

## The Opening of Japan

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Since the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan closed itself against the influence of the outside world. Only the Dutch traders could under strict restrictions enter the port of Nagasaki. This policy of so-called sakoku (isolation) was one of the cornerstones of the Tokugawa bakufu. However, since the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the ships of the western powers started to gain interest in the seas around Japan. The ruling Tokugawa regime was nevertheless anxious of the internal consequences of the opening of the country and turned away any effort of western Great Powers to open Japan to foreign trade. This policy was not however backed by military ability to repulse the foreigners if they came and tried to open Japan by force. The arrival of powerful fleet of Commodore Perry in 1853 therefore compelled the bakufu to sign a first treaty opening its ports to western country. Treaties with other countries followed soon and at the end of the 50s Japan had to sign a series of unequal treaties under the pressure of the Great Powers. This was a start of a whole new period of Japanese history.

[Japan; Great Britain; United States; Russia; France; diplomacy; international relations; trade]

Japan<sup>1</sup> had always been an isolated and insular country due to its remote location. Foreign relations were limited to its relatively close neighbours in Asia. Trade agreements concluded in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with Korea and China led to the brisk exchange of goods, which was, however, accompanied by increased activities of Japanese pirates (*wakō*) and Chinese smugglers on the Chinese-Korean coast.<sup>2</sup> Traders also sailed from Japan to Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. They sailed on ships known as

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<sup>2</sup> E. O. REISCHAUER – A. M. CRAIG, *Dějiny Japonska*, Praha 2009, pp. 67–68.

red-seal ships (*go shuinsen*) by authority of the shogun himself,<sup>3</sup> which was the only option for undertaking legal foreign trade.<sup>4</sup>

But Asian countries were not the only ones to express interest in Japan. The Portuguese were the first to turn up on Japan's islands, and they were quick to establish trading relations with Japan.<sup>5</sup> The Portuguese were accompanied on their travels by Jesuits, who soon expanded their missionary work in Japan under the leadership of Francis Xavier (1506–1552). The Jesuit priests made a big impression in far-off Japan, as can be seen in this early description of one of them: “Although man-shaped, the Padre is undistinguishable from demons and monsters. The nose is so big it looks like a smoothened conch shell glued to the centre of the face. The big eyes are like a pair of lenses, with yellow irises. The head is small, the nails of the fingers and toes long, the height in excess of seven feet, the teeth greater than those of horses, the colour of the hair grey. He shaves the top of his head so that the scalp is exposed as much as could be covered by a small cup. His words are like nothing one has ever heard, and his voice resembles an owl's hooting. Everyone says his appearance was stranger than that of a mountain spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

Although Japanese society was strongly Buddhist and viewed foreigners with a certain amount of amusement and caution, some citizens began to turn to the Christian faith. In some cases, conversions took place for purely selfish reasons, since good contacts with the Jesuits meant more frequent visits from the Portuguese traders and resulting greater profits. An example of this would be the construction of Nagasaki port on the western coast of Kyushu in 1571, which soon became a centre of Portuguese trade, and from 1579 was *de facto* in the hands of the Jesuits.<sup>7</sup> And it was Kyushu which could ‘boast’ of the largest concentration of Jesuits and converts, where a considerable number of lords, or daimyo converted to the Christian faith. Besides a foreign religion, the Portuguese brought with them much that was new (tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, etc.), which Japanese society welcomed. But it was the firearms which impressed the

<sup>3</sup> *Seii tai shōgun* or the *Barbarian-subduing Generalissimo* was first given as a title to the leaders of the campaign against the native Ainu nation, with the title subsequently received by the highest military commander in Japan. In 1192, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) received the title, and the last shogun was Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837–1913), who was named in 1866. *Ibidem*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> R. H. P. MASON – J. G. CAIGER, *Dějiny Japonska*, Praha 2007, pp. 202–203.

<sup>5</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> T. TOKUGAWA, *The Edo Inheritance*, Tokyo 2009, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 76.

most, the so-called arquebuses, which Japan was very soon able to integrate into its war strategies.<sup>8</sup>

The unstable situation which began to express itself in Kyushu forced the then-leader of Japan,<sup>9</sup> Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) to take radical measures. In 1587, he subjugated the rebellious daimyo Shimazu and in doing so bore witness to the destabilising impact of the Christians. He issued an edict which ordered all missionaries to leave the country within twenty days, although it did not ban trade itself with Portugal.<sup>10</sup> The edict was not strongly enforced, and a number of missionaries did not leave Japan. Hideyoshi's fears of the expansion of Christianity not just amongst the daimyo, but also amongst ordinary peasants, were deepened by a number of events. These included the arrival of Spanish Franciscans and their subsequent clashes with the Jesuits, and also missionaries from Nagasaki joining the colonial base in the Far East at Manila in the Philippines, which was supported by European troops.<sup>11</sup> In his edict, Hideyoshi stressed the execution of twenty-six missionaries (The History of Japan states they were nine missionaries and seventeen Japanese converts). Hideyoshi's death in autumn 1598 freed up some room for the Christian missionaries.

Although Hideyoshi's young son Hideyori (1593–1615) was meant to take his father's place in future, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) won the battle for power. His status was reinforced in 1603 when he was awarded the old title of shogun and appointed a military government known under the name of bakufu.<sup>12</sup> He was very open to foreigners and international trade. He strived to gain important knowledge on the construction of European ships since the ships built in Japan at the time were not capable of long voyages. Spain and Portugal, however, feared that any

<sup>8</sup> By 1575 there was already massive and strategic use of muskets in the Battle of Nagashino, with Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) and Tokugawa Ieyasu integral to success. TOKUGAWA, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup> Hideyoshi never became shogun; he was not from the Minamoto clan. He was, however, awarded the name of Toyotomi (Bountiful Minister) by the imperial court. In 1585, he became Imperial Regent (*kampaku*) and the following year he became Grand Minister of State (*daijō daijin*). M. B. JANSEN, *The Making of Modern Japan*, Cambridge 2000, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> TOKUGAWA, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Bakufu literally means tent government. The term was taken from Chinese and denoted the tent of the commander who led the campaign against the barbarians. REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 46.

maritime expansion by Japan would represent a threat to their colonies (e.g., the Philippines).<sup>13</sup> William Adams (1564–1620) provided him with an alternative,<sup>14</sup> not just helping with the construction of ships which were capable of successfully sailing to Mexico, but also becoming his advisor over the years. Amongst other things, he arranged trade privileges for the Dutch, and Adams' influence led to Britain receiving approval for establishing a factory (trading station) in Hirado in 1613.

