanese minutes of conference, 16 May 1855.

ification, but specifically relieved warships of any such obligation. They catalogued the port regulations to be observed at Nagasaki, but added that if weather conditions made such a course desirable, ships might proceed direct to the inner harbour without stopping for examination. Finally, they enjoined observance of Japanese laws, but made it clear that the penalty for breach of those laws would be dismissal of the ship and punishment of the offenders, not the closing of the port.⁽⁸¹⁾

The bugyoo could not let these statements pass unchallenged, and took up all three points in a written reply. Denying that the treatment of the Winchester constituted a precedent, he insisted that in future warships produce suitable papers and that all ships stop in the outer harbour until given permission to proceed. Moreover, he wrote, the port would certainly be closed if the laws were broken.⁽⁸²⁾ In fact, he took a firm stand on the letter of the treaty.

Stirling was evidently willing to let the matter drop until he returned in October, for no further discussions followed this exchange of notes. His report to the Admiralty gave no details of what had occurred,⁽⁸³⁾ and was, indeed, wilfully misleading. He claimed that he had been led to broach the subject of clarifying the convention by certain 'favorable indications' in the attitude of the officials, a proposition which is inherently improbable and is supported neither by

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 (81) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, X, 305-10, translation, Stirling to Nagasaki bugyoo, 17 May 1855 and enclosed draft regulations.

(82) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, X, 349-51, Nagasaki bugyoo to Stirling, 19 May 1855.

(83) F.O.China Corres, vol 240, Stirling to Adty, No.51, 19 May 1855 in Adty to For Off, 18 Aug 1855.

the Japanese records nor by the experiences of other visitors to Nagasaki. He admitted that he found the officials 'extremely punctilious and evidently disposed to adhere strictly ~~to~~ even to the minutiae of the Agreement', but neither enclosed nor referred to the bugyoo's letter which categorically rejected his draft proclamation. Indeed, by stating that he could not 'report with any degree of certainty upon the prospects of success', Stirling implied that while the discussions had revealed disagreement, they had not reached deadlock. This could be true only if Stirling himself planned to force the issue. One concludes that he was determined, with or without powers to negotiate, to effect some improvement in the treatment of British ships in Japan, and did not wish to give the Admiralty too clear a picture of his intentions or of the methods such a course might entail, for fear they should tie his hands by issuing some over-cautious set of orders.

Before returning to Nagasaki, Stirling paid a visit to Hakodate to obtain copies of the port regulations and of the Russian treaty with Japan. His immediate interest in the latter was that section which defined the frontier between Russian and Japanese territories in the north, knowledge vital to him in planning attacks on the Russian settlements. For the moment, this was the only point on which he was prepared to insist, and he accordingly accepted instead of the treaty itself an abstract of the desired information, given him with a promise that he should have ~~a~~ a copy of the whole treaty as soon as it became available. (84)

The Hakodate bugyoo, although he denied it to Stirling,

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(84) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, XII, 14-5, Hakodate bugyoo to Stirling, 21 July 1855; XII, 15-6, translation, Stirling to Hakodate bugyoo, 21 July 1855.

did in fact have a copy of the treaty. He was reluctant to reveal its terms because it opened Simoda to the Russians & in addition to Hakodate and Nagasaki and allowed them to purchase supplies in the open market, privileges which the British would undoubtedly wish to claim under the most-favoured-nation clause of Stirling's convention. The bugyoo declined to take such a responsibility without instructions from the Roozyuu,⁽⁸⁵⁾ and in this he rightly judged the attitude of his superiors. They had already warned Simoda that the British might insist on using that port, but that it was most undesirable that they should come so close to Edo and every effort must be made to discourage them. Similar instructions were sent to Hakodate. The bugyoo's previous decision was commended, and he was ordered to continue withholding the complete copy of the Russian treaty as long as that proved practicable.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The attitude did not augur well for the success of Stirling's negotiations at Nagasaki.

By the time the admiral joined Commodore Elliot there at the end of September, the Japanese had been able to check the translation of his ratification which they had copied in May. The officials in Edo responsible for coast defence and foreign relations, comparing it with the Japanese text, found a few minor discrepancies in the wording of the article permitting ships in distress to enter Japanese ports for shelter, and proposed that when the ratifications were exchanged - an event they could see no means of preventing - Stirling should

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 (85) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, XII, 8-10, Hakodate bugyoo to Roozyuu, 19 July 1855.

(86) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzuyo, XI, 439-40, Roozyuu to Simoda bugyoo, 11 July 1855; XII, 80-1, Roozyuu to Hakodate bugyoo, 3 Aug 1855; XII, 94-5, Roozyuu to Hakodate bugyoo, 9 Aug 1855.

be asked to give a private undertaking that the Japanese version be accepted as the master-text. This proved unnecessary in the event, for Curtius was able to assure the bugyoo that there was no essential difference in meaning between the two.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Nothing was said of the most-favoured-nation clause or the points raised by Stirling in May. Unlike Stirling, the Japanese had assumed that the matter ended with their rejection of his proposals. The only instructions known to have been sent to the Nagasaki bugyoo by the Roozyuu directed him to exchange ratifications in the same manner as had been used for the American treaty, and to grant the right to use Simoda only if he could find no possible way of avoiding it.⁽⁸⁸⁾

1 October was the date set by Stirling for the exchange of ratifications.⁽⁸⁹⁾ By 29 September eleven British and two French warships were gathered at Nagasaki, an exhibition of force which the admiral thought 'not without advantage'.⁽⁹⁰⁾

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 (87) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzvo, XII, 38-40, Kaiboo-kakari ~~kanzvoo~~ bugyoo to Roozyuu, 24 July 1855; XII, 346-7, ~~Nagasaki~~ Nagasaki interpreters to bugyoo, 1855, 8th month (11 Sept-10 Oct).

(88) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzvo, I, 240-1, Roozyuu minute on Nagasaki bugyoo to Roozyuu, 1855, 3rd month (17 Apr-15 May; presumably 15 May, date of Stirling's request).

(89) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Adty to For Off, 5 Jan 1856 enclosed Stirling's full report on the negotiations, including Stirling to Adty, No.78, 8 Nov 1855; Diary of Events and Conferences kept by Capt Currie (cited as Currie's Diary of Events); Journal of Conferences kept by Capt Wilson of H.M.S.Winchester (cited as Wilson's Journal of Conferences). Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.229-34 omits important passages from Stirling's dispatch and the whole of both diaries.

(90) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5657, Stirling to Adty, No.74, Nagasaki, 1 Oct 1855.

Some days passed before all questions arising out of the translation of the two documents had been settled, but at last the negotiators exchanged notes affirming that the ratifications agreed with the texts of the convention as signed in the previous year, and on the morning of 9 October the formal ceremony of exchange took place.⁽⁹¹⁾

Not till this was done did Stirling turn to other matters. He knew that he had no power to treat and was 'thereby prevented from being a party to new conditions',⁽⁹²⁾ and for this reason had resisted Japanese attempts to discuss points of interpretation during the meetings ~~in~~^{of} the preceding week.⁽⁹³⁾ However he, too, was capable of observing the letter rather than the spirit of the law. Once the ratifications were exchanged, he shed the character of a diplomatic representative charged by his instructions with a single mission and unable to go beyond them, and reverted to that of naval Commander-in-Chief, whose duty it would be to see that British ships observed the provisions of the treaty just ratified. In this new capacity he drew up what he called 'a liberal Explanation' of the convention's terms and began the task of obtaining from the Japanese 'their formal assent to as much of that exposition as they might be induced to concur in'.⁽⁹⁴⁾

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 (91) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Currie's Diary of Events and Wilson's Journal of Conferences for 1-9 Oct 1855.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XII, 367-84, Japanese minutes of conference, 9 Oct 1855.

(92) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), pp.229-30, Stirling to Adty, No.78, 8 Nov 1855.

(93) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences, 5 Oct 1855.

(94) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Stirling to Adty, No.78, 8 Nov 1855.

The admiral already knew something of the terms of the Russian and American treaties, copies of which he had demanded from the Japanese, and had announced that he considered Simoda automatically opened to British ships under the most-favoured-nation clause of his own convention.⁽⁹⁵⁾ His exposition dealt rather with practical details of the treatment to be accorded British ships in the treaty ports. In effect, Stirling's 'liberal Explanation' was equivalent to a demand for considerable changes in both the treaty and the port regulations. It assumed the opening of the inner harbour at Nagasaki as a matter of right, provision of a hospital and burial-ground there and the right to go ashore, all contrary to the existing arrangements, while it included also a statement to the effect that the Japanese would not 'impose unnecessary restrictions' on British ships and subjects. The document further maintained that although breach of the laws might lead to the closing of the ports, no act of an individual, if it were neither authorised nor approved by his government, could set aside a treaty between sovereign rulers. Stirling insisted that British warships could visit any Japanese port on showing good reason, whether it be officially open or not. Finally, he stated specifically that the Dutch and Chinese privileges excepted from the most-favoured-nation clause were only those 'existing previous to the 14th of October 1854'.⁽⁹⁶⁾ It was on these points - apart from a few minor questions of phrasing--

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 (95) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences, 9 Oct 1855.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzvo, XII, 373-4, Japanese minutes of conference, 9 Oct 1855.

(96) The text of this draft exposition is given as Appendix B, pp. 298-300, which also shows changes made in it as a result of the subsequent discussions.

that the negotiations turned.

Stirling presented this draft to the two bugyoo at a meeting ashore on 11 October. At that meeting and at later discussions he employed two interpreters, the Japanese cast-away Rikimatu, borrowed from Commodore Elliot's squadron, and a surgeon from the flagship who had been learning Dutch specially for the purpose. Between them they prevented any such major misunderstandings as had occurred the year before. In handing over the draft, Stirling impressed on the Japanese that he did not regard it as a basis for discussion. It was his own interpretation of the treaty and must be wholly accepted or wholly rejected by them. If they did not accept it as accurate, then the matter was incapable of solution at Nagasaki and must be referred to Edo and London. He had not mentioned Simoda, Stirling explained, because he considered it to have been opened automatically to British use by the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause. Other privileges might accrue from the Russian treaty, a copy of which he would expect to be ready for him when he sent a ship to fetch it in sixty days' time. (97)

Since the exposition would have to be translated before more could be done, the meeting of 11 October consisted of little more than Stirling's statement - which had many of the characteristics of an ultimatum. It was, in fact, four days before the bugyoo made any reply. On 15 October they sent to say that they could give no answer to the draft, since it touched on matters not contained in the treaty and was there-

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(97) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences and Currie's Diary of Events, 11 Oct 1855.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XII, 423-37, Japanese minutes of conference, 11 Oct 1855.

fore outside their province, a reply very similar to that which had terminated the discussions in May.

This time Stirling was not prepared to accept such an answer as final. He warned the Japanese that their intransigent policy might force him to refer the whole question of the convention to his government, making it his own duty meanwhile 'to see that it is carried into full effect on both sides'.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Next day he stated that he would expect to receive, by the ship which was to fetch a copy of the Russian treaty, 'a full and distinct acceptance or ... or a specific refusal' of his exposition, failing which he would go to Edo and demand one there.⁽⁹⁹⁾ The threat was enough to bring the offer of another conference ashore for the morning of 17 October.

This new meeting was no more successful than preceding ones. Stirling began by claiming that British ships had every right to enter the inner harbour at Nagasaki, since the convention expressly opened the port of Nagasaki and must necessarily be understood to mean the whole of that port. The bugyoo denied this. He preferred to take his stand on the wording of the port regulations, which had been accepted in the previous year under Article II of the convention. Neither was willing to discuss a compromise. Stirling continued to insist on a specific answer, and when it became clear that none would be forthcoming he stormed out of the conference room with the parting threat that he would immediately notify his government that the treaty had been broken by Japan, since the port of Nagasaki was not in fact open to British ships. He had little doubt, he said, that he would receive orders to enforce the

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 (98) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences,
 15 Oct 1855.

(99) ibid, 16 Oct 1855.

treaty, 'to carry it out with a high hand'. (100)

With some difficulty the admiral was persuaded to wait for ten minutes while the two bugyoo considered his terms in private consultation. The only result of their conference, however, was that they offered to send to Edo and get an answer within the sixty days provided that in the interval no British ship was to enter the inner harbour. At this Stirling again lost patience, and threatened to go out to the flagship and bring his entire force without further delay past the war-junks guarding the harbour entrance. The fear of open hostilities which this might cause brought the bugyoo to terms. They agreed to admit the ships then present at Nagasaki, emphasising that this was all they had power to grant, and that the treatment of future squadrons must be left to the decision of the Bakuhu. (101) With that temporary solution, consideration of the other points at issue was postponed to a meeting arranged for the following day.

When discussions were resumed on the morning of 18 October, the bugyoo at once agreed to the clause opening 'the whole and every part' of each of the treaty ports. This put Stirling in a tractable mood. He agreed to strike out the reference to a hospital and fix on a site for the burial ground, and when the bugyoo objected to the right of landing which had been inserted in the exposition of Article I, contented himself with remarking that it seemed a necessary corollary of opening

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(100) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences, 17 Oct 1855.

(101) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal Of Conferences, 17 Oct 1855.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XII, 479-86, Nagasaki bugyoo and metuke to Roozyuu, 19 Oct 1855; XII, 448-58, Japanese minutes of conference, 17 Oct 1855.

the ports, but might be omitted pending reference to the two governments. Article II was accepted with minor changes, and surprisingly enough, after a tedious discussion of detail, so was the right of warships to visit ports not opened by treaty. Article IV presented no difficulties.

The interpretation of Article V, the most-favoured-nation clause, brought fresh disputes, however. The bugyoo objected to any mention of rights of residence, and assured Stirling that Japan had no intention of granting such privileges to any nation. Since the point was in any case covered by the wording of the clause in general, its omission was no great matter. But over Dutch and Chinese privileges there was complete deadlock. Stirling argued that it had always been his intention that only rights enjoyed by those nations before his own convention was signed should be excluded from the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause. Kawamura, on the other hand, maintained that in 1854 it had been agreed to exclude them altogether from the operation of the article, which thus entitled Britain to share neither existing nor future privileges granted to Dutch and Chinese in Japan. He even tried to persuade Stirling to alter the original convention to conform to this view. This, of course, the admiral refused to do, but as neither side would give way, the offending phrase was struck out of the exposition and left like others to the decision of the two governments. (102)

Next day officials came off to the Winchester to make a last attempt to get Article V of the convention amended to

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(102) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences and Currie's Diary of Events, 18 Oct 1855.

Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyc, XII, 458-70, Japanese minutes of conference, 18 Oct 1855.

meet their ideas, but found Stirling obdurate. Indeed, he told them that the only change to which he might agree would be to cancel the existing agreement in its entirety and substitute the much more generous terms granted by Ieyasu to the English East India Company in 1613. He even gave them a copy of the document for future reference. (103)

Since further discussion was clearly useless, English and Japanese copies of the amended exposition were exchanged on 19 October, and next day Stirling sailed. Although he did not know it, the Japanese version differed from his own on one important point. (104) To meet Japanese objections, he had removed the expression 'existing previous to the 14th of October 1854' from that part of the English text which dealt with the exemption of Dutch and Chinese privileges from the most-favoured-nation provision. Elsewhere in the same article, however, they were referred to as those privileges 'hitherto conceded' to Dutch and Chinese, so that the change made the clause less specific but not essentially different in meaning. There were no corresponding alterations in the Japanese text handed to Stirling on 19 October. Under Article V it gave a direct translation of Stirling's original draft, including the disputed passages, followed by a note to the effect that agreement had not been reached on this article, which therefore remained in abeyance. This was an accurate statement of the position.

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 (103) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Wilson's Journal of Conferences, 19 Oct 1855.

(104) For the English text see Appendix B, pp. 298-300.

The Japanese text handed to Stirling is in F.O.Protocols of Treaties, Japan, I (F.O.93/49-1). The Japanese version retained by the Bakuhu, showing what are presumably later corrections, appears in Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XII, 437-42.

The Japanese text retained by the Bakuhu provides yet a third variant. It applied to the translation of Stirling's original draft the same kind of corrections made in the English version - omission of some phrases, small changes in others - and since there can have been no time to draw it up on 19 October, must represent either the working copy used by the bugyoo during the negotiations or a fair copy made after Stirling's departure. With one exception, its terms correspond with those published in Britain. The exception is in Article V. The literary style (sooribun) used in the Japanese had no past tense, and this resulted in one important difference in meaning between the two versions. The removal of the date from the reference to Dutch and Chinese privileges in the Bakuhu copy made it possible for the exemption to apply equally to future as to past concessions, which was undoubtedly the result the bugyoo had intended to achieve by insisting on the date's omission. This was the interpretation on which the Japanese subsequently took their stand - another source of dispute which was a by-product of faulty translation.