With the arrival of the Dutch, and then the English, in Japan, there were expressions of antipathy between them and the Spanish and Portuguese (encouraged by disputes between Catholics and Protestants). The Jesuits and Franciscans tried to discredit Adams and keep good relations with the shogun court. Ieyasu, however, was alarmed by the arrogant behaviour. A Spanish delegation sought to expel Dutch traders, and declared that *"the greatest ruler in the world is the Spanish monarch"*, and that *"His Christian Majesty [Phillip II.] has the pious desire that all nations should be taught the Holy Catholic Faith and thus be saved"*, to which Ieyasu refused to agree.<sup>15</sup> The shogunate wanted to preserve international trade, in which Portuguese ships were involved the most, but it feared the close links between trade and missionary work. Although King of England, James I (1566–1625), spoke of himself as the *Defender of the Faith*, he wanted above all to trade; but it was the Dutch who impressed the bakufu the most, keeping trade and religious thinking separate, and furthermore Maurice, Prince of Orange (1567–1625), had warned them of the missionaries' stealthy expansion: *"[T]he Society of Jesus, under cover of the sanctity of religion, intends to convert the Japanese to its religion, split the excellent kingdom of Japan, and lead the country to civil war."*<sup>16</sup>

There was a danger that the powerful daimyo could become more loyal to a foreign god (that is to say to his representative on earth, the Pope) than to the shogun himself. Aware of this, Ieyasu, and subsequently his successors, Hidetada (1572–1632) and Iemitsu (1604–1651), began issuing anti-Christian edicts. Foreign monks were ordered to leave Japan under

<sup>13</sup> G. MILTON, *Na dvoře japonského vládce*, Praha 2003, p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> William Adams was an English helmsman who reached the Japanese coast on the Dutch ship *Leifde* in spring 1600. He became a valuable associate for the Shogun for his knowledge of the Western world. He received a number of privileges and was named a Samurai. He remained in Japan until his death in 1620. JANSEN, p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> MILTON, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> JANSEN, p. 74.

penalty of being outcast, having their nose or leg cut off, castration or death.<sup>17</sup> Christian temples and churches were destroyed. The converted were forced to renounce their new faith (stepping on a Christian symbol, a *fumi-e* was considered proof of this). At the same time, citizens had to regularly visit a Buddhist temple where they were watched by priests. Those who refused to submit were often tortured and subsequently executed. The deeds of Christians also contributed to the widespread negative opinion of them, such as when the converted daimyo Arima tried to acquire land and property confiscated from him by Ieyasu through bribery.<sup>18</sup> In 1614–1615, they were involved in the uprising against Tokugawa under the command of Hideyori, and in the defence of Osaka Castle.<sup>19</sup> With the gradual enforcement of strict edicts, Christianity disappeared from Japan. All books referring to foreign religions were destroyed. The Shimabara Rebellion in 1637 can be considered the final expression of resistance.<sup>20</sup>

Along with the persecution of Christianity, foreign trade was also restricted. After Ieyasu's death, traders were plunged into uncertainty. They had to appear before the new shogun and ask that the rights to their factory be recognised. Hidatada forbade foreigners from trading anywhere other than in the ports of Hirado and Nagasaki. For the operating English factory, which was restricted only to Hirado and had deteriorating relations with the Dutch (who had attacked them and declared a blockade of English goods in Hirado, amongst other steps)<sup>21</sup> it proved its undoing. The English ended trading relations with Japan in 1623, turning their attention fully to India. Relations with Spain were affected by their support for missionary work and the bakufu ended mutual trading. The Portuguese, whom the Japanese considered the main instigators in the spreading of Christianity, were expelled from the country in 1636. They didn't want to give up, however, and in 1640 sent a ship from Macau to force the bakufu to trade with them; the Japanese response was over sixty executions and just a handful of the crew were allowed to return safely.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> MILTON, p. 152.

<sup>18</sup> JANSEN, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup> MILTON, pp. 153–158.

<sup>20</sup> This was in land in the north of Kyushu where peasants revolted against the tyranny of the local ruler. The number of rebels grew to thirty thousand and the bakufu had great problems suppressing them. A large role was played here by Dutch ships which fired on rebel positions from the sea. MASON – CAIGER, p. 204.

<sup>21</sup> MILTON, pp. 193–200.

<sup>22</sup> JANSEN, p. 79.

The last to remain in Japan were the Dutch. Their initial elation that they had managed to gain control all foreign trade in the 'land of the rising sun' was instantly forgotten when they were ordered by the shogun in 1641 to move to the artificially-built island of Dejima at Nagasaki. Dejima, which had originally been built for the Portuguese, was surrounded by a fence and strictly guarded. In terms of food, it was self-sufficient to a certain extent (containing a vegetable garden and a number of cows, sheep and hens), and water, which traders had to pay for along with the annual lease of the whole island, was supplied using bamboo pipes.<sup>23</sup> When a ship sailed to this artificial piece of Japan, the crew were forbidden from having weapons, any Christian symbols or Bibles, and they were not allowed to set foot in Nagasaki without special permission. Although the Dutch were totally isolated and had no chance of better prospects, they continued trading with Japan. For the bakufu, trade itself wasn't particularly important, but the presence of the Dutch meant that the Japanese had regular information on events in the world, something they didn't want to miss out on.<sup>24</sup>

In order for Japan to be protected from the influence of foreigners, the Japanese were forbidden to go abroad. Those who had left the islands in the past were not allowed to return under penalty of death. The bakufu restricted shipbuilding to only those able to sail along the coast, and their tonnage was reduced to 500 *koku*.<sup>25</sup> This series of measures, fully undertaken by 1639, resulted in Japan becoming an isolated and 'closed country', today known as the policy of *sakoku*.<sup>26</sup> The Japanese themselves, however, used the term *kaikin*, or 'maritime prohibitions' for the situation.<sup>27</sup> The country's isolation was not absolute, however. Nevertheless, Europeans sooner or later lost interest in Japan, and the only foreigners allowed to maintain limited contact were the Dutch, while the bakufu continued in mutual trading with their closest neighbours. The most significant trade was between the principality of Satsuma and the Ryukyu

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> TOKUGAWA, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> This is a term for a unit of volume which defines an amount of rice – 180 litres. Individual principalities were defined by their annual production, though at least 10,000 *koku*. REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> The Japanese did not use the actual term *sakoku* until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The term first appeared in 1801 in a translation of a German study by geographer Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716). TOKUGAWA, p. 64.

<sup>27</sup> MASON – CRAIG, p. 205.

Kingdom (Okinawa),<sup>28</sup> and also China; and also between the principality of Tsushima and Korea (involving the port of Busan); and last but not least between the principality of Matsumae and the native nations of Ainu in the north of the country.<sup>29</sup>

As such, Japan had closed itself off to Western countries and their squabbling which it considered subversive and a threat to the empire's stability. Over the course of the two centuries during which its isolation was maintained, the Japanese were able to shape their identity and culture. Although they were not open to new religions, they were not closed to new knowledge. Chinese scholars and artists were invited to Japan, and books were much in demand.<sup>30</sup> Over time, Japan also started importing European publications, most commonly in Dutch. The study of books, however, did not trigger the technical progress which Europe was undergoing and which should have been a strong argument for opening up the isolated country.

Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the bakufu succeeded in keeping the *status quo*, but the turbulent global situation began to affect even Japan. As early as 1792, a Russian ship turned up on the island of Hokkaido. A few years later, in 1804, a Russian expedition arrived in Nagasaki with a request from Tsar Alexander I (1801–1825) to establish trading relations under the command of Nikolai Rezanov (1764–1807), which was politely, but emphatically, rejected by the bakufu: “our countrymen wish to carry on no commerce with foreign lands, for we know no want of necessary things”.<sup>31</sup> After departing, Rezanov ordered attacks on Japanese settlements in the southern Kuril Islands and Sakhalin during 1806 and 1807. He defended this action to the Tsar as the only way “to force the Japanese to open trade”; in response to these attacks, Captain Vasily Golovnin (1776–1831) was held prisoner and only released after two years when St. Petersburg had officially distanced itself from the attacks.<sup>32</sup> Under the Rus-

<sup>28</sup> Although it was a kingdom with its own king, it also had a vassal relationship to China and Japan, specifically to the principality of Satsuma, which considered it its vassal territory. D. KEENE, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912*, New York 2002, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> MASON – CRAIG, pp. 205–206.

<sup>30</sup> During the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan was self-sufficient in raw materials and was not dependent on foreign trade. It mostly used trade for getting books and information. JANSEN, pp. 91–93.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>32</sup> W. G. BEASLEY, “The Foreign Threat and the Opening of the Ports”, in: M. B. JANSEN

sian threat, the bakufu took the Ezo (Hokkaido) area under their direct protection and improved its defence capabilities. Under the shadow of the Napoleonic Wars, however, Russia was forced to end its expansion to the Pacific and this led to a slight release in tensions. At the same time, Japan was beginning to worry about the threat coming from China and other foreign states, and it was thought that military reforms were necessary to overturn foreign dominance (e. g., Hayashi Shihei, 1738–1793, and his book *The Military Defense of a Maritime Country*, or *Kaikoku heidan* as the Japanese original was titled).<sup>33</sup> The bakufu, however, were more focused on the growing tensions within the country which were the result of economic and social changes which had also led to a deterioration in the status of the Samurai class.<sup>34</sup>

During the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), the situation also changed for the Dutch. First it was conquered by revolutionary France, and the Batavian Republic was proclaimed in 1794. In 1806, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) charged his brother Louis (1778–1846) with ruling the country and declared the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which was then part of France until 1814, when William VI of Orange (1772–1843) was crowned and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands was established. After a war with the British, Netherlands also lost its colonial base in southern Africa and Indonesia. During this period, Dutch ships did not sail and traders located in Batavia (today's Jakarta) used the ships of neutral countries sailing under the Dutch flag to get supplies to Dejima (including Americans, who visited Japan in this manner a number of times).<sup>35</sup> Britain was not idle, and attempted to get the weakened Dutch trade in Dejima for itself. Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781–1826), Lieutenant–Governor of Java was almost sure of success: “[I]f we are successful in once obtaining footing, there will be no serious difficulty in extending the exportation to many commodities the produce of British India, for which there is no sufficient vend in Europe.”<sup>36</sup> In 1808, the ship *Phaeton* sailed to Nagasaki where it caused chaos when its captain appropriated many supplies and sailed away. Further attempts in 1813–1814 were not successful. The command station in

(ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan. Vol. 5: The Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 265–266.

<sup>33</sup> JANSEN, p. 262.

<sup>34</sup> E. K. TIPTON, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, Routledge 2008, pp. 15–20.

<sup>35</sup> JANSEN, pp. 264–265.

<sup>36</sup> BEASLEY, p. 261.

Dejima convinced the English to sail under a Dutch flag. Java was later handed back to the Dutch. The bakufu did not appreciate the attempt to bypass the Japanese government and its regulations. Although Japan now had a greater knowledge of individual nations and their languages, Europeans continued to be difficult to differentiate between for them (including due to their same way of dressing, in contrast to the traditional clothing worn by the Koreans and Chinese). The attempt at deceiving the bakufu, with sailors and traders passing themselves off as members of a different nation, led in 1825 to the issuance of a strict order. No differentiation was to be made between foreigners, and they should be deterred from docking in Japan: *“Henceforth, whenever a foreign ship is sighted approaching any point on our coast, all persons on hand should fire on and drive it off. If the vessel heads for the open sea, you need not pursue it; allow it to escape. If the foreigners force their way ashore, you may capture and incarcerate them, and if their mother ship approaches, you may destroy it as circumstances dictate. Note that Chinese, Koreans, and Ryukyu can be differentiated by physiognomy and ship design, but Dutch ships are indistinguishable [from those of other Westerns]. Even so, have no compunctions about firing on [the Dutch] by mistake; when in doubt, drive the ship away without hesitation. Never be caught off guard.”*<sup>37</sup>

Although it might appear that this was an extreme solution, it was not unfounded. A study of foreign publications by Takahashi Kageyasu (1785–1829), a great intellectual and linguist, showed that foreigners didn’t allow boats into their ports without authorisation either: *“[W]hen ships from a nation with whom diplomatic relations are not maintained tries to enter, blank rounds are fired from the nearest cannon on shore. It is customary for those ships to leave the harbour after thus being informed that entry is not permitted.”*<sup>38</sup> As such, the bakufu found inspiration in Western policy and hoped that foreigners were not going to try to penetrate their territory. Despite this tough approach to ‘barbarians’, ships did appear on the horizon which were trying to land on Japanese shores. In 1838, the American ship *Morrison* was sent to establish trading relations under the pretext of saving seven shipwrecked Japanese subjects. In accordance with the 1825 edict, the ship with the shipwrecked subjects on board was driven away from the coast.