Stirling's claim that the negotiations had been conducted 'with the utmost goodwill' and the exposition obtained 'without solicitation or menace'⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ is hardly borne out by the British, still less by the Japanese records. Even so, at least one of the British officers present at Nagasaki condemned him for getting so little with so strong a squadron and thought his weakness might make it necessary later 'to strike a blow instead of pursuing the more magnanimous policy of only exhib-

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 (105) F.O.China Corres., vol 255, Stirling to Adty, No.78,
 8 Nov 1855.

iting strength'. (106)

Indeed, the negotiations had achieved very little. Stirling thought he had gained his points about the movement of warships and the right to enter Nagasaki's inner harbour, but both were subject to confirmation by Edo and were destined to arise again. He himself admitted that the very important questions of landing and the application of the most-favoured-nation clause to Dutch and Chinese privileges would have to be left until he received instructions from Her Majesty's Government. Yet he was satisfied that his two agreements together constituted 'as good a Treaty with Japan as any other nation has acquired or can by any possibility acquire hereafter'. (107) This was natural enough, for Stirling thought in terms of war and naval bases, not in terms of trade. To him, the justification for his actions lay in the statement that during 1855 Japan had been 'as useful to us as a British Colony in that locality', (108) for he was well aware that naval superiority could turn an equal into an exclusive advantage.

Stirling's grandiose plans for the future throw additional light on the objectives he had set himself in Japan. He saw in Manchuria, 'the Turkey of the Eastern Seas', the key to the Pacific trade as well as to the defence of China and India against Russia, and therefore the key to British power in the Far East. He wished Britain to extend her trade because of the revenue and influence it would bring, and to the same end she must repress piracy and protect the coasting trade in

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(106) Whittingham, Expedition, pp.214-5.

(107) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Stirling to Adty, No.78,
8 Nov 1855.

(108) ibid.

the western Pacific, open all the ports of northeast Asia, obtain a new treaty with China and use to the full the resources of neighbouring countries. To accomplish this might require the use of force. Certainly it must be accompanied by an unchallengeable naval supremacy in Pacific waters. 'In other words', he wrote, 'we must establish a Maritime Empire with all its concomitant adjuncts of Naval Positions, Postal Communications, Hydrographical Surveys, and Steam Factories and Dockyards'.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ In his own estimation, Stirling had made a beginning in Japan.

Stirling's personal views were representative of a section of British opinion which might justly be characterised as "imperialist", but which was not dominant in Whitehall. Because he was in a position to put those ideas into practice in Japan at a time when detailed control of policy from London was an impossibility, they had, in the years 1854 and 1855, manifested themselves in action. Moreover, his conduct was officially commended⁽¹¹⁰⁾ and his agreements ratified. His policy, however, did not thereby become official policy, for it was his results, not his objectives, that were acceptable. His plans for the future were never adopted by the Foreign Office and Board of Trade. Nor did they regard his convention as in the least satisfactory. They accepted it, in fact, not as the prelude to a new maritime empire, but because it might pave the way thereafter for some form of commercial agreement. Stirling's negotiations were in that sense a digression in the

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 (109) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5660, Memoir on the Maritime Policy of England in the Eastern Seas, in Stirling to Sir C.Wood, private, Hongkong, 15 Nov 1855.

(110) Parl Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2077), p.235, For Off to Adty, 21 Jan 1856.

development of British policy towards Japan.

The admiral himself was to play no further part in the story. In 1856 he was recalled because he had failed in the primary naval ~~task~~^{duty} of finding and destroying the Russian squadron⁽¹¹¹⁾ - partly, perhaps, because of his preoccupation with the self-imposed task of negotiating with Japan. For the future, British relations with Japan were to be conducted through more normal diplomatic channels.

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(111) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5672, Stirling to Adty, No.101, 11 Dec 1855 and No.11, 8 Dec 1856, and Admiralty minutes thereon.

Chapter VI. Foreign Office policy and the Elgin mission:
1854-1858

Stirling's diplomacy was not greeted with enthusiasm on the China coast. The China Mail, which represented chiefly the views of the Hongkong merchants, condemned it in no uncertain terms. It compared his convention unfavourably with that of Perry and ridiculed the Foreign Office for ratifying an agreement which entitled Britain only to pay dearly for stores originally provided free of charge.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, it said, in his preoccupation with this 'precious treaty' with Japan, Stirling had neglected the more important duty of protecting British ships and subjects in China. In the midst of dangers arising out of the ~~T~~^aiping Rebellion and the Russian war, he had achieved 'nothing creditable to the arms of his country, and something rather discreditable to his own diplomacy'.⁽²⁾ Even in the fleet similar sentiments were expressed.⁽³⁾

In England there was less criticism of this kind. On the other hand Stirling received little direct support. The Times gave no prominence to news of the convention and published the official correspondence without comment.⁽⁴⁾ The subject was raised twice in the House of Commons during question time⁽⁵⁾ but on each occasion it appeared as a request

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 (1) China Mail, 2 Nov 1854, 9 Aug 1855, 19 June 1856.

(2) China Mail, 25 Oct 1855.

(3) Osborn, A Cruise in Japanese Waters, pp.90-1.

(4) London Times, 16 Jan and 7 May 1856.

(5) Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Ser, vol CXXXVIII, col.834, Commons, 21 May 1855; vol CXL, cols 832-3, Commons, 15 Feb 1856.

for information rather than a discussion of policy or results. In fact, public interest was centred on the Crimean War and events in Japan attracted very little attention.

In 1854 the Foreign Office had decided to ratify the convention, but this meant no more than that there seemed to be some value in it. Clarendon did not necessarily think it satisfactory or approve of all its provisions. Stirling's own argument had been that the agreement was of immediate practical value and at the same time gave Britain equal advantages in Japan with all but the Dutch and Chinese. To him Japan was of greatest importance strategically, as a British foothold in northeast Asia where future dominance could be more surely attained if trade were postponed. The activities of British merchants, he said, judged by their record in China, seemed more likely to destroy confidence and cause Japan to deny Britain use of her invaluable harbours, coal and timber than to bring closer co-operation. (6)

Sir John Bowring, by contrast, was more interested in trading privileges. Comparing the terms of the convention with those he had been instructed to obtain, he came to the conclusion that Clarendon would not ratify. Whether ratified or not, however, he thought the existence of such an agreement would 'greatly add to the difficulties of after negotiations'. (7)

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 (6) Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5640, Stirling to Adty, No.71, 26 Oct 1854; Vol 5657, Stirling to Graham, private, 27 Oct 1854.

(7) F.O. China Corres, vol 217, Bowring to For Off, No.198, 29 Nov 1854, recd F.O. 27 Jan 1855.

Bowring's criticisms were reflected in London, where discussions between government departments continued despite the decision to ratify. The Board of Trade, rightly observing that the convention had 'very little to do with trade', had not originally intended to take any action beyond arranging for the forms of identification to be carried by British ships.⁽⁸⁾ When later requested to comment officially for Clarendon's information, it did so in distinctly unfavourable terms. The Board believed that the chief value of the convention lay in establishing relations with Japan through which trade might eventually be arranged, but confessed to some misgivings about the effect of the last article which denied the right of any 'High Officer' to change the terms of the agreement in the future. It urged Clarendon to consider whether future negotiations 'might not be embarrassed if not precluded altogether by the retention in a Treaty of indefinite duration, of a provision which expressly pronounces the existing arrangements to be unalterable'.⁽⁹⁾

The Foreign Office came to Stirling's defence. Hammond, the permanent undersecretary, characterised the Board's letter as 'flippant' and drafted a reply denying its interpretation of Article VII. The convention was not, he thought, 'of so immutable a nature as the Lords of the Committee apprehend'; first, because Article VII was intended only to prevent alteration by the commanders of ships, not by formally accredited diplomats; second, because the most-favoured-nation clause would entitle Britain to share in the

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 (8) F.O. China Corres, vol 238, Cardwell (Bd Trade) to Hammond, private, 24 Jan 1855.

(9) F.O. China Corres, vol 238, Bd Trade to For Off, 30 Jan 1855.

benefits obtained by other countries, and its inclusion implied that the Japanese expected to grant such benefits; finally, because the prohibition of trade appeared not in the treaty itself, but in the Nagasaki port regulations, which could be changed without in any way altering the wording of the convention.⁽¹⁰⁾ The arguments were not strictly accurate nor entirely compatible with each other. However, they indicated that the Foreign Office did not intend to be blocked at the outset of its relations with Japan by Stirling's inexperience in drawing up diplomatic documents.

Neither Bowring nor the Foreign Office showed any immediate inclination to give effect to these views or to take any positive steps to improve on Stirling's arrangement. The instructions given to Bowring in the previous year still held good. His plans to visit Japan had been postponed, not abandoned, when events in China and the outbreak of war had together made it impossible to spare the naval force which he thought indispensable to success. On the other hand, he regarded Stirling's convention not as a help but as a hindrance. He thought it would multiply the difficulties facing any attempt to negotiate a commercial treaty because of the precedent it had created, and, as he reported to Clarendon, this made him reluctant to undertake the mission. In his next dispatch on the subject, he recommended that these difficulties could best be overcome by sending a joint British and French squadron to Edo.⁽¹¹⁾ Since this was a

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 (10) F.O.China Corres. vol 238, Hammond minutes on Bd Trade to For Off, 30 Jan 1855 and draft For Off to Bd Trade, 8 Feb 1855.

(11) F.O.China Corres. vol 217, Bowring to For Off, No.192, 27 Nov 1854 and No.198, 29 Nov 1854.

course that could only be adopted after consultation between the two governments, it is clear that Bowring was not contemplating any immediate action.

Both these dispatches arrived in London on the same day. Apparently unwilling to force an issue in Japan while the Russian war still demanded so much of his attention, Clarendon decided that it would not be 'expedient' for Bowring to go there for the present and wrote to him accordingly.⁽¹²⁾ Before the dispatch reached Hongkong, Bowring had changed his mind again. In March 1855 he announced rather vaguely that after the Siam mission, which had been planned for the spring of that year, he intended to join Stirling's fleet in its operations in the north, though without stating precisely what he hoped to do there.⁽¹³⁾ This plan Clarendon accepted without comment. But Bowring was obviously acting without much conviction and was bitterly aware that he could expect little support from home while the war continued. Before he could put his new plan into operation, he received Clarendon's dispatch of 10 February, approving his earlier decision to defer the Japan negotiations, and with that for authority, gladly abandoned all thought of going to the north.⁽¹⁴⁾

There the matter would presumably have rested had it been left to Bowring's initiative. During the summer, however, Clarendon took up the question once more, and this

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 (12) F.O.China Corres, vol 217, Clarendon minute on Bowring to For Off, No.192, 27 Nov 1854; vol 224, For Off to Bowring, No.51, 10 Feb 1855.

(13) F.O.China Corres, vol 228, Bowring to For Off, No.131, 10 Mar 1855.

(14) F.O.China Corres, vol 230, Bowring to For Off, No.151, 14 May 1855 and No.153, 15 May 1855; vol 232, Bowring to For Off, No.249, 14 July 1855.

time issued more positive directions. In April 1855 a Liverpool merchant had written to the Foreign Office for information about the terms of what he believed to be a commercial treaty negotiated by Stirling. When told that it actually made no provision for trade, he promptly pointed out that the Americans intended to trade under Perry's convention and urged the importance of obtaining a similar privilege for Britain, a statement which led Clarendon to call for a comparison of the British and American agreements. (15)

The comparison of the two treaties was drawn up at the Foreign Office in July. It showed that the essential difference between them was that Perry had secured the right, under certain conditions, of exchanging coin and goods for Japanese products, which seemed tantamount to permitting trade. This raised the question of how far the most-favoured-nation clause of Stirling's convention would entitle Britain to do the same. Clarendon's first reaction was to order Bowring to sound the Japanese on this point. If they refused to admit such an interpretation, then he must take steps to amend the convention in such a way as to put British citizens visiting Japan on an equal footing with American. When it came to drafting a dispatch on the subject, however, the Foreign Secretary realised that it might be wiser to assume that there could be no doubt about British rights. He therefore amended the wording of his instructions. In their final form they ordered the plenipotentiary, without equivocation or condition, to claim from the Japanese 'whatever benefits,

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 (15) F.O. China Corres, vol 239, Campbell to For Off, 13 Apr 1855; For Off to Campbell, 18 Apr 1855; Campbell to For Off, 23 Apr 1855, and Clarendon minute thereon.

commercial or other, have been secured by the United States.,⁽¹⁶⁾

Such explicit instructions were not at all to Bowring's taste. During the summer he had heard that the Japanese consistently repudiated Perry's interpretation of the American treaty, and had refused to admit Americans to residences or trade. He was still prepared to go to Japan as long as he was given adequate support and a suitable naval escort, but he thought the situation so little encouraging that in August 1855 he wrote home to ask that even if it were decided to persist in the attempt to get a new agreement, he should be given discretion to decide the moment at which to make it.⁽¹⁷⁾

He was, therefore, 'greatly embarrassed' by the new instructions when they arrived in September. He objected again that the Japanese recognised only the Dutch and Chinese as having any right to trade, and their rights were specifically excluded from Stirling's most-favoured-nation clause. Article VII, he said, would cause difficulties in any attempt to revise the convention, while it would be impossible for him to submit to the port regulations which Stirling had accepted. Finally, the fleet was away, engaged on other duties - Stirling was then approaching Nagasaki for the exchange of ratifications - which meant that there were no immediate means of going to Japan.⁽¹⁸⁾ In any case, Bowring was determined to avoid action until he received a reply to his request for discretionary powers. The news of Stirling's

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 (16) F.O.China Corres, vol 240, Forr Off memo of 20 July 1855 and Clarendon minute; vol 225, For Off to Bowring, No.150, 27 July 1855 and minutes thereon.

(17) F.O.China Corres, vol 232, Bowring to For Off, No.249, 14 July 1855; vol 233, same to same, No.282, 24 Aug 1855

(18) F.O.China Corres, vol 233, Bowring to For Off, No.309, 25 Sept 1855.

new diplomatic endeavour, the negotiation of the exposition in October, gave him an additional reason for seeking fresh instructions. The beginning of the northerly monsoon enabled him to declare that no visit could be made to Japan until the spring of 1856, when the winds would again be favourable. (19)

The situation with respect to formal diplomatic negotiations with Japan now reverted to what one can only regard as normal - it had persisted intermittently for some ten years. The plenipotentiary, having received both instructions and authority to negotiate, awaited some ill-defined "opportunity" to do so. The Foreign Office was content to await his action. Clarendon had never intended to dictate the timing of the expedition. His orders had referred to the terms he wished Bowring to obtain and he had not meant to imply that the plenipotentiary must proceed post-haste to Japan to implement them. In December he readily approved Bowring's request that the choice of date be left to be decided at Hongkong. (20) Nor did news of Stirling's exposition introduce any necessity for speed. In January 1856, far from issuing fresh instructions or renewing earlier ones, Clarendon wrote to request Bowring's views on the objects and methods of future negotiations. (21)

On the other hand, the Foreign Secretary had not changed his views about the interpretation of the British

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 (19) F.O.China Corres, vol 234, Bowring to For Off, No.326, 12 Oct 1855; and No.345, 29 Oct 1855.

(20) F.O.China Corres, vol 225, For Off to Bowring, No.233, 8 Dec 1855.

(21) F.O.China Corres, vol 242, For Off to Bowring, No.29, 9 Jan 1856.

convention. He insisted on it despite Bowring's opposition. The latter had announced the agreement in the Hongkong Gazette in July 1855, copying the official notice from the London Gazette, which, as he pointed out, made no mention of the port regulations restricting its application. In October Clarendon told him that he should also make public the terms on which trade could be carried on.⁽²²⁾ Bowring thereupon reiterated his opinion that no trade was permitted by the Convention, which accounted for his 'hesitation in encouraging commercial adventures to Japan'.⁽²³⁾ When Clarendon replied that he saw no reason why traders should be discouraged from making the attempt so long as they were warned of the risks involved, the plenipotentiary countered maliciously that no discouragement was needed. Merchants, he said, showed no inclination to go to Japan under British registry.⁽²⁴⁾ It was a view for which he was able to muster considerable evidence.⁽²⁵⁾

Meanwhile Stirling's exposition had been causing fresh discussions of interpretation and policy. On 5 January 1856, the Foreign Office received from the Admiralty a full account of the negotiations which followed the exchange of ratifications at Nagasaki. Stirling and the Nagasaki bugyoo had left two

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 (22) F.O. China Corres, vol 232, Bowring to For Off, No.256, 28 July 1855; vol 225, For Off to Bowring, No.210, 8 Oct 1855.