<sup>37</sup> JANSEN, p. 266.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 266–267.

At the same time, there was a conflict of ideas between Japanese scholars. Those supporting the isolationist policy, including Seishisai Aizawa (1782–1863) wanted to prevent any kind of foreign trade, as it would be damaging for the bakufu, and they considered relations with foreigners to be subversive; they strived for a deepening of national units and modernised armed forces without the assistance of Western foreigners.<sup>39</sup> Against them were the intellectuals who warned against the military and political strength of the West, which was unrivalled in the Far East, and warned against constantly rejecting foreigners and urged the bakufu to open the ports and the country itself.<sup>40</sup> Although they always had the good of the empire in mind and offered their knowledge of Western technologies which could improve Japan's defences, they were persecuted, jailed and sometimes even executed, or they committed *seppuku* ritual suicide; e. g., Watanabe Kazan (1793–1841), Takano Choei (1804–1850).

To a certain extent, the *Morrison* incident created fears of the possible response of Western powers, and these were reinforced by events in subsequent years. Japan observed with surprise and fear how the formerly powerful 'Middle Kingdom' (China) bowed to foreigners. China's Daoguang Emperor had tried to prevent the extensive import of opium which had resulted in a few million subjects becoming addicted. Its dispute with Britain culminated in the so-called First Opium War of 1839–1842. This showed that China was unable to compete with the warfaring of the 'barbarians'. A peace treaty was signed in Nanking in which Britain achieved the complete opening up of China. Britain demanded the payment of war reparations and very favourable trading terms (the opening of further ports for traders, a single customs tariff of 5 %, and the right to extraterritoriality where British citizens were judged in accordance with British law within Chinese territory),<sup>41</sup> these being ignominious and devastating for China. Over time, as Japan received information about this, it became clear what risk they were facing. But they were still unable to understand what the brave Chinese warriors had done wrong, and the Dutch gave them this answer: "*Bravery alone is not sufficient, the art of war demands something more. No outlandish power can compete with a European one, as can be seen by the great realm of China which has been conquered by only*

<sup>39</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, pp. 120–121.

<sup>40</sup> JANSEN, pp. 267–269.

<sup>41</sup> J. K. FAIRBANK, *Dějiny Číny*, Praha 1998, pp. 232–235.

four thousand men.”<sup>42</sup> Mizuno Tadakuni (1794–1851), author of the *Tempō* Reform,<sup>43</sup> also responded to the situation, writing: “*This concerns a foreign country, but I think it should provide a good warning for us.*”<sup>44</sup> In response to the demonstration of the West’s military might, the bakufu relaxed their Edict to Repel Foreign Vessels of 1825 such that if the ship and its crew were in an emergency situation, they were permitted to rest and fill up with necessary supplies. Foreigners were still forbidden from leaving the ship, and if they refused to leave after regaining their strength, Japan’s defenders were permitted to force them away. This did not really represent an act of mercy or the end of isolation, but was rather an expression of pragmatism, which was designed to avoid war with foreign nations, something Japan was not prepared for. Many of the daimyo, including Tokugawa Nariaki (1800–1860), were aware they were unprepared and urged the government to abolish the restriction on building large ships. Their endeavours, however, were without success; the result was secretly built ships and smuggled foreign manuals and weapons.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, Japan received a letter from the Netherlands in which King William II of the Netherlands (1792–1849) called for it to take a more open approach to foreign trade: “*We are aware that the laws laid down by Your Majesty’s enlightened predecessors limit exchange with foreign people severely. But, as Lao Tzu says, ‘where wisdom is enthroned, its product is the maintenance of peace’. When ancient laws, by strict construction, threaten the peace, wisdom directs that they be softened.*”<sup>46</sup> He feared that if Japan was to continue its *sakoku* policy, it could meet a similar fate to China: “*The intercourse between the different nations of the earth is increasing with great rapidity. An irresistible power is drawing them together. Through the invention of steamships distances have become shorter. A nation preferring to remain in isolation at this time of increasing relationships could not avoid hostility with*

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 273.

<sup>43</sup> *Tempō* or *Heavenly Protection* is a term describing the new era beginning in 1830. Although it was hoped to be an era of economic growth, it turned out to be more the opposite. Unusually harsh weather, poor harvests, unhappy samurais and peasants; all this caused the government to attempt the implementation of extensive reforms. They were unsuccessful, however, and Mizuno Tadakuni was removed from the government. TIPTON, pp. 22–24.

<sup>44</sup> JANSEN, p. 270.

<sup>45</sup> TIPTON, p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> JANSEN, pp. 273–274.

many others."<sup>47</sup> Although these were convincing arguments, the bakufu rejected them, saying it was impossible. But the threat from abroad did not vanish. Britain, boosted by its success in the Opium War, desired a market in Japan. In 1845, Sir John Francis Davis (1795–1890), British Superintendent of Trade and Governor of Hong Kong, planned a mission with the objective of acquiring the same privileges as in China. Because of Japan's fears from the Opium War, he was convinced that the bakufu would accede to his requests: "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."<sup>48</sup> In the end, however, such plans were abandoned. For Britain, focused mainly on China and India, Japan was only of secondary interest and they did not want to focus too much on acquiring privileges there. The memory of the loss-making Factory in Hirado two centuries earlier was still fairly fresh. The United States of America expressed greater interest in Japan in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The British government took a simple stance on this: "Her Majesty's Government 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."<sup>49</sup> This is a simple example of the foreign policy of the age. If any one country was to acquire market access in the Far East, mutual agreements meant that other countries would also acquire it; this was similar in the case of China, too.

American interest in Japan was influenced to the largest extent by a number of factors. Whaling ships had already been sailing to Japanese shores since 1820, supplying America with the whale oil it needed (used until 1858 to fill oil lamps).<sup>50</sup> Due to strict maritime bans, however, the sailors were unable to fill up their supplies and the issue of protecting any shipwrecked mariners was very complex, or impossible. With the opening of the Chinese market (through 1834's Treaty of Wangxia for the USA)<sup>51</sup> and the establishment of a formal authority in Oregon and California, the economic potential of the Pacific was seen, something America was determined to take advantage of (until that time it had used the same

<sup>47</sup> BEASLEY, p. 263.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, pp. 263–264.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, p. 264.

<sup>50</sup> JANSEN, p. 274.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 275.

trading routes across the Indian Ocean as Britain did).<sup>52</sup> Here, Japan was an appropriate stop in order to refill coal for the steamships on their long route to China.

In the summer of 1846, Commodore James Biddle (1783–1848) arrived in Edo with an official request which was then rejected. He did not have permission from the American government to use force, and although he was roughly treated, he did not ask for compensation and left with nothing.<sup>53</sup> The American government prepared carefully for the subsequent attempt. Command was given to Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794–1858; the original commander was meant to be Commodore John H. Aulick, 1791–1873),<sup>54</sup> who carefully studied all information about Japan available, and requested sufficient ‘deterrent’ support. Perry’s fleet, including the *Mississippi*, *Plymouth*, *Saratoga* and the *Susquehanna* flagship, arrived at the port of Naha on the island of Ryukyu on 26 May 1853. Perry visited Okinawa’s capital city of Shuri (despite the Principality of Satsuma’s protests), leased a house and concluded negotiations on mutual trade; he also visited the Ogasawara Islands (Bonin Islands) where he purchased land in order to build an office and supply station there.<sup>55</sup> Satisfied with himself, he continued to Japan itself, where he arrived in July 1853 at the port of Uraga.<sup>56</sup> His ship, many times larger than any Japanese ship with a crew numbering almost a thousand men and sixty cannons,<sup>57</sup> was now close to Edo. The boat earned the name *kurofune*, meaning ‘black ship’ as a result of the black smoke rising from its chimneys and its dark hull. Perry was told to move to the port in Nagasaki, because Uraga was not the right place to receive requests from foreigners. The Commodore refused to move anywhere and demanded that his letter from President Millard Fillmore (1800–1874) be delivered to high government representatives. According to his orders, Commodore Perry was first to take a friendly and respectful approach, and only should that not work was he to take a firmer approach, although he nevertheless

<sup>52</sup> BEASLEY, pp. 267–268.

<sup>53</sup> JANSEN, p. 275.

<sup>54</sup> BEASLEY, p. 269.

<sup>55</sup> KEENE, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> The exact date differs in different publications. In *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912* and *The Cambridge History of Japan, Vol. 5*, the date of arrival is given as 8 July, while in *The Making of Modern Japan*, 2 July is given. Other publications only give the month of July, or the year of 1853.

<sup>57</sup> JANSEN, p. 277.

applied a firm approach from the beginning of discussions. He thought that since all previous missions had failed despite respect and decorum, he had the right to take an opposing approach: *“He was resolved to adopt a course entirely contrary to that of all others who had hitherto visited Japan on a similar errand – to demand as a right, and not as a favour, those acts of courtesy which are due from one civilized nation to another.”*<sup>58</sup> A few times, however, he went beyond his competencies, such as when he sent the Japanese a firm letter and a number of white flags saying they would be necessary, in case of war, for peace negotiations.<sup>59</sup> The shogunate, aware of the danger of rejecting the American letter, acceded to Perry’s conditions. He was received in Kurihama, near Uruga port. Shogun Tokugawa Ieyoshi (1793–1853), however, was gravely ill and unable to attend to affairs of state and Commodore Perry was assured that he would receive a response the following year.<sup>60</sup> Perry then left Japanese waters and set out for China to renew his supplies.

The shogunate had to decide what it was going to do next. Abe Masahiro (1819–1857), who stood at the head of the ‘elders’ (people alternating in the highest executive roles and creating a collective decision-making body),<sup>61</sup> called a meeting regarding the new threat. But they were unable to make a decision, being divided into camps with opposing positions, including Abe Masahiro. At the beginning of August, he decided upon an unprecedented step. He sent a translation of the American requests to all daimyo, high officials and a few ordinary citizens and also informed the Imperial Court in Kyoto of the whole event.<sup>62</sup> Faced with an impasse, and aware of the inevitability of Japan’s ‘opening’, he hoped for a united course of action. The opposite, however, was what happened. Just two of the daimyo agreed to the American terms, defending their opinion by citing the low morale of citizens and Japan’s imperfect defence capabilities; a number proposed a temporary solution saying that the shogunate should trade with America only until it was fully prepared for war; other wanted Japan to delay future negotiations until America gave up; a number were unable to make a decision and eleven daimyo wanted

<sup>58</sup> BEASLEY, p. 269.

<sup>59</sup> JANSEN, p. 277.

<sup>60</sup> KEENE, p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 123.

<sup>62</sup> JANSEN, p. 280.

to confront the foreigners and fight.<sup>63</sup> Daimyo from the Satsuma principality, Shimazu Nariakira's (1809–1858) idea of possible war was based on delaying the enemy until military preparations were complete so that they could eliminate the threat of foreign barbarians in one swift strike.<sup>64</sup> One of the most influential proponents of war was Tokugawa Nariaki, daimyo from the principality of Mito and maritime defence advisor, who believed that although rejecting foreigners would involve certain difficulties, the bakufu should not submit to their demands; his main argument was about morale and honour: *"When we consider the respective advantages and disadvantages of war and peace, we find that if we put our trust in war, the whole country's morale will be increased and even if we sustain an initial defeat we will in the end expel the foreigners; while if we put our trust in peace, even though things may seem tranquil for a time, the morale of the country will be greatly lowered and we will come in the end to complete collapse."*<sup>65</sup>