(23) F.O. China Corres, vol 235, Bowring to For Off, No.389, 4 Dec 1855.

(24) F.O. China Corres, vol 242, For Off to Bowring, No.60, 21 Feb 1856; vol 246, Bowring to For Off, No.142, 29 Apr 1856.

(25) F.O. China Corres, vol 256, Bowring to Col Off, Commercial No.19, 1 Feb 1856 in Col Off to For Off, 18 Apr 1856; vol.246, Bowring to For Off, No.135, 21 Apr 1856; vol 250, same to same, No.308, 29 Sept 1856.

disputed points for reference to their respective governments; the first, whether the opening of the ports necessarily included the right of landing, as Stirling maintained; the second, whether the Dutch and Chinese privileges excepted from the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause should be limited to those existing when the convention was signed. The Foreign Office upheld Stirling on both points. It asked the Admiralty to instruct him that he should 'courteously acquaint' the Japanese of this fact were he to visit Japan again before Bowring. However, the bugyoo had promised to obtain decisions from Edo on these matters, and there was some prospect that they would be favourable, or alternatively that as contacts increased, Japanese hostility would abate and cause such difficulties to disappear. Clarendon therefore concluded that for the time 'it would be well to avoid any practical misunderstanding with the Japanese authorities.' (26)

Two weeks later the Board of Trade forwarded its opinion on the exposition. Basically, the Board's ideas were the same as those it had expressed in the previous year, but it saw some new difficulties over Dutch and Chinese privileges. The exposition seemed to cloud rather than clarify this issue. ~~THE~~ While its intention was clear enough, the actual wording was self-contradictory and might be taken to mean that the ports of Hakodate and Nagasaki were themselves excluded from the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause. The Board suggested that the best course would be to undertake fresh negotiations to remove the obscurity. (27)

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 (26) Foreign Office, General Correspondence, Japan (F.O.46; hereafter cited as F.O. Japan Corres), vol 1, For Off to Adty, 21 Jan 1856.

(27) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Bd Trade to For Off, 4 Feb 1856.

On 4 February the Board of Trade's letter was sent to the Admiralty for Stirling's information. Since it appeared to contradict the Foreign Office instructions of the previous month, and was not accompanied by any Foreign Office comment, the Admiralty asked whether it was intended that Stirling be ordered to open the fresh negotiations which the Board of Trade proposed. (28) This was far from being Clarendon's intention. He had earlier described Stirling's handling of the most-favoured-nation clause as 'a bungle' and was determined that Bowring should make the next visit to Japan. For this reason he had been careful to amend his earlier letter to the Admiralty so as to avoid giving the impression that any special action was required from Stirling. (29) He ~~XX~~ now put a definite end to Stirling's unauthorised career as a diplomat. On receipt of the Admiralty letter the Treaty Department at the Foreign Office observed that the admiral could do little good and might do some harm by going specially to discuss the points at issue. Since the convention was in any case only 'the thin end of the wedge', it recommended that negotiations be left until Bowring could revise the agreement more thoroughly. At Clarendon's direction, a reply was sent to the Admiralty in these terms. (30)

Copies of this correspondence were sent to Bowring, (31)

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- (28) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, For Off to Adty, 6 Feb 1856;
Adty to For Off, 7 Feb 1856.
- (29) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Clarendon notes and alterations on draft, For Off to Adty, 21 Jan 1856.
- (30) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, F.O. minutes on Adty to For Off, 7 Feb 1856; For Off to Adty, 9 Feb 1856.
- (31) F.O. China Corres, vol 242, For Off to Bowring, No. 37, 23 Jan 1856; No. 41, 31 Jan 1856; No. 46, 6 Feb 1856; No. 50, 9 Feb 1856.

but although it seemed clear that he was expected to act on the opinions expressed, he was not directly ordered to do so. Bowring himself was convinced that the exposition, like the original convention, had made his task all the harder. In this view he was confirmed by the Board of Trade's arguments. His experience was, he said, that oriental nations excelled in 'verbal controversies' such as would arise over the exact meaning of the convention and its exposition. The Foreign Office had claimed that the sense of the convention precluded the Japanese from imposing such port regulations as they had introduced at Nagasaki, but Bowring failed to see the force of this reasoning. No 'vague generality' could supersede 'a specific condition'. Even Stirling had never claimed that this treaty permitted trade. The Superintendent rejected with scorn any idea that other nations be left 'to open the doors through which we may hereafter enter', because Britain's dignity would not permit her to wait for such privileges as were likely to be arranged by 'inferior maritime powers'.⁽³²⁾ The fact was that he had already evolved a different plan of his own.

Bowring's new plan was one which would enable him to play a distinguished role. There had been suggestions for some time past that treaty revision in China should be undertaken jointly by the Treaty Powers, and late in 1855 he began to link this idea with that of negotiations in Japan, hoping that success in China would make the Japanese

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 (32) F.O.China Corres, vol 246, Bowring to For Off, No.110,
 5 Apr 1856.

more amenable to changes.⁽³³⁾ By February 1856 his ideas were taking definite shape. He reported that there seemed no prospect of Stirling providing naval support for a visit to Japan without direct orders from the Admiralty, and suggested that until such orders should arrive he might usefully spend some time in sounding the French and American representatives on their views and intentions towards Japan. He felt that a combined fleet sent there could effect far more than either Perry or Stirling had done. The French ~~xxxx~~ were not embarrassed by any earlier agreement, and it would be possible to concentrate on getting suitable terms for them, which both Britain and the United States could share under their respective most-favoured-nation clauses.⁽³⁴⁾ In March he put forward the proposal that a joint Anglo-French squadron be sent to Edo. If the fleet received orders that 'naval arrangements should be made subservient and subordinate to diplomatic action', he said, then it should be possible by 'a proper union of firmness and amenity' to overcome Japanese objections to a commercial treaty.⁽³⁵⁾

The initial arrangements for such an expedition would obviously have to be made in Paris and London, not in China. Bowring therefore decided that he would take no further steps about the Japan negotiations until he received a reply from the Foreign Office about his latest suggestion. This fact was not made clear in his letters to Clarendon. In April 1856

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 (33) F.O.China Corres, vol 235, Bowring to For Off, No.382,
 4 Dec 1855.

(34) F.O.China Corres, vol 245, Bowring to For Off, No.46,
 2 Feb 1856; same to same, Confidential, 6 Feb 1856.

(35) F.O.China Corres, vol 245, Bowring to For Off, No.81,
 12 Mar 1856.

he again urged the need for naval support and his desire to co-operate with the French, in a dispatch which implied, but did not actually state, that he was still awaiting instructions despite the arrival of the correspondence about the London discussions of the exposition.⁽³⁶⁾ Another letter of 26 July conveyed the same impression.⁽³⁷⁾

To Rear Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Stirling's successor as Commander-in-chief, Bowring was more explicit. He said that while he still hoped and expected to go to Japan, he would make no move without a considerable force and orders from home authorising him to use it in the way he proposed.⁽³⁸⁾ In August, Seymour left with his squadron to visit Japan and other lands in the north, expecting to return late in September. Since the northerly monsoon would begin again in October and there were still no instructions for his proposed Anglo-French expedition to the Peiho and Japan, Bowring saw in this the end of his hopes of putting the plan into execution during 1856. He began to look to the spring of 1857 as the next suitable opportunity.⁽³⁹⁾

In September there was encouraging news from Townshend Harris, American consul in Japan. Harris reported that the Japanese confessed 'great anxiety' about future British movements, now that the end of the Crimean War left both Britain

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 (36) F.O.China Corres, vol 246, Bowring to For Off, No.110, 5 Apr 1856 and No.135, 21 Apr 1856.

(37) F.O.China Corres, vol 249, Bowring to For Off, No.230, 26 July 1856.

(38) F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 210, Bowring to Seymour, No.118, 3 June and No.150, 7 July 1856.

(39) F.O.China Corres, vol 249, Bowring to For Off, No.236, 6 Aug 1856.

F.O.China Emb Arch, vol 210, Bowring to U.S.Commissioner, 11 Aug 1856.

and Russia free to pursue their ambitions in northeast Asia. In forwarding this information to Clarendon, Bowring expressed the hope that he would be authorised to go to Japan 'when the season is favourable' with a proper fleet and in co-operation with representatives of other nations.⁽⁴⁰⁾ It was the first time since February that he had asked openly for instructions.

It seems that during these months the Foreign Office was, with some justice, expecting Bowring to take action on the instructions he had already received. Certainly it showed no inclination to send new ones. The only point in his dispatches which was thought in London to need further action was that of naval strength. During 1855 he had often warned Clarendon that the Russians were steadily building up a position in northeast Asia which might soon enable them to dominate Japan, Korea and North China.⁽⁴¹⁾ In February 1856, with this in mind, the Foreign Office asked the Admiralty for information on the existing naval strength in Chinese waters and the extent to which it would be possible to reinforce it.⁽⁴²⁾ The reply was unhelpful. The Admiralty observed that reinforcement must depend in the last resort on whether the war with Russia was to continue,⁽⁴³⁾ and the matter was allowed to drop until April. By that time the crisis in British relations with the United States was making a new war seem possible, even probable, and

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 (40) F.O.China Corres, vol 250, Bowring to For Off, No.297, 25 Sept 1856.

(41) F.O.China Corres, vol 228, Bowring to For Off, No.99, 23 Feb 1855; vol 230, same to same, No.190, 26 May 1855; vol 235, same to same, No.379, 27 Nov 1855.

(42) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, For Off to Adty, 22 Feb 1856.

(43) F.O.China Corres, vol 255, Adty to For Off, 23 Feb 1856.

the Admiralty was instructed that the China squadron must be strengthened on that account under the guise of taking steps to suppress piracy on the China coast. The force so collected, according to Clarendon, would be none the less useful if war should not occur, for it could be used to support the negotiations with China and Japan. (44)

As a result of this correspondence more ships were sent out to China. In view of their real purpose, however, no immediate instructions were sent to put them at Bowring's disposal. Ships in themselves were no satisfaction to the plenipotentiary. He wanted authority to determine their use, and without it he continued to complain. In September, in reply to one of his complaints, the Admiralty somewhat acidly pointed out that Seymour already had twelve ships, that ten more were being sent; and as the American squadron contained only two and the French had none at all in China, it failed to see in what respect the force was inadequate to the duties required of it. (45)

Bowring's difficulty had, in fact, been disposed of in July, when instructions were sent to Seymour to support the negotiations in the north. (46) However, he did not receive them until the beginning of October. By that time it was too late to organise the expedition before the monsoon changed, and Bowring decided to postpone the attempt until May 1857. He thought the delay might enable him to arrange

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(44) F.O.China Corres, vol 256, For Off to Adty, Secret,
9 Apr 1856.

(45) F.O.China Corres, vol 258, Adty to For Off, 10 Sept 1856.

(46) F.O.China Corres, vol 257, For Off to Adty, 22 July 1856;
Adty to For Off, 24 July 1856.

effective French and American co-operation, and would give Seymour time to collect the necessary force 'for giving to the expedition such a character as would most likely secure us against disappointment or defeat'. (47)

While Bowring spent the summer and early autumn of 1856 waiting for instructions and collecting such information as he could about the activities of Dutch and Americans in Japan, the Royal Navy again intervened actively in Anglo-Japanese relations. In 1855 Stirling had agreed to send a ship to Nagasaki sixty days after the signing of the exposition to fetch the replies of the Japanese government on the points left unsolved by himself and the bugyoo. The Foreign Office, although anxious to prevent any further naval diplomacy, had agreed that these letters must be obtained. It had also ordered Stirling that he was at the same time to secure copies of any new port regulations which might have been introduced as a result of his actions. (48) Stirling did nothing to follow out these instructions before he was recalled. It was not until 3 September 1856 that his successor, Seymour, arrived at Nagasaki to do so. He was accompanied by no more than three ships, but quickly found an opportunity to show himself something more than a mere carrier of messages.

Seymour's first move was to insist on the right to enter the inner harbour which Stirling had already claimed the year before. Immediately on arrival he announced his intention of entering with the squadron and gave the Japanese one hour in which to remove the line of war-junks blocking

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(47) F.O.China Corres, vol 251, Bowring to For Off, No.317, 3 Oct 1856, encl correspondence with Seymour.

(48) F.O.Japan Corres, vol 1, For Off to Adty, 21 Jan 1856.

the entrance. There is some doubt whether they did so, (49) but the ships certainly entered at the end of that period without provoking armed opposition.

At a meeting with the bugyoo two days later, Seymour obtained a copy of the Russian treaty with Japan and officially announced the end of Britain's war with Russia, but the discussion chiefly concerned the question of port facilities. A depot had been built at Nagasaki for British seamen to use as a recreation space, and also as a place at which supplies might be purchased and stored. This was an improvement, of course, on the arrangements for previous visits, but Seymour complained vigorously because the depot was surrounded by a stockade, refusing to believe that such protection against the Japanese people could be necessary. He went on to request the same facilities for landing at Nagasaki as were already enjoyed at Hakodate. To this he received the usual reply, that what happened at Hakodate was no concern of the Nagasaki bugyoo. Seymour's request became a demand. The bugyoo, fearing he would resort to force, offered to permit him the necessary privilege on this occasion and refer to Edo for authority to do so in future, at which the admiral declared that he considered permission had now been given and that it was irrevocable. (50) There the matter

(49) Tronson (Voyage to Japan, pp.397-9) describes the forcing of an entry, but Seymour's report (F.O.Japan Corres., vol 1, Seymour to Adty, 22 Sept 1856 in Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856) makes no reference to such an incident - perhaps deliberately so. The Japanese records are of no assistance on this point.

(50) F.O.Japan Corres., vol 1, Seymour to Adty, No.66, 22 Sept 1856 in Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kenkei Monzyo, XIV, 663-76, Japanese minutes of conference, 5 Sept 1856; XIV, 692-5, Nagasaki bugyoo and metuke to Roozyuu, 7 Sept 1856.

was left, though the point was scarcely settled.

The chief difficulties, however, arose over the replies to Stirling's questions of the previous year. When these were referred to Edo in November 1855, there had been little difficulty in agreeing to hand over a copy of the Russian treaty, for that could not be indefinitely delayed.⁽⁵¹⁾ But neither Roozyuu nor subordinate officials showed any inclination to give way on the other points. The kaiboo-kakari bugyoo could see no alternative but to allow British visitors to land at Nagasaki. They gave most of their attention to the problem of how that could be arranged so as to prevent contact with the local inhabitants - the depot to which Seymour objected was the result of their considerations - but they also declared their opposition to Stirling's claim that British warships were entitled to enter any port and need carry no identification papers.⁽⁵²⁾ The Roozyuu agreed in this. They also debated the question of the most-favoured-nation clause, and decided that only two courses were acceptable. They must either omit all reference to the date and thus make the exception of Dutch and Chinese privileges hold good for future as well as existing ones, or they must delete mention of the Dutch and Chinese altogether, as had been done in the Russian and American treaties. Any other decision, they said, would involve Japan in constant disputes.⁽⁵³⁾

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 (51) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIII, 20-2, Kaiboo-kakari to Roozyuu, 4 Nov 1855; XIII, 68-70, Roozyuu to Nagasaki bugyoo and metuke, 20 Nov 1855.

(52) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIII, 18-20, Kaiboo-kakari kenzyoo-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 4 Nov 1855; XIII, 30-1, same to same, 7 Nov 1855.

(53) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XII, 474-5, Roozyuu notes on Japanese copy of Exposition of Oct 1855; XIII, 71-2, Roozyuu to Nagasaki bugyoo, 20 Nov 1855.