The idea of abandoning the isolationist policy which had shaped Tokugawa Japan for over two centuries also had its proponents. Ii Naosuke (1815–1860), daimyo from Hikone principality, was convinced that Japan should return to the international market which would provide it with the necessary opportunities to make preparations against foreigners: *"Careful consideration of conditions as they are today [...] leads me to believe that [...] it is impossible in the crisis we now face to ensure the safety and tranquillity of our country merely by an instance on the seclusion laws as we did in former times. [...] We must construct new steamships, especially powerful warships, and these will load with goods not needed in Japan [...] these will be called merchant vessels, but they will in fact have the secret purpose of training a navy."*<sup>66</sup>

Kuroda Nagahiro (1811–1887), daimyo from the Fukuoka principality, was of a similar opinion. The Americans (or Russians) should be permitted to trade in one port (Nagasaki) for a limited period of five to six years, with other nations rejected; thus Japan would avoid conflicts with America, which were they to grow into a war could endanger the very safety of Edo, and if they were to be attacked by Russia the shogunate could lose some of its northern territory.<sup>67</sup> Good relations with America (and

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>64</sup> KEENE, p. 18.

<sup>65</sup> JANSEN, pp. 280–281.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, pp. 281–282.

<sup>67</sup> KEENE, pp. 16–17.

consequently Russia) would serve as a shield. Kuroda also warned of the need for better maritime defence, and in this regard the abolishment of the ban on building large ships; experts in this field should be invited to Japan to monitor the construction of modern Western-style ships, and the Japanese should be allowed to travel overseas without sanction.<sup>68</sup> There was unexpected support for *kaikoku* policy,<sup>69</sup> or 'open country' from the Imperial Court. Chancellor Takatsukasa Masamichi (1789–1868) referred to the fact that although the country was closed to foreigners, trade with China, Korea and the Netherlands had been undertaken the whole time, and as such he did not see a problem in adding other countries to this group as long as this was governed by the prescribed rules (which applied for the Dutch).<sup>70</sup>

The old Chinese proverb "*internal disorder invites external difficulties, while external problems provoke internal unrest*",<sup>71</sup> was to prove a particularly apt description of the situation in Japan over subsequent years. Perry's arrival deepened the worsening crisis in the shogunate, which culminated in 1868 with the overthrow of the shogun and the establishment of a new government headed by the emperor, beginning the new Meiji era. As such, the period from 1853 to 1868 is called *bakumatsu*, meaning 'end of the shogunate'.<sup>72</sup>

Before Commodore Perry returned for the response, a Russian fleet of four ships arrived in Japan in the summer of that year under the command of Vice-Admiral Yevfimiy Vasilyevich Putyatin (1803–1884). In contrast to the American expedition, it submitted its request in Nagasaki, as proof of its respect of Japanese law, where it handed over a polite letter from the Tsar with a request that trading relations be established.<sup>73</sup> In the end, however, they received only a few evasive responses and a plea to wait a few years due to the death of the last shogun. He returned in January 1854, but again his trading treaty was rejected.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, the bakufu were focused on establishing Tokugawa Iesada (1824–1858) in his role, and were unable to stop pressure from foreign powers. The Ameri-

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> TIPTON, p. 28.

<sup>70</sup> KEENE, p. 18.

<sup>71</sup> TIPTON, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 123.

<sup>73</sup> KEENE, p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> BEASLEY, p. 271.

can fleet, boosted by additional ships, returned to Japan in 1854. Perry had found out about the Russian mission and did not want to accept any disadvantageous agreement under any conditions.<sup>75</sup> Both sides met in Kanagawa (today's Yokohama). Although the bakufu knew that they would likely be unable to avoid the creation of some kind of agreement, they did not want to accede to permitting international trade: *"Japan is a small country with a large population. As such, although we are self-sufficient, we do not produce enough to sell to foreigners. Foreign trade will deplete our resources, and what could have lasted a century would be gone in half that time. Foreign trade is thus without merit, merely forcing the populace to suffer, causing problems for the shogun's government. Think of a well that was dug for one family but is used by all the neighbors. It will dry up very quickly. If foreign powers insist on trading with us regardless of our wish, and if the only alternative is war, then we will choose to fight. Do the Western powers believe that as long as they are making profits, the other nations' suffering do not matter?"*<sup>76</sup>

Negotiations ended on 31 March 1854, when the Japan-US Treaty 'of Peace and Amity' was signed. In this, Japan consented to the opening of two ports (Shimoda and Hakodate),<sup>77</sup> where American ships were to get coal, water and other supplies. Assistance was to be given to shipwrecked sailors, who were to be allowed to return to their countries. An American consulate was approved, to be based in Shimoda. The treaty also permitted the purchase of goods in open ports, something Perry perceived as a precursor to future trade. It also included a most favoured nation status for America (if Japan provided any privileges to another country, these would automatically also apply for America too). Although the shogun was convinced he had secured the minimum possible concession to the foreigners, he did so without the approval of the Imperial Court (although he had promised Abe Masahiro no action would be taken without his approval).<sup>78</sup> Emperor Kōmei (1831–1867) was dissatisfied with the government's approach and called for the foreigners to be expelled from the country. The Shogun's inability to end the threat of foreign expansion and increasing dissatisfaction with the Tokugawa regime led to the

<sup>75</sup> JANSEN, p. 278.

<sup>76</sup> TOKUGAWA, p. 133.

<sup>77</sup> These are two isolated and insignificant ports which were to keep the foreigners far from Edo. REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 123.

<sup>78</sup> KEENE, p. 24.

forming of an anti-Tokugawa opposition which upheld the motto *sonnō jōi* – “Revere the Emperor and expel the barbarians!”<sup>79</sup>

The treaty with the Americans was not the first, and nor was it the last. British Rear Admiral Sir James Stirling (1791–1865) arrived in Japan as part of the Crimean War (1853–1856), assigned to protect British ships and attack Putyatin; his main goal was to prevent Russian ships landing in Japanese ports.<sup>80</sup> The whole situation, however, was misinterpreted by Japan, who offered Stirling a convention (based on Perry’s treaty), which he accepted on 14 October 1854 even though he did not have diplomatic credentials for this.<sup>81</sup> Putyatin arrived in Japan at the end of that year, when mutual negotiations were disrupted by a large earthquake and subsequent tsunami. Although a number of Russian ships, including the *Diana* flagship were destroyed or seriously damaged, Russian sailors saved dozens of citizens who had been swept out to sea, earning gratitude and appreciation from the Japanese, expressed in friendlier negotiations at the beginning of the subsequent year.<sup>82</sup> In February 1855, a treaty was signed in which the two countries split the Kuril Islands between themselves, and Nagasaki port was opened. The Dutch, represented by Jan Hendrik Donker Curtius (1813–1879) achieved a certain relaxation in conditions at Dejima at the beginning of 1856 and also acquired the same privileges as the other countries.

With the outbreak of the Second Opium War in China (1856–1860) and the subsequent capture of Canton in winter 1857 by the allied forces of Britain and France, the shogunate was faced with a difficult decision. The Dutch again warned Japan that Britain would demand the same trading rights they had in China, and as such it would be better for the empire if they could conclude a treaty with the Netherlands first, which would be binding for Britain. Negotiations began in Nagasaki in summer 1857, where Curtius persuaded the officials to conclude a trading treaty which was sent to Edo for approval. Putyatin arrived in Nagasaki in September, and immediately demanded the conclusion of a similar treaty. The town officials, who had still not received a decision from Edo, concluded mutual treaties with the Netherlands and Russia on 16 October (involving

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 34.

<sup>80</sup> BEASLEY, pp. 270–271.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem, p. 271.

<sup>82</sup> KEENE, pp. 25–27.

an improvement in trading restrictions in Nagasaki).<sup>83</sup> American consul, Townsend Harris (1804–1878), who arrived in Japan in summer 1856, was dissatisfied with these developments and endeavoured to acquire better conditions for the United States of America. He demanded to appear before the shogun with his requests; and he was granted an audience despite many protests in the Hall of State Ceremonies on 7 December 1857.<sup>84</sup> He received the shogun's consent to further negotiations which was reinforced by warnings such as Japan received from the Dutch: *"If Japan should make a treaty with the ambassador of the United States, who has come unattended by military force, her honor will not be impaired. There will be great difference between a treaty made with a single individual, unattended, and one made with a person who should bring fifty men-of-war to these shores."*<sup>85</sup> He emphatically warned the Japanese government that should a military conflict with Britain (France) break out, they would have no chance of winning and the empire would be at the mercy of their exaggerated claims, while the United States was striving for an agreement in a peaceful manner through which Japan could prevent opium imports (in their agreement with China, the Americans had undertaken not to import or smuggle opium).<sup>86</sup>

Debates on the form of the treaty started at the beginning of 1858 (how many ports would be open, whether traders would be able to live in the particular cities, whether the presence of foreign envoys in Edo was necessary). At the end of February, a draft treaty was ready which was approved by the government's high-ranking Elder, Hotta Masayoshi (1810–1864). Harris, however, did not realise the treaty was meant to be ratified by the Emperor himself who had a negative attitude to co-operation with foreigners. On the basis of his decision, Hotta was removed from his role and replaced by Ii Naosuke (1814–1860), who influenced by events (signature of the Convention between Britain and China, the so-called Treaty of Tientsin)<sup>87</sup> and the insistence of American consul Harris, did not follow the Emperor's express wish not to establish trading relations with the 'barbarians'. The treaty between the United States of America and Japan (the 'Harris Treaty') was concluded on 29 July 1858 on the battleship

<sup>83</sup> BEASLEY, pp. 276–277.

<sup>84</sup> KEENE, p. 35.

<sup>85</sup> BEASLEY, p. 278.

<sup>86</sup> TOKUGAWA, pp. 132–133.

<sup>87</sup> FAIRBANK, p. 232.

*Powhatan*.<sup>88</sup> The shogunate undertook to open a number of additional ports over a five-year period (in addition to the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate): Kanagawa and Nagasaki from 4 July 1859, Niigata from 1 January 1860, Hyōgo (Kobe) from 1 January 1863; and trading in Edo and Osaka was to be permitted from 1 January 1862.<sup>89</sup> A consul was to reside in each of the open cities, and a diplomatic representative in Edo. All US citizens were to acquire extraterritoriality with judicial power represented by the consul. The treaty established a low import duty, and the import of opium was banned except for medical purposes. The bakufu then concluded a new treaty with the Netherlands (18 August), Russia (19 August), Britain (26 August) and France (9 October), which as well as the terms above included the granting of most favoured nation status (such that all advantages which had been or would be provided to another party would automatically be conferred to them).<sup>90</sup> These treaties are termed Unequal Treaties because one of the parties was at a disadvantage (here Japan). These treaties continued to be revised until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the opening of the ports, Japan found itself facing new problems. The market was dominated by quickly growing imports of cheap manufactured products and textiles which the shogunate could not fight against (were it to attempt to restrict foreign trade in any way, it would come up against complaints from consuls); their low prices meant local producers could not compete.<sup>91</sup> An accompanying effect was the arrival of foreign traders and diplomats to different cities. Mutual co-existence proved problematic in many cases with the growth in internal political tensions within the empire. Japanese authorities attempted to restrict its citizens' contact with foreigners by establishing separated neighbourhoods: *"It is the desire of the Japanese authorities that all foreigners should remove to the new location as soon as possible."*<sup>92</sup> This attempt was complicated by the fact that a number of traders had already leased houses or land to build on and did not want to move. Such behaviour, however, also involved taking a risk, as proven by a Mr. Porter, representative for

<sup>88</sup> KEENE, p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> BEASLEY, p. 280.

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem, p. 283.

<sup>91</sup> TIPTON, p. 31.

<sup>92</sup> Consul Morrison to Mr. Alcock, Nagasaki, May 31, 1861, The National Archives, London, Kew (henceforth only TNA), FO 410/2.

Messrs. Dent. and Co., when his leased house was burnt to the ground in 1860.<sup>93</sup> In trying to secure redress, he came up against the unwillingness of the Japanese officials, which just increased tensions between them and the consuls.