On 5 September 1856, in accordance with the instructions he had received, the Nagasaki bugyoo handed Seymour two notes addressed to Stirling, denying the validity of the British interpretation of the treaty on two major questions, ~~the~~ the rights of warships and the Dutch and Chinese privileges. (54) Next day Seymour replied, in wording which followed closely the Foreign Office instructions of January, that the British government upheld Stirling's views on both points. (55)

At the bugyoo's request, a conference was arranged to discuss the disagreement. This took place on 10 September and achieved nothing. The bugyoo, despite the answer he had received from Seymour, still insisted that his notes of 5 September must be sent to England, and spent most of the meeting trying to persuade the admiral not to exercise his new-found right of landing until there had been time to refer to Edo. This request Seymour consistently refused, though he did agree to instruct British ships not to enter the inner harbour without first identifying themselves to the appropriate officials. (56)

Since the discussions showed Seymour to be adamant,

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- (54) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 676-8, Nagasaki bugyoo to Stirling, undated (2 letters).
F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856, encl. English translation of these notes.
- (55) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856, encl. Seymour to Nagasaki bugyoo, 6 Sept 1856 (2 notes).
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 680-5, translations of Seymour's notes of 6 Sept 1856.
- (56) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Seymour's report in Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 704-14, Japanese minutes of conference, 10 Sept 1856; XIV, 722-4, Seymour to Nagasaki bugyoo, 12 Sept 1856.

the bugyoo bowed to the inevitable and drafted a set of regulations which he hoped would keep the privilege of landing within reasonable bounds. He restricted it to the territory directly administered by the Bakuhu - that is, not forming part of neighbouring fiefs - and to parties of officers. They were to be accompanied at all times by guides and were not to separate, enter private houses or purchase goods. All this Seymour was prepared to accept for the time being. He indicated, however, that he would expect these restrictions, in their turn, to be lifted by the following year. (57)

Seymour had also requested a copy of any new port regulations. When they arrived, he found that they incorporated a reference to the new depot to be used ashore but were otherwise little changed in spirit from those of 1854. He only accepted them, as he told the bugyoo, because the prohibition of landing was followed by a note to the effect that its revision was being undertaken. (58)

Seymour, with fewer ships but an equally threatening manner, had succeeded in improving slightly on Stirling's work at Nagasaki. His own feeling was that although the

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(57) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856, encl. Seymour to bugyoo, 13 Sept 1856 and translation of landing regulations.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 724-5, Nagasaki bugyoo to Seymour, 12 Sept 1856; XIV, 739-42, translation, Seymour to bugyoo, 13 Sept 1856.

(58) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856, encl. Nagasaki port regulations and Seymour to bugyoo [13 Sept 1856] referring to them.

Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 726-7, revised Nagasaki port regulations; XIV, 743-5, translation Seymour to Nagasaki bugyoo, 13 Sept 1856.

officials were obviously afraid of making any concessions which would arouse 'the jealous suspicion of their Government', the atmosphere was gradually becoming more friendly and the prejudices against Europeans might in time be expected to disappear. (59) The Foreign Office approved his 'great ability and tact'. (60) Bowring was convinced that his methods not only secured 'becoming respect and attention', but would also make smoother future relations with Japan. (61)

In this view Bowring was confirmed by the news of H.M.S. Nankin's experiences at Nagasaki in October 1856. Her captain reported to Seymour that when forced to put in there by contrary winds, his men had been allowed to land and his boats to pull about the harbour without supervision, an improvement which he attributed entirely to the admiral's 'decisive measures' of the previous month. It was obvious, he said, that the bugyoo entertained 'a very wholesome respect' for Seymour. He did not seem at all anxious to renew his acquaintance, however, saying the Japanese 'were afraid the English ships would knock the town down'. (62) The reply to this statement was not calculated to ease the bugyoo's mind. Captain Stewart assured him that there was no danger of such an untoward event so long as the British were well treated!

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 (59) F.O. Japan Corres, vol 1, Seymour to Adty, No.66, in Adty to For Off, 1 Dec 1856.

(60) F.O. China Corres, vol 259, For Off to Adty, 4 Dec 1856.

(61) F.O. China Corres, vol 269, Bowring to For Off, No.265, 26 May 1857.

(62) F.O. China Corres, vol 251, Capt Stewart to Seymour, 25 Oct 1856 in Bowring to For Off, No.351, 30 Oct 1856; vol 279, For Off to Adty, 3 Jan 1857 conveyed F.O. satisfaction at this evidence of Seymour's success.

A question on which Seymour obtained no satisfaction, and on which his instructions did not permit him to negotiate, was that of the Dutch and Chinese privileges. After September 1856, however, this ceased to be of major importance to the Foreign Office. Whether or not Stirling's most-favoured-nation clause was admitted to apply^y to the Dutch, there could be no doubt that it applied fully to any treaties made with Japan by other western nations. This even the Japanese recognised. The American convention of 1854 had contained no commercial provisions, or at least none which it was worth while claiming. But the Russian treaty of February 1855, a copy of which Seymour had just obtained, provided a much more satisfactory basis for trade. It entitled the Russians to pay for the supplies they required either in cash or by exchanging goods of their own, and the accompanying explanatory articles not only gave them much personal freedom in the ports of Simoda and Hakodate, but also laid it down that arrangements for supplies and exchange could be made directly with the Japanese merchants, payment alone being effected through the officials.⁽⁶³⁾ The treaty gave no specific permission to trade, but its advantages over previous agreements were obvious. Bowring reported on them at length, and the Foreign Office was quick to see that at Simoda and Hakodate, at least, Britain could claim equal privileges.⁽⁶⁴⁾

One result of the Russian treaty was that Bowring received fresh instructions, something for which he had long

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(63) For the text of the Russian treaty and explanatory articles, see Gubbins, Progress of Japan, pp. 235-9.

(64) F.O. China Corres., vol 250, Bowring to For Off, No. 305, 27 Sept 1856 and F.O. minutes thereon.

been waiting. In December 1856 he was told that although the position with respect to Nagasaki remained obscure, Britain could certainly claim equality with the Russians at Hakodate and Simoda. He was therefore to go to Japan in an attempt to get terms at least as good as those granted to Russia. This duty he readily undertook to perform.⁽⁶⁵⁾ He could not, of course, go until the end of the northerly monsoon and would not go without a considerable naval escort, but as the monsoon changed in March and Seymour had authority to provide the escort, it seemed that the expedition to Japan was at last last to take place. Once again, however, external factors interfered with the plans. Bowring had missed his best opportunity in 1856, when he failed to take advantage of the period of comparative quiet which followed the end of the Crimean War. In June 1857, before he was able to carry out his new instructions, he learned that it had been decided to entrust the Japan mission to other hands.

The change was brought about by the outbreak of a fresh war with China. Ever since the Treaty of Nanking, Anglo-Chinese relations had been strained. The British believed that the treaty settlement must be enforced to the full and improved if possible; the Chinese that the treaties already made too many concessions and that complete exploitation of their terms must be prevented. In October 1856 the crew of the Arrow, a Chinese-owned lorcha under Hongkong registry, were arrested on a charge of piracy by the Chinese at Canton, and the circumstances surrounding the arrest led to a local dispute over treaty rights. Bowring had already

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 (65) F.O.China Corres, vol 243, For Off to Bowring, No.235,
 9 Dec 1856; vol 264, Bowring to For Off, No.61,
 4 Feb 1857.

been cautioned by Clarendon not to use force in such disputes. Apparently he decided that this was a temporary rule, occasioned by the need to concentrate on the war with Russia, and no longer held good now that the war had ended. He and Parkes, the consul at Canton, consequently refused to accept the Chinese offer to return the arrested men. They insisted that Britain receive a full public apology, and when this was not forthcoming, brought the fleet up the river to capture the forts and bombard official residences in the city as a means of exerting pressure. To their surprise the Chinese chose to resist, and the result was open war.

The news caused a political crisis in England. The Foreign Office had no advance warning of Bowring's intentions, but Palmerston and Clarendon agreed that they had no option but to support his actions and seize the opportunity of negotiating a new settlement with China. Russell, Gladstone, Disraeli and Cobden, a formidable if unusual alliance, thought differently. They violently attacked the honesty, legality and political wisdom of Bowring's actions, and early in 1857 succeeded in defeating the government in the House of Commons on the question of approving them. Palmerston promptly dissolved Parliament and won a general election on the issue of peace or war in China. (66)

This success meant that the war was to continue. But in view of the attacks on his conduct and the undoubted rashness of his action in precipitating hostilities, Bowring was clearly not the man to direct either the operations themselves or the negotiations to which it was hoped they

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 (66) For a detailed account of the charges and debates see Costin, Great Britain and China, pp.219-30.

would lead. He had originally been instructed to open negotiations for treaty revision with China in addition to going to Japan. In March 1857 he was informed that the Cabinet had decided to send out a special envoy, and that his plenipotentiary powers for China would therefore lapse for the period of the war.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Towards the end of the month Clarendon announced the appointment of Lord Elgin, a Palmerston supporter of some political independence who had an excellent record in Jamaica and Canada.⁽⁶⁸⁾

In these first exchanges there had been no suggestion that Elgin was also to be responsible for negotiations with Japan. Bowring, who in February had reported that he continued to receive news favourable to British prospects there and that he would go 'when Chinese questions are arranged', remained optimistic despite Elgin's appointment. He still hoped to be allowed to conduct the mission.⁽⁶⁹⁾ However, there seemed no good reason why the two series of negotiations should be conducted by different men, and Bowring was not popular at home. In April he was informed that the Foreign Office had decided to send Elgin to Japan as well as to China, a decision to which he bowed with reluctance.⁽⁷⁰⁾

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 (67) F.O.China Corres, vol 261, For Off to Bowring, No.72, 10 Mar 1857.

(68) F.O.China Corres, vol 261, For Off to Bowring, No.88 25 Mar 1857.

Morrison, The Eighth Earl of Elgin, pp.192-4.

(69) F.O.China Corres, vol 264, Bowring to For Off, No.57, 3 Feb 1857; vol 268, same to same, No.216, 4 May 1857.

(70) F.O.China Corres, vol 261, For Off to Bowring, No.105, 21 Apr 1857; vol 295, Bowring to For Off, No.295, 11 June 1857.

Some months later the Superintendent wrote a postscript on his own accomplishments in the matter of the Japan expedition. Confessing himself 'grieved and disappointed' at being deprived of the opportunity of accomplishing an important task, he reported that Townshend Harris, U.S. consul at Simoda, had been authorised to conclude a commercial treaty with Japan. Since the time when he had himself been given such powers, he wrote, he had continued, through Harris and other correspondents, 'to gather such intelligence and to convey such information to the Japanese as was likely to prepare the way for ... success'.⁽⁷¹⁾ It was a small enough achievement for over three years' work.

Elgin's instructions for the Japan negotiations were neither pugnacious nor very detailed. The Foreign Office ignored the more extravagant suggestions made by private correspondents - one urged that the time was ripe for forcing the abolition of polygamy in China and Japan⁽⁷²⁾ - and showed no signs of 'trying its hand with Japan', the interpretation put on recent events by one of the government's opponents in the House of Lords.⁽⁷³⁾ Elgin was provided with copies of the American, Dutch and Russian treaties and of the papers relating to Stirling's negotiations. He was instructed to co-operate closely with the French plenipotentiary, a plan originated as a result of Bowring's suggestions in the previous year.⁽⁷⁴⁾

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 (71) F.O.China Corres, vol 272, Bowring to For Off, No.383, 21 Sept 1857.

(72) F.O.China Corres, vol 259, James Stewart to Clarendon, 6 Dec 1856.

(73) Hansard, 3rd Ser, vol CXLIV, cols 2429-30, Lords, 19 Mar 1857.

(74) F.O.China Corres, vol 250, Clarendon minute of 5 Dec on Bowring to For Off, No.297, 25 Sept 1856.

The only specific points brought to his attention were the need to make the English version the master text of his treaty, as he was also to do in China, and to ensure that any provision for extraterritoriality was clear, easily enforceable and did not give the same privileges to Japanese subjects in Britain as it was desired to obtain for British subjects in Japan.

His object was to be to establish commercial relations with Japan upon terms 'at least as favourable' as those he had been instructed to obtain in China. To that end he was to regard the proposed treaty with China, which had already been fully discussed, as the model on which to base his subsequent negotiations in Japan. In one respect, however, the two negotiations would differ markedly. The treaty with Japan was not to be obtained by the use of force, as the final paragraph of his instructions strongly emphasised -

'I have only to add that Your Excellency will understand that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to impose a new Treaty on Japan by forcible means. We wish to conciliate the goodwill of the Government and people of Japan; but we have no cause of quarrel with them to justify our having recourse to coercive measures on any account, and least of all in order to compel them to conclude a Treaty the provisions of which might be repugnant to their wishes or interests'. (75)

This prohibition of the use of force was repeated in the dispatch which ordered Seymour to provide Elgin with a suitable

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~~Bank Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp. 18-9, For Off~~
~~to Elgin, No. 16, 20 Apr 1857.~~

(75) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp. 18-9, For Off to Elgin, No. 16, 20 Apr 1857.

escort.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Although H.M.S. Furious was sent out with fourteen gunboats to reinforce the China squadron,⁽⁷⁷⁾ this was for the prosecution of the war with China, not to overawe the Japanese negotiators.

After April 1857 the Foreign Office continued to send Elgin frequent reports from Europe and America about the activities of other western diplomats in Japan, but by February 1858, the end of his period in office, Clarendon had made no major addition or alteration to the instructions for the proposed treaty. In October 1857 both Dutch and Russians succeeded in obtaining supplementary treaties which gave them new privileges at Nagasaki and Hakodate, and in particular increased rights of trade under somewhat less rigid control by the officials.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Elgin had already been directed to include in his own treaty all the provisions of the earlier Russian agreement⁽⁷⁹⁾ and no new instructions seemed necessary. When he reported the new terms obtained by Russia both Foreign Office and Board of Trade agreed that they were a great improvement on all previous concessions, but held to their original idea that a new British treaty incorporating these terms would be more satisfactory than any attempt to

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 (76) F.O. China Corres., vol 280, For Off to Adty, 21 Apr 1857.
 Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1613, Adty to Seymour, No.166,
 24 Apr 1857.

(77) Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1613, Adty to Seymour, No.173,
 29 Apr 1857.

(78) Gubbins, Progress of Japan, pp.255-65, Additional articles
 to Dutch treaty, 16 Oct 1857; pp.239-45, Russian
 supplementary treaty, 24 Oct 1857.

(79) F.O. China Corres., vol 274, For Off to Elgin, No.46,
 19 June 1857.

claim them under the most-favoured-nation clause of Stirling's convention. (80)

At about the same time Bowring's dispatch reporting his correspondence with Townshend Harris arrived in London. It led Clarendon to raise the question of sending a British consul to Japan. The permanent under-secretary opposed such a move on the grounds that there were no British interests immediately in need of protection. Moreover the presence of a consul might hamper Elgin, and Elgin's arrival with plenipotentiary powers would certainly lower the consul's prestige. Nothing was done, therefore, except to refer to Elgin for his opinion. (81)

Elgin arrived in Hongkong in 1857 in time to conduct the summer campaign, but the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny in India robbed him of many troops and some ships. After ~~writing~~ visiting India to investigate the situation at first hand, he decided to postpone full-scale operations in China until the 1858 season. Since negotiations with Japan were to follow those in China, his visit to Japan, too, was necessarily postponed.

In Britain the Palmerston government fell early in 1858 and Malmesbury succeeded Clarendon as Foreign Secretary. He took the unusual step of preparing a circular to announce to British diplomats and the governments to which they were accredited the principles on which his foreign policy was to be conducted. This document emphasised the peaceful intentions of Great Britain and denied that she had any wish for territorial expansion or exclusive privileges in any part of the world.

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(80) F.O.China Corres, vol 276, F.O.minutes on Elgin to For Off, No.63, confidential, 19 Nov 1857; vol 303, Bd Trade to For Off, 3 Feb 1858.

(81) F.O.China Corres, vol 272, Clarendon and Hammond minutes of Nov 1857 on Bowring to For Off, No.383, 21 Sept 1857; vol 274, For Off to Elgin, No.110, 7 Dec 1857.

It implied strong criticism of the policies of aggression and of interference in the domestic politics of foreign countries which had so often been attributed to Palmerston by his opponents. It might have been taken as heralding a reversal of British policy towards China and Japan. In fact no change resulted, presumably because, as the circular also stated, the government was 'convinced that no surer guarantee for peace is to be found than in the maintenance and extension of commercial and social intercourse between nations'.⁽⁸²⁾ That Malmesbury was anxious to end the war in China was beyond doubt,⁽⁸³⁾ but it seemed that in China, at least, peace and the extension of commerce were temporarily incompatible objectives.

The change in government brought no change in Elgin's instructions for China and Japan. Indeed, it was difficult to see what changes Malmesbury could make. The war with China was a fact he could not alter, and the instructions about Japan were already as peaceable as he could wish. Moreover, he had fallen heir to a very complex problem, and it was some time before he could see his way clearly in it. In April 1858 he confessed to Elgin that he was faced with such 'a mass of correspondence' that it was quite impossible to appreciate the situation properly. He asked him to send home a summary of events and a statement of his own opinions and intentions in order that the Foreign Office could draw up fresh instructions if they seemed necessary.⁽⁸⁴⁾ As if in answer to this, a dispatch arrived from Elgin three days later announcing that

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 (82) F.O. China Emb Arch, vol 250, F.O. circular of 8 Mar 1858.

(83) See, for example, his premature attempt to recall part of the China squadron. (Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1615, Adty to Seymour, No.256, 19 May 1858; No.257, 20 May 1858; No.265, 24 May 1858).

(84) F.O. China Corres, vol 284, For Off to Elgin, No.3, 9 Apr 1858.

he was about to go to Shanghai to open negotiations, and thence to Peking or Japan.⁽⁸⁵⁾ In fact the negotiations were transferred to the Peiho, and it was not until he had signed the Treaty of Tientsin in JMXX July 1858 that Elgin found it possible to visit Japan.

Since 1854, while British policy towards Japan had been slowly taking shape, the attitude of the Japanese towards foreign relations had undergone a gradual change. This change was due in no small measure to British activities in China. It played a vital part in determining the character and results of Elgin's negotiations in 1858, and before proceeding with an account of the Elgin mission, therefore, it is necessary to give some consideration to the development of Japanese policy in this period. In particular, we must consider Japanese reactions to news of British plans.

In and after 1854 the principal influences on Bakuhu policy were the Roozyuu; the Gosanke⁽⁸⁶⁾ and other close family connections of the Syoogun; the great outside feudatories or tozama daimyoo; and the lords of the tamari-no-mazume, leaders of the hudai daimyoo. The Gosanke, led by Nariaki of Mito, together with such related lords as Matudaira Etizen-no-kami, Matudaira Awa-no-kami (son of a previous syoogun) and Matudaira Sagami-no-kami (son of Nariaki), were the leaders of the seclusion party and fierce opponents of every attempt to relax

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 (85) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.231-2, Elgin to For Off, No.51, 27 Feb 1858. Recd F.O. 12 Apr 1858.

(86) The three senior Tokugawa branch houses of Mito, Owari and Kii, from which the Syoogun's heir was chosen if the direct line failed.

the laws governing treatment of foreigners. The tozama lords were traditional rivals of the Tokugawa. Some of them, like Simazu and Nabesima, were moderates in foreign affairs; others like Moori, Hosogawa and Yamanouti seemed ready to resort even to force to prevent the opening of the ports. The tamari-no-mazume, on the other hand, was dominated by Ii Naosuke and Hotta Bittyu-no-kami, both advocates of a so-called liberal foreign policy, which meant in practice that they advocated an extension of foreign intercourse not as being desirable in itself, but as being the only safe and sensible course in face of Western military superiority. This group was represented in the Roozyuu by Matudaira Iga-no-kami and Matudaira Izumi-no-kami. As kaiboo-kakari these two were the officials most closely concerned with the conduct of foreign affairs, and Iga, at least, was a man of strong will and forceful character. ~~XXXX~~ Abe Ise-no-kami and Makino Bizen-no-kami were the senior members of the Roozyuu. Both saw the urgent necessity of finding some formula that would prevent foreign war, but they were equally convinced that no policy could long succeed if it did not have the support of Nariaki, with whom, therefore, they did their utmost to co-operate. The other two members of the Council were nonentities. (87)

The split within the ranks of its supporters over foreign relations, the differences between the Gosanke and the hudai of the tamari-no-mazume, certainly constituted a notable danger to the Bakuhu's political position in Japan. The full support of both would be required if the Tokugawa were successfully to resist the new challenge to their power represented

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 (87) Akimoto, Ii Naosuke, pp.125-7.
 Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.258-61.

by a growing movement to restore to the Emperor his ancient rights as active head of the State. Abe recognised the danger, though not, perhaps, its precise form. It was in an attempt to close the ranks that after Perry's visit in 1853 he brought Nariaki back into active politics as an adviser to the Roozyuu, especially on problems of defence. But Iga and Izumi consistently opposed Nariaki's recommendations, and the breach if anything widened.

Nariaki's power and influence grew steadily, and by the autumn of 1855 he was able to force the dismissal of both Iga and Izumi from the Roozyuu. His success was shortlived, however. If it was impossible for Abe to run directly counter to Nariaki's views, it was equally dangerous to alienate the leaders of the hudai. The latter began at once to press for the appointment of Hotta to replace Iga and Izumi, a move which would make their representation stronger even than before. Within a few weeks they had gained their end. Within a year, Hotta had replaced Abe as acknowledged head of the Roozyuu.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Up to the time of Hotta's appointment and for some months thereafter, Bakuhu foreign policy remained essentially unchanged. Although Imperial approval of the early treaties was given in 1855, they continued to be the object of widespread criticism. This criticism forced the Bakuhu into expensive defence measures in preparation for the expected trial of strength with the Western Powers, the financing of which presented ever-increasing difficulties. Further concessions, it seemed, might well lead to a domestic crisis. Thus Stirling

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 (88) Akimoto, Ii Naosuke, pp.135-9.
 Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.262-5.
 Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 738-40.

at Nagasaki in 1855 and Seymour in 1856 met with stubborn opposition when they tried to obtain them.. The methods they chose to employ to overcome that opposition not only gained them small advantage, but also tended to confirm Japanese suspicions of British policy. But while Seymour was still at Nagasaki in September 1856, the Roozyuu was giving much thought to new reports of British intentions respecting Japan and the possible ways of countering them. These were deliberations which led in time to a new phase in Japanese policy.

In August 1856 a Dutch ship arrived at Nagasaki with the news that Bowring planned to visit Japan within a few weeks, accompanied by a large fleet, for the purpose of demanding a commercial treaty. Donker Curtius took the opportunity of urging that only a treaty with the Dutch, laying down terms on which trade could be conducted by all foreigners, could possibly avert the obvious danger of attack and minimise the concessions Japan would be forced to make. The Nagasaki bugyoo, confessing that he could see no feasible alternative to this plan, promptly appealed to Edo for support and instructions.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The first action of the Roozyuu, on the advice of the bugyoo responsible for defence, was to ensure that the Nagasaki officials would do nothing on their own initiative. They were accordingly instructed to refer any such British request to Edo, though without permitting the mission itself to go there.⁽⁹⁰⁾

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 (89) Japan, Foreign Office, Niti-ei gaikoo-si, I, 42-4.
Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 421-4, Bugyoo in
 Nagasaki to Kanzyoo-bugyoo and Nagasaki bugyoo in Edo,
 10 Aug 1856; XIV, 445-9, same to same, 21 Aug 1856.

(90) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 544-8, Kaiboo-
 kakari kanzyoo-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 28 Aug 1856;
 XIV, 687-8, Roozyuu to Nagasaki bugyoo and metuke,
 c. 6 Sept 1856. These orders could not have arrived
 in Nagasaki in time to affect Seymour's discussions.

At the same time, the Roozyuu called for the advice of the officials most closely concerned with foreign affairs, in a letter which indicated a growing feeling that trade, however unwelcome, had become inevitable, and might be put to good use in strengthening the finances - and through them the defences - of the country.⁽⁹¹⁾ This was the policy of Hotta. However, the replies to this and a later request revealed considerable differences of opinion among the officials. Most of them, since they were much more aware of Japan's weakness than the generality of the daimyoo, recognised the need for concessions and recommended trade in such goods as camphor and lacquerware. The metuke and oometuke were unwilling to countenance even this. The Nagasaki metuke, in contrast, wanted a public announcement that trade would be permitted, followed by discussions to decide the conditions under which it should be carried on. Some were even optimistic enough to hope that if the foreigners were supplied with beef, women, and such other luxuries as they might require during their visits to Japanese ports, they might agree not to press their demands for trade.⁽⁹²⁾

Probably because opinions were conflicting, no definite decision on policy was taken at once. Mizuno Tikugo-no-kami, who had negotiated with Stirling in 1854, was sent to Nagasaki to discuss general policy and the Dutch request with the bugyoo, with orders that any settlement must be based on the Russian

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 (91) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 652-3, Roozyuu to various officials, 2 Sept 1856.

(92) e.g. Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XV, 118-9, Oometuke and metuke to Roozyuu, 1856, 9th month (29 Sept-28 Oct); XIV, 825-8, Nagasaki metuke to [Wakadosiyori], 1856, 8th month (30 Aug-28 Sept); XIV, 799-802, Kaiboo-kakari kanzyoo-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 24 Sept 1856.

and American treaties. A group of envoys was appointed to negotiate with Bowring when he came.⁽⁹³⁾ In the event, however, Bowring did not come and the Roozyuu was not therefore forced to commit itself to a specific policy at all.

Shortly after these discussions, Hotta assumed the direction of foreign relations in person, and instituted a formal investigation of the trade problem by appointing special bugyoo to study it. Progress was slow, and by the spring of 1857 the investigators had still produced no solution. Hotta therefore called on them for an interim report. The wording of his request makes it clear that he had already decided that trade in some form was inevitable, and that to him the real issues were whether Japan should take the initiative or wait for the British envoy, and what laws would enable her best to use the profits from trade to strengthen her own position.⁽⁹⁴⁾ To that, of course, must be added the problem of what support he could expect for his policy in Japan.

Once again Hotta's advisors were not unanimous. The kanzyoo-bugyoo were anxious to limit trade to the minimum that would satisfy the West, and proposed that a restriction be put on the number of ships to be sent by each nation. Moreover, they wanted to permit trade only at Nagasaki in the first instance, as this would enable Japan to offer Simoda and Hako-date if the foreigners later demanded trade at the Inland Sea

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 (93) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XIV, 781-2, Roozyuu to Kanzyoo-bugyoo Mizuno Tikugo-no-kami, 20 Sept 1856; XV, 70-1, Roozyuu to Ometuke Tosa Tanba-no-kami, Kanzyoo-bugyoo Kawazi Saemon and Mizuno Tikugo-no-kami and others, 14 Oct 1856.

(94) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XV, 669-71, Roozyuu to Kaiboo-kakari, 20 Apr 1857; XV, 682-7, Hotta draft memo to Boeki Torisirabe-kakari, 1857, 3rd month (26 Mar-23 Apr).

ports of Hyogo and Osaka, which were uncomfortably close to the Imperial capital at Kyoto.⁽⁹⁵⁾ The kaiboo-kakari metuke and cometuke dissented from this opinion. They pointed out that such half-measures would never satisfy Britain and the other maritime powers, and that it would be better, therefore, to permit extensive private trade without government interference and use the revenue derived from it to build up Japanese military strength.⁽⁹⁶⁾ News of the British attack on Canton, reaching Japan at about this time, provided the occasion for other statements of policy. Most officials thought that this event underlined the need for concessions to Britain,⁽⁹⁷⁾ and Hotta undoubtedly agreed. But such was not the temper of the capital at large. Moriyama, the senior interpreter, reported to Townsend Harris on 28 March 1857 that of every ten men in authority, three would favour opening the ports at once and two opening them after some delay; three would be prepared to yield without resistance to a threat of force, but two would fight to the last.⁽⁹⁸⁾

The death of Abe in the summer of 1857 greatly strengthened Hotta's position in the Roozyuu and reduced the influence

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 (95) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XV, 687-97, Kaiboo-kakari kanzyoo-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 1857, 3rd month (26 Mar-23 Apr); XVI, 183-7, same to same, 1857, 5th month (23 May-21 June).

(96) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XV, 819-24, Kaiboo-kakari cometuke and metuke to Roozyuu, 1857, 4th month (24 Apr-22 May).

(97) e.g. Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XV, 700-5, Kaiboo-kakari cometuke and metuke to Roozyuu, 1857, 3rd month (26 Mar-23 Apr); XV, 831-4, Simoda bugyoo to Roozyuu, 1857, 4th month (24 Apr-22 May); XV, 781-3, Hakodate bugyoo to Roozyuu, 6 May 1857.

(98) Harris, Complete Journal, pp.336-7.

of the Mito group. Thereafter Nariaki was no longer consulted by the Bakuhu on important questions of policy. In October treaties were concluded with the Dutch and Russians which incorporated the results of the previous twelve months' discussions among Edo officials, and which Hotta intended to be models for all future agreements. The terms were not generous, for trade was still to be restricted and supervised, but they were acceptable to the Dutch, who planned to effect improvement in their position by stages rather than by a single coup,⁽⁹⁹⁾ while the commercial interests of the Russians were relatively small.

During the same period the Roozyuu were considering a more ambitious plan. It was clear that the Japanese lacked experience of international trade and relied heavily on Dutch and Chinese traders for estimates of Britain's future intentions, especially on the vital question of whether or not she was prepared to use force against Japan. The Roozyuu was aware of this difficulty, and in October 1857 asked the advice of the officials about a plan to send a mission to Hongkong to gather first-hand information on trade and international affairs.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The kaiboo-kakari bugyoo and metuke differed over this as they on the topic of trade in general, and along the same lines. The hyoozyoosyo (the highest feudal court of Japan) envisaged all kinds of legal and practical difficulties. Hayasi Daigaku-no-kami, head of the Confucian school which trained most of the

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 (99) For an account and justification of Dutch policy at this period see van Doren, De Openstelling van Japan voor de Vreemde Natien in 1856, especially pp.111-2, 204-8.

(100) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kenkei Monzyo, XVII, 338-40, Roozyuu to various officials, 5 Oct 1857.

Bakuhu officials, feared the effect it might have on British officials at Hongkong and the danger of involving the mission in the Anglo-Chinese war. He would have preferred sending it direct to Europe.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Hotta, summarising the conflict of opinions in a report to the Syoogun, was not prepared to say that the advantages of such a mission would be greater than the risks it involved. He proposed that the matter be considered again at some future date.⁽¹⁰²⁾

The problem of British intentions, already a recurrent theme in Japanese discussions of foreign policy, was also being urged on the Bakuhu from another quarter. Townsend Harris had been appointed American consul at Simoda in 1856 under the terms of the Perry convention. He had met Bowring before this appointment, and called again at Hongkong on his way to Japan and discussed his plans with the Superintendent. The two men probably talked over the terms of the commercial treaty Harris hoped to obtain, and Harris was certainly told of Bowring's plan to visit Japan and given permission to disclose the fact to the Japanese.⁽¹⁰³⁾

After Harris reached Simoda he continued to correspond with Bowring and was able to put his knowledge of Bowring's plans to some use in his own negotiations with the Japanese.

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 (101) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XVII, 340-2, Hyoozyoosyo to Roozyuu, 1857, 8th month (18 Sept-17 Oct); XVII, 342-6, Oometuke and metuke to Roozyuu, 1857, 8th month; XVII, 658-61, Kaiboo-kakari kanzyoo-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 24 Oct 1857; XVII, 755-7, Hayasi Daigaku-no-kami to Roozyuu, c. 29 Oct 1857.

(102) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XVII, 812-5, Roozyuu to Syoogun, 1857, 9th month (18 Oct-16 Nov).

(103) Crow, Harris of Japan, pp.105-7, 257.
 Harris, Complete Journal, pp.165-7.

After spending several weeks impressing them with his friendliness, he revealed that he was empowered to treat and asked permission to visit Edo to present his credentials. He promised if this request were granted to put the Japanese in full possession of his information about British intentions, and insisted that he was only willing to do so in the capital ~~KKK~~ itself.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ The Japanese, of course, had already received Dutch reports of Bowring's proposed visit and were probably less anxious to hear more than Harris thought. However, his proposal in some respects fitted in with Hotta's decision that treaties must soon be made, and in September 1857, after consulting the Gosanke and the daimyoo, the Roozyuu agreed to his visit to Edo despite fierce opposition from Nariaki.

In December Harris travelled in state to the capital, and after a formal audience with the Syoogun, had a long private interview with Hotta at the latter's yasiki. According to the accounts left by Harris and his secretary Heusken,⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ the consul's argument was that in changing world conditions Japan could not indefinitely maintain her seclusion, and it would be easier for her to negotiate with him, free from the threat of action by foreign warships, than to wait until other nations lost all patience and forced greater concessions at the point of a gun. From the Japanese records ~~KK~~⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ it appears that

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 (104) Crow, Harris of Japan, pp.163-4.

Harris, Complete Journal, pp.247 note, 300 note.

(105) Harris, Complete Journal, pp.484-7 (12 Dec 1857).

Wagener, 'Aus dem Tagebuche Hendrik Heuskens', Mittheilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Volkerkunde Ostasiens, III, 29 (June 1883), pp.382-3.

(106) Japanese accounts have been translated and summarised in Murdoch, History of Japan, III, 636-8 and Treat, Early Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Japan 1853-1865, pp.75-9.

Harris was, in fact, much more specific as to the source of danger. He warned Hotta that Britain would take the lead in any move against Japan, that she was willing to fight to open Japanese ports, and even that she had territorial as well as commercial ambitions. Whether or not that was an accurate summary of Harris's statement, it was the one made by the Japanese and presumably, therefore, the gist of what they believed him to have said.

Harris was dealing with men already convinced of the reality of these dangers, and he accordingly had little difficulty in opening negotiations or in overcoming most Japanese objections to specific points in his proposals. Always his argument was that what he did was for the ultimate good of Japan in that it would prevent worse from happening.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ On one occasion, when the negotiators proved obstinate, he much impressed them by quoting from one of Bowring's letters written nearly a year before. 'Japan, of course, occupies much of my thoughts', wrote Bowring, 'and if I had reason to know that I should have a becoming reception and a disposition to give me such a treaty as I could accept with propriety ... I have no desire to be accompanied by so great a fleet as to cause alarms and apprehensions'.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ A quotation more apt to Harris's purpose it would be difficult to find.

It would be unjust to Harris's ability to say that he obtained his treaty entirely by using the British fleet as a threat to support his diplomacy. He was but emphasising and

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 (107) Harris, Complete Journal, pp.525-7.

Wagener, 'Tagebuche Hendrik Heusken', pp.385-6.

(108) Harris, Complete Journal, p.554 note, quoting Bowring to Harris, 18 Mar 1857.

documenting a danger which many Japanese had recognised before his arrival. It is clear from the record of their policy discussions since 1855 that Japanese officials needed little persuasion to believe the course he proposed the safest one for their country. The difficulty was to persuade the daimyoo in general of this fact. At the end of 1857 and again in 1858 Hotta called for advice about the American treaty, as had been done in 1853. This time the replies showed some important changes, but not enough to solve Hotta's problem.

Mariaki and his son, with a few supporters, still argued that the danger of admitting foreigners was greater than that of excluding them altogether. At all costs, they said, foreigners must be kept out of the provinces near Kyooto. Many agreed with this last point, though prepared to open trade elsewhere in Japan. There had been some defections from the seclusion party in recent years, notably Matudaira Etizen-no-kami, but nearly all the replies urged that Imperial approval be obtained before the treaty were signed, an attitude adopted only by Ii Naosuke in 1853. Most daimyoo felt, like Simazu of Satsuma, that Japan had no choice but to open trade, but there were few among them who did not wish to put restrictions on it, either of time or place.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ There is no doubt that the treaty sought by Harris went much farther than most were willing to accept. In February 1858, after the draft had been agreed by the negotiators, one of them told Heusken he estimated that only about a third of the daimyoo would be in favour of signing it.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

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 (109) Gubbins, Progress of Japan, pp.102-11, 289-91.

Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.308-9.

Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 748-9.

(110) Wagener, 'Tagebuche Hendrik Heusken', p.387.

In face of such opinions, Hotta decided that it would be wise to obtain Imperial sanction before signing the treaty he had arranged with Harris. Consequently Hayasi Daigaku-no-kami was sent to Kyoto to plead the Roozyuu case. This had at first seemed a mere formality, but the intrigues of Mariaki and the anti-foreign feeling of the court nobles persuaded the Emperor to refuse the request, and Hotta was unable to reverse this decision though he went himself to Kyoto and spent the months of March, April and May there.

Hotta's failure was not due entirely to the question of foreign policy. The Syoogun was without an heir, and one was to be chosen from among the Tokugawa branch houses, with the result that intrigues on behalf of rival candidates from Owari and Mito complicated the political situation. In Edo, the coincidence of these two crises and Hotta's failure to solve them soon led to a widespread demand for the appointment of a Tairoo, or Regent, to bolster the waning Tokugawa prestige. Early in June 1858, while Hotta was still on his way back from Kyoto, Ii Naosuke was appointed to the office. (111)

As Tairoo Naosuke assumed general supervision of policy and sometimes of administrative detail. He was, of course, as anxious as Hotta to sign the American treaty, and for the same reasons. Having arranged another postponement with Harris, promising that whatever happened the American treaty would be the first to be signed, Naosuke set himself to the task of securing the agreement of daimyoo and court nobles. He was given little time to succeed. In July occurred the very crisis which the treaty had been designed to prevent. In that month

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 (111) Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.309-12, 345-59, 371-2.
 Oomori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 754-61.

news reached Japan that the Treaty of Tientsin had been concluded and that the British and French envoys were on their way to Japan with a large fleet. Harris, first to get the news, went at once to Kanagawa to meet the officials with whom he had negotiated his treaty. He urged that unless it were signed at once, Elgin would be able to start negotiations on his own terms untrammelled by any precedent, and would probably insist on an agreement very similar to the Treaty of Tientsin. On the other hand, Harris promised, if the American treaty were signed before Elgin arrived, he would do his best to persuade the British ambassador to accept a similar one. (112)

Harris's treaty was already formally drawn up and required only the addition of the signatures, and on 28 July the Bakuhu ministers met to discuss his request. Naosuke still preferred to delay until Imperial approval was received, but he was supported only by the Wakadosiyori Honda Ktzyuu-no-kami. Hotta made no contribution to the discussion. Matudaira Iga-no-kami, now restored to his old position in the Roozyuu, urged strongly that the Bakuhu had made treaties without Imperial approval in the past and should certainly do so in a crisis such as now faced Japan. The others agreed that it was hopeless to think of resisting British and French power. Still reluctant, Naosuke finally decided that the negotiators must delay as far as possible but sign if they saw no alternative, and on 29 July, at Harris's insistence, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed. (113)

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 (112) Griffis, Townshend Harris, pp.315-21.

Omori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 767-9.

(113) Akimoto, Ii Naosuke, pp.156-9.

Kobayashi, Bakumatu-si, pp.385-7.

Omori, Dai Nihon Zenshi, III, 770-5.

Now that the die was cast, Naosuke took decisive steps to strengthen his own position before Elgin's arrival. He announced the signing of the treaty to the daimyoo, but before doing so dispatched another mission to Kyoto to obtain Imperial approval. Partly because of their unpopularity with the Court and the seclusion party, partly because of their differences with himself, he dismissed both Hotta and Iga-no-kami, replacing them in the Roozyuu with men who were competent administrators unlikely to have a decisive effect on policy. He thereby greatly increased his personal control over that body. He had already taken steps to decide the succession question against the Mito candidate, and as soon as Imperial sanction for the choice was received, found an excuse to order the confinement of Nariaki and his immediate supporters.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ This took place the day after Elgin reached Kanagawa. The domestic crisis continued throughout the discussions with Britain, but Naosuke had ensured that for a time, at least, Bakuhu policy would conform to his own ideas on foreign relations.

Harris claimed that Elgin and Gros would 'find their work all done to their hands' when they arrived, and that they would have no need of a large fleet to help them secure the terms they sought.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ There was much truth in his statement. During his protracted negotiations, Harris had educated the Japanese in the ideas of Western diplomacy, the language of which their interpreters had begun to learn. Moreover, if

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 (114) Satoh, Agitated Japan, pp.72-94.

~~xxxx~~ Kobayasi, Bakumatu-si, pp.392-9.

(115) Griffis, Townshend Harris, p.321, quoting Harris to Bowring, 2 Aug 1858.

Elgin chose to accept the American treaty as a model, there was little doubt that he would be spared the tedious discussions of detail that had gone to the making of it. It is probable that Harris was also thinking that his own frequent warnings about British power and intentions had predisposed the Japanese to submit to Elgin's demands. But he had been by no means alone in this, and it is doubtful whether his influence was decisive. More important were the political repercussions of the American treaty in Japan. Harris, by his persistence and persuasions, had brought to a head the conflict between those who were and those who were not willing to open the ports to trade, and while he cannot claim credit for the victory of the former - that must go to Hotta and Ii Naosuke - his treaty had established a precedent, and no other diplomat was likely to suffer the same delays. In the event, Elgin's negotiations were almost a formality.

On 6 July 1858, as soon as he heard that the Chinese Emperor had approved the Treaty of Tientsin, Elgin decided that his next task was to negotiate with Japan. He therefore arranged with Seymour for a suitable naval escort, emphasizing, however, that his intentions were entirely peaceful.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ He went first to Shanghai, intending to make arrangements for the negotiation of a tariff agreement supplementary to the Tientsin treaty, but at the end of the month, finding that the the Chinese envoys for these negotiations would not arrive for

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 (116) F.O.China Corres, vol 289, Elgin to For Off, No.145,
 6 July 1858 and encl.

Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5693, Seymour to Admiralty,
 No.228, 6 July 1858.

another two weeks, he decided that the resultant delay would be sufficient for a visit to Japan. Seymour had originally planned to accompany him, but the situation at Canton was unsatisfactory, and both agreed that after a brief visit to Nagasaki the admiral had better go south. (117)

The visit was in any case expected to be no more than an exploratory one, for Elgin did not know what he could accomplish in the time at his disposal. (118) Baron Gros, the French envoy, had been ordered to stay in China, and the China Mail, at least, thought that Elgin should have done the same. His first duty, it maintained, was to ensure the protection of Hongkong in the new hostilities that had broken out at Canton, instead of which he was taking Seymour off on what seemed to be no more than a pleasure excursion. (119) From the light-hearted spirit in which the adventure was undertaken one might almost think the China Mail's strictures to be justified. Most members of the mission seemed more interested in shopping than diplomacy, while the tone of the account given by Oliphant, Elgin's secretary, even suggests that the discomfort of Shanghai's summer heat had something to do with the decision to escape for a few weeks from China. (120)

Elgin reached Nagasaki on 3 August aboard H.M.S. Furious, escorted by two other ships. Seymour arrived on

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(117) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.374-5, Elgin to For Off, No.163, 30 July 1858.

Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5693, Seymour to Adty, No.263, 30 July 1858.

(118) Elgin, The Letters and Journals of James, eighth Earl of Elgin, pp.260-1.

(119) China Mail, 5 and 19 Aug 1858.

(120) e.g. Oliphant, Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan, I, 449-50.

the following day. Despite the attempts of an 'officious signalman' on the flagship to draw attention to them, the captain of Furious had studiously ignored all Japanese boats and officials on his way into harbour, for fear that they should impose unacceptable restrictions on his ship's movements under the terms of Stirling's convention. Once in, however, he submitted to the usual detailed interrogation, allowing the officials 'to see, touch, smell and hear everything, except the British Ambassador'.⁽¹²¹⁾ This somewhat cavalier assumption of the right to choose which Japanese laws were to be observed and which ignored was to characterise the actions of all Elgin's subordinates, and sometimes of the ambassador himself.

Conditions at Nagasaki had much improved since Seymour's previous visit, but Elgin had no intention of negotiating there. After a brief stay he continued to Simoda. There he had a long talk with Harris about the terms of the American treaty and then left for Edo Bay, despite the almost tearful protests of the Simoda bugyoo that such a course would endanger both Elgin and himself. Once again the guard-boats were ignored, and on the morning of 12 August Furious passed Kanagawa, where Poutiatine was opening negotiations, and at Elgin's orders and in defiance of all precedent, moved on up the channel towards Edo itself, followed at lengthy intervals by boats bringing the officials from Uraga, Kanagawa and elsewhere whose duty it would have been to meet her had the speed ~~mk~~ of her passage not defeated their purpose.⁽¹²²⁾

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 (121) Osborn, Cruise in Japanese Waters, pp.18-20, 25-9.

(122) Osborn, Cruise in Japanese Waters, pp.120-9.
 Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 92.

Once anchored in sight of the capital, Elgin refused all requests that he return to Kanagawa, an attitude accepted without great demur by Japanese officials who had orders to be tactful.⁽¹²³⁾ He now officially informed the Roozyuu that he had come to negotiate and wished to do so in Edo, and after necessary arrangements had been made, on practically identical lines with those made for Harris and Poutiatine, he landed and entered Edo on 17 August.⁽¹²⁴⁾

Despite the evidence of his actions so far, Elgin's approach to the question of negotiations with Japan was very different from that of Bowring. He had been instructed to avoid the use of force and hoped to avoid the threat of it, although it seemed that the situation created before his arrival, especially by the activities of Stirling and Seymour, might make inevitable some sort of recourse to "gunboat diplomacy". Osborn, captain of the Furious, thought that 'the hour had arrived for Japan to yield to reason, or to be prepared to suffer, as the Court of Pekin had done, for its obstinacy'.⁽¹²⁵⁾ But Elgin had no desire to transfer to Japan the methods he had found necessary in China. He had little sympathy with Britain's record in what he called 'this abominable East - abominable not so much in itself, as because

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 (123) Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 95-9.

Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XX, 678-9, Roozyuu to Mati-bugyoo and kanzyoo-bugyoo, 12 Aug 1858.

(124) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), p.379, Elgin to For Off, No.168, 28 Aug 1858.

Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XX, 699-700, England oosetu-kakari to Mati-bugyoo, 15 Aug 1858; XX, 704-6, Mati-bugyoo to Roozyuu, 16 Aug 1858.

(125) Osborn, Cruise in Japanese Waters, p.127.

it is strewn all over with the records of our violence and fraud, and disregard of right.'⁽¹²⁶⁾ He wanted to like the Japanese. He knew that they had been encouraged to fear Britain and that it would be difficult to overcome their suspicions, but he was resolved not to be any more 'peremptory' in his relations with them than was absolutely necessary.⁽¹²⁷⁾ On the other hand, he had a duty to perform and must perform it, even though, like Harris,⁽¹²⁸⁾ he sometimes wondered whether Japan might not be better without treaty relations, whether, indeed, treaties might not bring her only 'misery and ruin'.

His task did not seem at first an easy one. The problem, as Elgin saw it, was that he had to make a treaty against time, for he must soon return to China; without an interpreter, which put him at the mercy of any the Japanese might provide; and without proper credentials, for although he had full powers, he had no right to demand an audience with the Syoogun as Harris had done, and this might lower his prestige in the eyes of the Japanese.⁽¹²⁹⁾

The last difficulty was easily solved, for the Japanese were inexperienced in the niceties of diplomatic credentials. When Stirling had completed his convention at Nagasaki in 1854, he had promised, on behalf of the British government, to send a yacht as a present to the Syoogun - whom he, like most of his contemporaries, thought to be "the Emperor". This promise

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(126) Elgin, Letters, p.274.

See also Morison, Elgin, pp.212-5.

(127) Elgin, Letters, pp.263, 267-8.

Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 15.

(128) Compare, for example, Elgin, Letters, pp.264-5, 271 and Harris, Complete Journal, p.225.

(129) Elgin, Letters, p.263 (12 Aug 1858).

was confirmed by the Foreign Office, and a steam yacht built for the purpose was finally made ready in the spring of 1857. It was sent out to be handed over by Seymour ~~xxxxxx~~ with a complimentary letter to the "Prime Minister" from Clarendon.⁽¹³⁰⁾ Even before leaving China, Elgin had seen in this yacht, which had by then reached Shanghai, a useful means of introduction to the Japanese capital. He suggested that it might be left to him to deliver it, but Seymour at first insisted on carrying out the Admiralty's instructions that he was to do so himself.⁽¹³¹⁾ At Nagasaki the admiral changed his mind. Before leaving for Canton, he arranged that the present should be handed over by a naval officer, but in a manner and at a time convenient to the ambassador, which gave Elgin the excuse he needed to go to Edo rather than Nagasaki, and to insist on the ceremonial due to a friendly envoy.⁽¹³²⁾

The interpreter problem was solved by Harris. He lent Elgin his secretary, Heusken, who spoke some Japanese as well as Dutch, and whose experience during the American negotiations made him invaluable not only as an interpreter but as an

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 (130) F.O.China Corres., vol 280, Adty to For Off, 3 Apr 1857 and For Off to Adty, 16 Apr 1857; vol 278, draft, Clarendon to Prime Minister of Japan, 15 Apr 1857. Admiralty, Out-Letters, vol 1613, Adty to Seymour, No.153, 20 Apr 1857.

(131) F.O.China Corres., vol 289, Elgin to For Off, No.145, 6 July 1858.
 Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.374-7, Elgin to For Off, No.163, 30 July 1858.

(132) Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 56.
 Admiralty, In-Letters, vol 5693, Seymour to Adty, No.272, 20 Aug 1858
 Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), p.378, Elgin to For Off, No.165, 28 Aug 1858.

adviser, almost First Secretary, to the mission.⁽¹³³⁾ The time factor was much more likely to prove a real difficulty, especially, Elgin thought, as the Japanese were 'not much disposed to do things in a hurry'.⁽¹³⁴⁾ He had been told to base his treaty on that which he negotiated with China, but such a course would have involved him in lengthy discussions of the form and content of every article. These he could only avoid by accepting Harris's treaty as the basis of his own. It was neither so detailed nor so generous as the Treaty of Tientsin, but it provided an adequate foundation for commercial relations, and so anxious was Elgin to return to China that he decided to accept it despite its minor imperfections. This would enable him, he said, to avoid delay and 'to obviate, as far as possible, the risk of confusion and complication at the outset of a regular trade'.⁽¹³⁵⁾

His first formal meetings were with two of the new members of the Roozyuu, whom both he and Oliphant thought stupid.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The same was not true of the five bugyoo appointed to conduct the negotiations, however. The most important of them were Mizuno Toku-no-kami and Nagai Genba-no-kami, who had negotiated with Stirling at Nagasaki in 1854, and Iwase Higo-no-kami, one of the commissioners for Harris's treaty. Iwase, according to Oliphant, was the wit of the party and

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 (133) Elgin, Letters, p.263.

Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 90.

Crow, Harris of Japan, p.296.

(134) Elgin, Letters, p.265 (14 Aug 1858).

(135) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.382-5, Elgin to For Off, No.172, 30 Aug 1858

(136) Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 152.

Elgin, Letters, p.268.

Nagai the most intelligent, and when Nagai and Mizuno agreed, the rest seldom failed to follow.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Elgin found them 'business-like' and 'very shrewd'.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Moriyama, the senior Japanese linguist, who spoke both Dutch and English, was not only an efficient interpreter but 'a diplomat of the Talleyrand school'.⁽¹³⁹⁾ All insisted on the fullest discussion of any proposal which departed from the text of the American treaty, and it was only with difficulty that Elgin succeeded in making a few small alterations - which was not surprising, since the avowed policy of the Roozyuu was to whittle down the British requests to the greatest possible extent.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

After some discussion of the full powers given to the Japanese plenipotentiaries, the first meeting to discuss the terms of the treaty took place on 21 August. On that and the two following days the draft was gone through article by article. By the evening of 23 August all outstanding points were settled, and it was agreed that the treaty should be signed and the yacht handed over on the twenty-sixth. Elgin promised, though with little hope of good result, that he would pass on to his government a Japanese request that Britain should not exercise the right to send a permanent diplomatic representative to Edo until 1861. By that time, it was hoped, Japanese opinion would be reconciled to such an unparalleled event. He also refused an audience with the Syoogun's heir, because

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 (137) Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 160-1.

(138) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.382-5, Elgin to For Off, No.172, 30 Aug 1858.

(139) Oliphant, Elgin Mission, II, 104-5.

(140) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XX, 776-7, Roozyuu to Oometuke and metuke, 21 Aug 1858.

although the Syooguh himself was ill, Elgin feared to establish a precedent by waiting on anyone of lesser rank. (141)

Three days later the treaty was signed and the yacht handed over with all due ceremony. Elgin departed well satisfied that his 'daring exploit' had ended 'in an illumination of the forts in our honour'. (142)

Elgin's treaty, as he pointed out to the Foreign Office, differed in some respects from that concluded ~~xxx~~ by Harris. (143) It omitted the promise of mediation and friendly aid which had been included in Article II of the American treaty, and where the latter prohibited the import of opium into Japan, Elgin, mindful of events in China, was careful to place the responsibility for checking smuggling squarely on the Japanese authorities. He also inserted a most-favoured-nation clause, a thing which Harris had unaccountably omitted.

The regulations for trade which formed an appendix to both documents were almost identical. Exports were to pay a uniform duty of five per cent; imports of gold and silver (both coin and bullion) and the personal effects of foreign residents were to be admitted free of duty, and all intoxicating liquors were to carry an import duty of 35 per cent. Harris had arranged that supplies for rigging and repairing ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ ships, coal, timber, steam machinery, zinc, lead, tin and various foodstuffs could be imported at a five per cent duty, and

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(141) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.382-5,
Elgin to For Off, No.172, 30 Aug 1858.

(142) Elgin, Letters, p.273.

(143) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.386-7, Elgin to For Off, No.174, 31 Aug 1858; pp.387-94, Treaty of Edo and Regulations for Trade, 26 Aug 1858.

The text of the American treaty will be found in Gubbins, Progress of Japan, pp.269-77.

to this list Elgin succeeded in adding cotton and ~~W~~IX woollen manufactured goods. On all other imports a duty of 20 per cent was to be paid. The American agreement provided that these categories could be revised after five years at the request of the Japanese government, but Elgin again went a little farther by making revision depend on the wishes of either signatory.

On major issues, however, the two treaties were alike. Both opened the ports of Hakodate, Nagasaki and Kanagawa at once, Niigata or some other port on the Japan Sea coast from 1 January 1860 and Hyogo (later known as Kobe) from 1 January 1863. They gave foreigners the right of residence in Edo from 1 January 1862 and in Osaka from 1 January 1863. Both conceded diplomatic or consular representation in Edo and the open ports, arranged for consular jurisdiction and extraterritoriality, and provided that trade should be carried on freely between private subjects without government intervention. The two treaties, in fact, incorporated many of the ideas which had been originated or developed in the course of Western relations with China.

The Japanese text of Elgin's treaty, ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ although a little looser in its phraseology and sometimes vague in its dates - for example, the date of revision, 'on or after 1 July 1872', became 'after about fourteen years from now' - differed from the English text in only one notable respect. That difference lay in the most-favoured-nation clause. The English version entitled British subjects to share 'all privileges, immunities, and advantages, that may have been or may be hereafter, granted' in Japan to other countries. The Japanese text

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 (144) Bakumatu Gaikoku Kankai Monzyo, XX, 791-810, Japanese text of Treaty of Edo and trade regulations.

left out the reference to existing privileges and mentioned only 'special rights which may hereafter be granted'. It was the same sort of change that had appeared in the Japanese text of Stirling's convention. This time, however, it had little practical importance, for there were no existing rights of any value that were not incorporated in the treaty itself. British interest would be in future not in past concessions.

The treaty met with general approbation if not enthusiasm. Of those most immediately concerned, the Japanese were satisfied that they had conceded as little as possible,⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ while Elgin thought the settlement would be of advantage to both countries if British merchants 'did not, by injudicious and aggressive acts, rouse against themselves the fears and hostility of the natives'.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ The Foreign Office, having indicated its 'interest' and 'satisfaction',⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ began to make arrangements to establish consular representation in Japan. It did not choose at first to send anyone of full diplomatic status because it expected that Japanese ports would 'principally be resorted to by vessels engaged in the Whale Fishery',⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ but in this it was rapidly disillusioned by news that a number of merchants were fitting out ships for the trade even before the exchange of ratifications had made it legal to do so. Steps were accordingly taken to restrain their impatience.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

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 (145) Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, XX, Roozyuu to Oometuke and metuke, 28 Aug 1858; XX, 825-6, Roozyuu to negotiators of treaty, 30 Aug 1858.

(146) Elgin, Letters, p.274.

(147) Parl Papers 1859, vol XXXIII (Cd 2571), pp.394-5, For Off to Elgin, No.65, 8 Nov 1858.

(148) F.O.China Corres, vol 307, For Off to Treasury, 4 Dec 1858.

(149) F.O.China Corres, vol 307, For Off to Adty, 24 Nov 1858. London Times, 3 Feb 1859.

Outside official circles, the merchants of Belfast and Dundee complained that linen had not been included in the list of goods bearing import duty of only five per cent, ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ but there was little other criticism. The China Mail approved the treaty and contrasted it favourably with that of Stirling. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ The Times thought it of less commercial importance than the Treaty of Tientsin, but 'with even a higher character of historical interest and political significance'. ⁽¹⁵²⁾ And if the Edinburgh Review doubted the permanence of Elgin's accomplishment, ⁽¹⁵³⁾ the treaty was sufficiently popular to cause the political parties in England to vie publicly for the credit of having initiated and directed it. ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

It was, however, left to a Frenchman, a member of the Gros embassy which followed Elgin to Japan, to pay tribute to Japanese policy, to commend 'cette rare intuition que possède le gouvernement japonais et qui le porte à accorder de bonne grâce et spontanément ce qu'il sent pouvoir lui être enlevé par la force'. ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ The praise was perhaps a little high, certainly a little premature. Recent Anglo-Japanese relations had been confined to treaty negotiations and the use of Japanese ports for naval operations. With the opening of trade, as British merchants, missionaries and officials claimed the right

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 (150) F.O.China Corres, vol 307, Memorial of Belfast Chamber of Commerce, 4 Dec 1858; Bd Trade to For Off, 13 Nov 1858, encl memorial of Dundee Chamber of Commerce.

(151) China Mail, 9 and 16 Sept 1858.

(152) London Times, 2 Nov 1858.

(153) Edinburgh Review, CXI, 225 (Jan 1860), p.118.

(154) London Times, 4 Feb 1859, reports of Parliamentary debates.

(155) Marquis de Mages, Souvenirs d'une Ambassade en Chine et au Japon en 1857 et 1858, p.333.

of residence in Japan, fresh occasions of dispute would undoubtedly arise. In the existing state of opinion in the two countries, it seemed unlikely that they would be ignored. The real test of British intentions and Japanese policy had still to come.

Retrospect and Conclusions

The East India Company's Japan factory, founded early in the seventeenth century in the first flush of English expansion, proved a disappointment. Japan produced few of the exotic oriental goods that the traders sought. Indeed, she sought them herself as imports. There was no great market for European products other than arms, no basis for a flourishing trade, and no gateway was to be opened through Japan to the mysterious and fabulously wealthy China. In face of Dutch competition, of increasing Japanese restrictions and the ineffective trading methods of Richard Cocks, the factory inevitably proved a commercial failure. It was withdrawn only ten years after its foundation.

Thereafter the directors of the Company were not easily persuaded of the value of markets in Japan. A few men remained convinced that great wealth could be found there and, despite evidence to the contrary, that British woollens could be sold in quantity. Their efforts led the Company to make an attempt to renew the trade in the reign of Charles II, but the attempt failed, as did those to open an indirect trade through other countries of East Asia. After 1700, still not convinced that the trade would repay the cost of opening it, the East India Company sought its profits elsewhere.

This pattern of opinion was repeated after 1775. Once more the efforts of a few individuals, some of them officials of the Company, some private merchants, brought about a revival of interest in Japan. The directors, who had access to seventeenth century records, were reluctant to make any new attempt on the trade. The government proved easier to persuade and in the Macartney mission of 1791-3 made half-

hearted plans to establish contact with Japan. Nothing came of these plans. Thereafter, however, unofficial visits to Japan increased in number through enthusiasts like Raffles and adventurers like Peter Gordon; still more through the expansion and northward movement of the Pacific whale fishery, which brought British seamen in increasing numbers to the Japanese coast.

There came, too, greater knowledge of Japanese opposition to trade. It was realised that Japan's policy of seclusion, directed not specifically against Great Britain, but against all foreigners outside the group of Dutch and Chinese merchants allowed to trade at Nagasaki, put an obstacle in the way that could not be overcome by the undirected efforts of a few individuals. The task would have to be undertaken by the Company or by the government, and probably on a large scale. For that there was still not enough incentive.

In 1834, with the end of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade, the Foreign Office became directly responsible for British policy in East Asia. This made no immediate difference. Like the Company, whose policy it inherited, the Foreign Office paid lip-service to the desirability of opening Japan but was not sufficiently convinced of the trade's value to take direct action. It was, of course, susceptible to the pressure of merchant opinion. But Japan had not captured the imagination of the merchants as China had done, nor was there any general belief that Japan had unlimited sources of wealth waiting to be tapped by British enterprise. There was, after all, some solid basis for the "myth" of the China trade. A valuable trade already existed there; the greater part of the country was still untouched by it; and it was logical to believe that a vast expansion was possible in remoter Chinese markets. As seen by British merchants and

officials, the war of 1839 to 1842 was fought to gain access to those markets. There was no such basis on which they could erect a similar structure of belief about Japan. Japan was obviously smaller, reputedly less wealthy than China. There was no British trade by which prospects might be judged; the trade of the Dutch was reported to be small and declining; and even those who did advocate establishing relations with Japan did not presume to claim that its possibilities were as great as those of China. Moreover, a beginning had been made in China. Its exploitation was not only more attractive but more practical. Success in China, therefore, brought no immediate attempt to open Japan.

Even so, the China war did bring the opening of Japan one step nearer. By opening to British ships ports to the north of Canton, it increased the possibility of unofficial - or unpremeditated - visits to Japan out of which conflict might grow. More important, it led to the creation of a consular service and a new naval squadron permanently stationed on the China coast. Where in the past the organisation of an expedition to Japan would have required a special effort on the part of the Foreign Office and Admiralty, and did not seem likely to repay the expenditure of time and money involved, it could now be carried out by the use of purely local resources and might therefore be worth the attempting. This fact explains the plans of 1845. Davis saw that the evacuation of Chusan provided a convenient and inexpensive opportunity of going to Japan, a view in which Aberdeen concurred.

Yet it was another thirteen years before Britain concluded a treaty of the kind Davis planned. Why was this? Practically, it was because the officials directly responsible for implementing the plans were convinced that negotiations, to be successful, must be accompanied by a display of 'naval

pomp'; and the warships they required for this purpose seemed never to be available when the plenipotentiary was ready to sail. Fundamentally, it was because there was no deep interest in the project, either in London or in China, among officials or among merchants, to lend drive and persistence to the policy which had been formulated. It is a measure of Japan's unimportance that in 1846 the suppression of piracy in Borneo was numbered among the more important duties which prevented the China squadron from visiting Japan.

The unimportance of Japan in British policy was confirmed after 1847 by the failure of attempts to force revival of the plans abandoned by Davis. In Bonham there was a new Superintendent who naturally did not have an author's interest in the project; in Palmerston a new Foreign Secretary much occupied with events in Europe. Moreover, the pressure brought to bear on them was neither great nor effective. Men like Gutzlaff and Bettelheim had little political influence. Montgomery Martin worked up a public campaign of a kind much more likely to succeed, but it was obviously the work of one man and aroused only a superficial interest. None of the commercial organisations approached by Martin ever saw fit to press the matter once their initial memorials had been answered by the Foreign Office.

British policy towards the Perry expedition provides further evidence. Despite the arguments of a number of private correspondents, neither Malmesbury nor Clarendon showed any inclination to emulate, still less to forestall the Americans. They preferred to await the expedition's results and benefit by them if they could. It was not until after Perry's success - or rather, a premature report of his success - that Clarendon took action. Even then he did so only because the American treaty seemed to create a new

opportunity of opening relations with Japan without special risk or expense. Early in 1854, presumably in a belief that where America led Britain could follow with little difficulty he instructed Bowring to go to Japan on the first suitable occasion for the purpose of concluding a satisfactory commercial treaty. This time the plan remained in being. It was the subject of frequent discussion in the course of the next four years, but it was still not put into effect.

The twin problems of providing naval support and of overcoming Japanese opposition to trade continued to render British policy ineffective. The Foreign Office, aware that its instructions might be four months out of date by the time they reached Hongkong, was unwilling to give specific directions about the date of the mission. Bowring, though eager enough to accomplish a task that might bring him fame, tended to overestimate its difficulties. He was sure that the Japanese would not willingly grant the kind of treaty he meant to demand, and from that premise argued that nothing effective could be done without the help of a large naval squadron. First the Crimean War, then the new war with China made it impossible to provide such a squadron as he desired. In the interval between these wars it would have been possible, but Bowring missed this opportunity by waiting for Foreign Office permission to organise a joint Anglo-French expedition. Had he been content with an escort of one or two ships, there would have been other opportunities. He might have gone in the winter, for example, during the northerly monsoon. The advent of the steamer had made such a course possible, but he continued to think of the Japan mission as something for the summer months, perhaps because he had not fully realised the possibilities of the steamer, more probably because there were still not enough steamers on the China coast to form an impressive squadron.

On the other hand, the events that prevented Bowring from taking action actually operated to create an opportunity for the Royal Navy to do so. The two wars brought considerable reinforcements to the China squadron. Bowring could not use them because his Japan expedition required a predictable interval in naval operations, a thing it was almost impossible to find in time of war. The commander-in-chief was not so handicapped, for he could make decisions about the use of his ships at very much shorter notice. Moreover, his duties took him to Japan and gave him a valid reason to negotiate.

Stirling's desire to use Japanese ports against the Russians took him to Nagasaki, where the errors of the interpreters and the preconceived ideas of the Japanese negotiators provided him with a convention very similar to that secured by Perry - and very different from that desired in London and Hongkong. That it was criticised because it omitted all mention of trade gave Stirling but little concern. However, when he found that it was also proving unsatisfactory as a means of providing bases for the fleet, he attempted to expand its provisions by negotiating an Exposition in 1855.

Stirling received no support in his attempt to introduce a strategic factor into Anglo-Japanese relations. Bowring, the Board of Trade, the Foreign Office all continued to think in terms of trade. To some, a treaty containing no commercial privileges was worse than no treaty at all. In January 1856 Clarendon took steps to put an end to naval diplomacy in Japan, and the responsibility for future negotiations fell once again to Bowring, now more than ever convinced of the difficulty of the task and the impossibility of accomplishing it by mere persuasion.

The war with China and the consequent criticism of Bowring's conduct made it desirable to send a special envoy

to assume control of British interests there. In April 1857 the Foreign Office took the opportunity of putting the Japan mission, too, in different hands. Elgin, like Bowring, was forced to postpone negotiations, but not for the same reasons. He was not dominated by the China coast traditions of diplomacy and had, moreover, been instructed not to use force against Japan. He was therefore willing to dispense with much of the 'naval pomp', but on the other hand his visit to Japan was contingent on success in China and that in its turn was delayed by events in India.

This delay proved to have certain advantages, however. By 1858, when Elgin was ready to leave China for a time, events had taken place in Japan which made his work much easier. Perry's negotiations in 1854 had made it easier for Stirling to obtain similar terms if he cared to accept them. Harris performed much the same office for Elgin, and Elgin, because he was anxious to return to China with the least possible delay, was ready to follow the lead he had been given. The British treaty of 1858 confirmed the fact of American leadership in the opening of Japan.

From this narrative of British policy towards Japan it is possible to draw certain general conclusions. In the first place, it is clear that the initiative rested usually with British officials in the East. They were frequently the first to put forward such plans as were adopted, and were always given wide discretion in carrying them out. The function of the Foreign Office - like that of the East India Company's Court of Directors before 1834 - was to approve or reject the suggestions of its representatives in China, to ensure that they conformed in methods and objectives to the general lines

of government policy. It was seldom that a policy was formulated in London that did not originate in an in-coming dispatch. Sometimes an over-enthusiastic or over-ambitious official had to be restrained, for in so remote a field of action he might easily involve Britain in embarrassment or even war, but rarely was any attempt made to urge a reluctant one to take action.

Foreign Office failure to take the initiative is a measure of Japan's importance to British Foreign Secretaries. Palmerston and Aberdeen, Clarendon and Malmesbury, despite their political differences, were remarkably consistent in their attitude to Japan. They showed by their actions, sometimes by their words, that the opening of Japanese ports, however desirable in theory, was not an object of sufficient value to warrant the expenditure of much effort or the acceptance of much risk. And there was never enough public interest at home to make a change in that attitude politically profitable.

The Royal Navy's influence lay in the execution rather than the formulation of policy. Stirling's negotiations are an obvious exception, but they were an accident of personality, a temporary diversion from the main stream of policy made possible by the freedom of action enjoyed by the commander of a distant station in the days before the telegraph. In the plans of Davis and Bowring the China squadron was to play a supporting, not a leading role. It was to provide the prestige, the ceremonial and the thinly-veiled threat of force which alone, they thought, would make a plenipotentiary's arguments convincing to the Japanese.

This technique is the one that became known as "gunboat diplomacy", and it is interesting that it was always the Superintendent who insisted on its necessity, the Foreign

Office who bowed to his judgement, often reluctantly. Even Palmerston, with whose name such methods are normally associated, was more willing to approve than to advocate their application to Japan. And their effect was very different from their purpose. Since the plenipotentiary would not go without ships, the timing of the Japan expedition was controlled by the duties of the China squadron, and there seemed always to be more important duties to perform. The methods that were to have ensured success served only to delay the attempt itself.

British policy towards Japan in the period 1834 to 1858 is marked off from what is usually termed British foreign policy by the fact that it was concerned ^{not} with the day-to-day relations between two countries but with the plans and negotiations aimed at establishing such relations. This gives it an appearance of independence, even of isolation. It was, however, closely related to British policy in China. China was always recognised as being the more important of the two countries, and it was usually the protection or extension of British interests there, requiring the full attention of the China squadron, that prevented the plenipotentiary from assembling a suitable force to support his Japan negotiations.

More directly, Anglo-Chinese relations did much to determine the type of treaty Britain sought to conclude with Japan. Japan was a near neighbour of China, akin to her in language and culture and equally averse to foreign intercourse. It was natural enough that British officials should assume that both presented the same problems. By 1845, when the first plans were made for negotiating with Japan, they already had much experience of dealing with such problems. The instructions sent to Davis were based on that experience, anticipating the same difficulties and providing for their solution in terms

identical with those then being applied in China. The same was true of the instructions to Bowring in 1854. They differed from earlier ones precisely to the extent that the immediate issues engaging Foreign Office attention in China had changed. Elgin in his turn was told to base his treaty on that to be concluded with China. That he did not do so was due to circumstances which neither he nor the Foreign Office had foreseen, and it made little difference in the result, for Harris, too, had been impressed with the desirability of incorporating into his agreement many of the provisions which governed western relations with China.

The same tendency is apparent in British policy immediately after 1858. The consular service established in Japan as a result of Elgin's agreement was openly modelled on, and almost entirely staffed from that existing in China. In fact, Britain entered upon treaty relations with Japan with certain fixed ideas - belief in the "treaty port" system, extraterritoriality and tariff control being chief among them - which owed nothing of their development to the situation in which they were to be applied.

If China played an important part in British policy towards Japan, it played a still more important one in Japanese policy towards Britain. As a demonstration of British power, events in China undoubtedly inclined the Japanese to submit to the demands of an enemy whose military might they knew themselves unable to withstand. As a demonstration of British expansion, they bred fear of the results of foreign intercourse. British military operations in China, the reports brought by Dutch, Chinese and Americans, the actions of Stirling and Seymour at Nagasaki, even the treaty negotiated by Elgin, all helped to convince the Japanese that their national

sovereignty was threatened by British imperialism. The extension of British political control for the protection of trade to them seemed naked aggression. A re-examination of that imperialism is outside the scope of this study, as is any new analysis of the associated problem of British policy in China. However, an attempt must be made to answer the question of how far British policy towards Japan in the years 1834 to 1858 represented a real threat to Japan's political and economic independence. The discussion may throw light on these wider problems.

On one point it is possible to be definite. There is no evidence of any policy of deliberate British political and territorial expansion in Japan before 1858. Stirling's emphasis on strategic interests and his plans for a new 'maritime empire' were never accepted by the British Cabinet, to whom the government of colonial territories was a burden to be undertaken - if at all - only in return for very real advantages.

On the other hand, the story of British interest in Japan before treaty relations began is inevitably one of plans and intentions, and it is argued that in the mid-nineteenth century British imperialism was less a matter of intentions than of unpremeditated results, of a gradual and often unwilling assumption of political authority as the only way of providing the law and order in which trade might flourish. To contemporaries, it seemed unlikely that the Bakuhu would be able to provide the administrative efficiency which alone could prevent such a development. Its policy was one of grudging concessions unlikely to breed goodwill. Moreover, most of the samurai were unshaken in their hatred of foreigners, and Tokugawa control of them was precarious - as

appeared after 1858 in the frequent attacks on foreign ships and citizens. Yet it does not follow from these facts alone that disputes would have lead to war and war to British economic and political domination of Japan.

The danger to China lay not so much in Manchu weakness as in the belief of British merchants, diplomats and officials that the China trade was but a fraction of what it might be and that only political obstacles - the policy of the Chinese government - prevented access to vast new markets. On this estimate the China trade was worth fighting for, and two wars were indeed fought for it. It was, too, a consideration that might make China worth governing if all else failed. The reasoning does not apply equally to Japan. The threat to Chinese independence existed only so long as the Foreign Office and Board of Trade retained their faith in the roseate promises of the "old China hands", and there was no equivalent body of belief behind the attempt to secure trade with Japan. Admittedly elements of economic and political control which had already been introduced in China were incorporated in the first treaties with Japan - not only by Britain but by all the Treaty Powers - but this was because the China treaty-pattern had become almost a habit of mind with Western diplomats. Moral considerations apart, Britain was not prepared to fight to impose such terms unless convinced both that they were necessary and that the returns would repay her effort. With few exceptions, neither Foreign Office nor merchants were convinced of either. If they had been they would never have delayed so long in face of Japanese opposition to the opening of the ports.

That is only to say that in 1858 Japan was not facing the same dangers as China. It was still possible that danger

would arise thereafter, for the treaty of 1858 was potentially not the end but the beginning of difficulties. Stirling in 1855 and Seymour in 1856 had shown that friction was more likely to arise out of the expansion or interpretation of existing treaties than out of the negotiations to obtain them in the first place - a fact already amply demonstrated in China. British merchants could certainly be expected to show greater interest in the extension of an existing trade than they had in the attempt to establish a new one in a country relatively unknown to them. They might even create a new "myth" of the Japan trade if the policy of the Japanese government denied them the opportunity of assessing its true worth.

In the event these dangers proved illusory, for both British and Japanese policies were eventually to undergo a change. That change, however, was not immediately apparent. In the interval there occurred events which were decisive for the future course of Japanese history, since the years 1858 to 1868 saw the struggle for power within Japan come to a head, and its result brought new rulers and a new form of government. Throughout that vital formative period, the Japanese held to the estimate of British policy which they had formed before the signing of the treaties. British actions, reflecting as they did most of the characteristics of British policy in China, gave them no good cause to revise their estimate. In fact, by convincing many Japanese statesmen that only modern economic, political and military organisation on Western lines could preserve their country's independence in face of Western aggression, British policy, both before and after 1858, played an important part in determining the nature and objectives of the new Japan.

Appendix A. The Anglo-Japanese Convention of 14 October 1854.

The text of the convention given below, omitting preamble and signatures, is taken from Parliamentary Papers 1856, vol LXI (Cd 2014), pp.209-12. The phrases in italics and enclosed between square brackets were omitted from the Japanese text of the agreement (Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monzyo, VII, 439-41). Other variations in the Japanese text are indicated by italics and footnotes. Since the phrasing of the English and Japanese documents does not exactly correspond, it is emphasised that the differences between them indicated here are differences of meaning, not exact differences of wording.

Article I. The ports of Nagasaki (Fisen)⁽¹⁾ and Hakodadi (Matsumai)⁽²⁾ shall be open to British ships for the purpose of effecting repairs, and obtaining fresh water, provisions, and other supplies of any sort they may absolutely want⁽³⁾ for the use of the ships.

Article II. Nagasaki shall be open for the purposes aforesaid from and after the present date; and Hakodate from and after the end of fifty days from the Admiral's departure from this port. The rules and regulations of each of these ports are to be complied with.

Article III. Only ships in distress from weather, or unmanageable, will be permitted to enter other ports than those specified in the foregoing Articles, without permission from the Imperial government.

.....
(1) Nagasaki (Fisen).

(2) Hakodate (Matsumai).

(3) In Japanese, "and indispensable necessities".

Article IV. British ships in Japanese ports shall conform to the laws of Japan. If high officers or commanders of ships shall break any such laws, it will lead to the ports being closed. Should inferior persons break them, they are to be delivered over to the Commanders of their ships for punishment.

Article V. In the ports of Japan, [either now open, or] which may hereafter be opened, to the ships or subjects of any foreign nations, British ships and subjects shall be entitled to admission, and to the enjoyment of an equality of advantages with those of the most favoured nation,⁽⁴⁾ [always excepting the advantages accruing to the Dutch and Chinese from their existing relations with Japan.]

Article VI. This Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Nagasaki on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, and on behalf of His Highness the Emperor of Japan, within twelve months from the present date.

Article VII. When this Convention shall be ratified, no high officer⁽⁵⁾ coming to Japan shall alter it.

.....
(4) In Japanese, "other countries".

(5) In Japanese, "ship's commander".

Appendix B. Draft Exposition handed by Rear Admiral Sir James Stirling to the Nagasaki Bugyoo, 11 October 1855.

The text is taken from F.O. China Corres, vol 255, enclosure in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 5 Jan 1856. Passages omitted from the final form of the exposition as a result of the negotiations of October 1855 are shown in italics and enclosed in square brackets. Other changes made during the negotiations are indicated by italics and footnotes.

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The First Article of the Convention opens the Ports of Nagasaki and Hakodadi⁽¹⁾ to British Ships for Repairs and Supplies. It opens the whole and every part of those Ports, but Ships must be guided in anchoring by the Directions of the Local Government. Safe and convenient Places will be assigned where Ships may be repaired. Workmen, Materials, and Supplies will be provided by the Local Government according to a Tariff to be agreed upon, by which also the modes of Payment will be regulated. All Official Communications will be made in the English Language.⁽²⁾ [An Hospital in case of need will be provided,] a British Burial Ground set apart, fenced in, and⁽³⁾ properly protected [and permission given to land under Regulations to be hereafter agreed upon].

.....

(1) Hakodate.

(2) The final text reads, "will hereafter, when Japanese shall have time to learn English, be made in that language".

(3) The final text reads, "shall be set apart on Medsume Sima, fenced in by a stone wall, and".

The Second Article provides that at each of the Ports of Nagasaki and Hakodadi,⁽⁴⁾ the Port Regulations shall be obeyed; but the Japanese Government will take care that they shall not be of a nature [to impose unnecessary Restrictions nor] to create embarrassment[s and quarrels,] nor to contradict in any other way the general tenor and Intent of the Treaty, the main object of which is to promote a friendly Intercourse between Great Britain and Japan.

The Third Article declares that only ships in distress from weather or unmanageable shall enter other Ports than Nagasaki and Hakodadi⁽⁴⁾ without permission from the Imperial Government; but [this Article is not intended to apply to Her Majesty's] Ships of War, whose general Right⁽⁵⁾ to enter the Ports of Friendly Powers in the unavoidable performance of Public Duties can⁽⁵⁾ neither be waived nor restricted, but they⁽⁶⁾ will not enter any other than Open Ports without necessity or without offering proper explanations to the Imperial Authorities.

The Fourth Article provides that British Ships and Subjects in Japanese Ports shall conform to the Laws of Japan, and that if any Subordinate British Subjects commit offences against the Laws, they shall be handed over to their own officers for Punishment, and that if High Officers or Commanders of Ships shall break the Laws, it will lead to the closing of the Ports specified. All this is as it should be, but it is not

.....

(4) Hakodate.

(5) The final text reads, "have a general right...public duties, which right can".

(6) The final text reads, "Her Majesty's Ships".

intended by this Article that any Acts of Individuals, whether High or Low, previously unauthorised or subsequently disapproved of by Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, can set aside the Convention entered into with Her Majesty alone by His Imperial Highness the Emperor of Japan.

The Fifth Article secures in the fullest sense to British Ships and Subjects in every Port of Japan, either now open or hereafter to be opened, an Equality in point of advantage and accommodation with the Ships and Subjects or Citizens of any other Foreign Nation, excepting any peculiar Privilege hitherto conceded to the Dutch and Chinese in the Port of Nagasaki. If therefore any other Nation or People be now or hereafter permitted to enter other Ports than Nagasaki and Hakodadi, ⁽⁷⁾ [or to reside in any part of the Empire,] or to appoint Consuls, or to open Trade, or to enjoy any Advantage or Privilege whatever, [(the Dutch and Chinese Privileges existing previous to the 14th of October 1854 alone excepted)] British Ships and Subjects shall, as of Right, enter upon the enjoyment of the same.

.....
 (7) Hakodate.

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General note.

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F.O.228, the archive collected at and returned from Hongkong, contains originals of dispatches from London and drafts of dispatches to London, including some dispatches and many enclosures which are missing from F.O.17. The letter-books containing copies of the Superintendents' letters to local correspondents (the Commander-in-Chief, merchants, etc) were occasionally useful, but the series does not include the letters received from those correspondents.

These are supplemented by the private correspondence of Secretaries of State - which serve rather as background information, since ~~xxx~~ direct references to China and Japan are rare - and more particularly by the few but important

Foreign Office minutes and memoranda relating to Japan in F.O.96. Such Board of Trade records as are available add little to the information contained in the Board of Trade letters which appear in the "Domestic Various" volumes of F.O.17. The Admiralty papers throw relatively little light on the formation of policy, but are, of course, essential for the study of Stirling's negotiations, of which they contain very detailed accounts. Many dispatches are missing from the correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, especially for the years 1848 to 1851.

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