Attempts on the lives of foreign citizens by supporters of jōi caused great diplomatic problems for the bakufu. In 1859 a Russian officer and his men were attacked in the streets of Kanagawa, as a result of which the officer died.<sup>94</sup> In January 1861, Henry C. J. Heusken (1832–1861), an interpreter and secretary for American consul, Harris, was killed in Edo.<sup>95</sup> In the same year, an attack took place on a Russian doctor who was returning home on a horse when he was attacked by a man with two swords (only high-rank Samurais were entitled to bear two swords).<sup>96</sup> A possible motive for the attack could be an insult the Russian doctor may have inadvertently committed – the right to travel on a horse was a privilege of high-rank Samurais. Not even the fact that it was an employee of the government eased the situation (similarly to Mr. Porter's case), which aroused doubts on the Japanese government's motivation: *"Is the Government trying to create an ill-feeling among foreigners against the Japanese, or vice versa?"*<sup>97</sup>

With the assistance of city representatives, individual consuls attempted to create suitable conditions for the cohabitation of both parties. Japan's treatment of those arrested caused great controversy, as they were not treated in accordance with the rights and liberties foreigners were guaranteed in the signed treaties: *"To seize a foreigner upon any idle or frivolous grounds, rush upon him, drag him down, beat him and tie him with cords in a brutal and humiliating manner, and so parade him before a Japanese population, and his own countryman, could not possibly tend to improve the position of foreigners generally in Japan, nor be considered consistent with their just rights. Yet such has been done on more than one occasion, without adequate provocation or any necessity to justify either the act or the undue violence of the method adopted."*<sup>98</sup> In this and other cases, the foreign consuls linked up to agree on a joint course of action (such as when the British and French

<sup>93</sup> Acting Consul Eusden to Mr. Alcock, Hakodaki, April 12, 1861, TNA, FO 410/2.

<sup>94</sup> Mr. Alcock to Earl Russell, Yeddo, September 21, 1861, TNA, FO 410/2.

<sup>95</sup> BEASLEY, p. 288.

<sup>96</sup> Acting Consul Eusden to Mr. Alcock, Hakodaki, April 13, 1861, TNA, FO 410/2.

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>98</sup> Mr. Alcock to Mr. Harris, Yokohama, December 11, 1861, TNA, FO 410/2.

consuls left Edo following Heusken's death until their safety could be assured).<sup>99</sup>

The most significant attack was that on the British legation and its members (including Sir Rutheford Alcock, 1809–1897, who was Britain's representative in Japan from 1858) in Edo on the night of 5 July 1861. Although the attack was undertaken in an organised and thorough manner: "And thus it happened that entrance was actually effected from three different sides; partly, no doubt, with a view of distracting the attention of those on the defensive, and also the more surely and rapidly to effect their object of destruction to all in the Legation," only a few members of the legation were injured (including a Mr. Morrison and Mr. Oliphant).<sup>100</sup> As compensation for their injuries, which were shown to be lifelong for Oliphant (his left hand was permanently damaged), they received a sum of 10,000 dollars.<sup>101</sup> Daimyo's and shogun's retainers assisted in protection of the British legation. Two of those men died and fifteen were injured (including a chef and priest).<sup>102</sup> Sir Alcock then asked the captain of the *Ringdove* ship to return to the proximity of Edo and provide a number of sailors to protect the legation.<sup>103</sup> There had been around fourteen attackers, although this figure appeared small to Sir Alcock compared to the number supplied by the servants which came to fifty (supported by a sheet of paper found with one of the attackers which contained 40 names).<sup>104</sup> Of the original fourteen, three died during the attack, two committed *seppuku* while escaping and three were executed (with their execution taking place in secret and their heads displayed on poles with a description of their offence: "the criminals whose heads were thus exposed were simply highway robbers, executed for entering a temple and stealing"; the government explained the false accusation through fears of possible revenge from their kind).<sup>105</sup> The attack on the site of the British legation stirred up debate on insufficient levels of protection of foreign citizens and their representatives. Dutch consul de Wit refused to return to Edo until he and the other consuls were pro-

<sup>99</sup> BEASLEY, pp. 288–289.

<sup>100</sup> Mr. Alcock to Lord J. Russell, Yeddo, July 6, 1861, TNA, FO 410/4.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes of a Conference with the Japanese Ministers of Foreign Affairs, March 12, 1862, TNA, FO 410/2.

<sup>102</sup> Mr. Alcock to Lord J. Russell, Yeddo, July 25, 1861, Inclosure 6: List of Killed and Wounded in the Attack on the Legation on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> July, TNA, FO 410/4.

<sup>103</sup> Mr. Alcock to Captain Craigie, Yeddo, July 6, 1861, 2 AM, TNA, FO 410/4.

<sup>104</sup> Mr. Alcock to Lord J. Russell, Yeddo, July 6, 1861, TNA, FO 410/4.

<sup>105</sup> Mr. Alcock to Earl Russell, Yokohama, February 11, 1862, TNA, FO 410/2.

vided with sufficient protection: *“It is now apparent that the danger which, according to the former communications of your Excellencies, hung threatening over the heads of the Diplomatic Agents at Yeddo [Edo] actually still exists, and also that the Japanese Government have not the power to enforce the respect of a principle of the law of nations [...]”*<sup>106</sup>

But good relations with foreigners were not beneficial for the Japanese either, as shown by the attack on the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Ando Tsushima no Kami (1819–1871) was attacked in 1862 during the Sakashitamon incident.<sup>107</sup> Ando suffered two serious slash wounds which left him unable to work for a whole month, and his assistant was shot; of the eight assailants, only one survived and he declared that four of them had been involved in the attack on the British legation a year earlier.<sup>108</sup>

The situation became even tenser when there was an attack on four British citizens on 14 September 1862. Literally a day before this happened (13 September), Colonel Edward St. John Neale (1812–1866) had been warned of the planned return of the imperial envoy: *“[N]ot knowing the ways and customs of foreigners, we fear some misunderstanding might arise, and therefore we request you to make known to your Consul at Kanagawa, that we do not wish British subjects to pass along the road the said Envoy will take on the said 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.”*<sup>109</sup> That which the Japanese ministers feared, however, actually happened the following day. The foreigners attacked were Mrs. Borrodaile (the wife of a trader from Hong Kong), Mr. Marshall (her brother-in-law and a trader from Yokohama), Mr. W. C. Clarke (from the company Messrs. H. Heard and Co.) and Mr. C. L. Richardson (who was visiting Japan before returning from China to England).<sup>110</sup> The attack took place at the village of Namamugi when they came across a procession of Samurais accompanying the father (Shimazu Saburo, 1817–1887) of a prince of Satsuma (Shimazu Tadayoshi, 1840–1897). Mr. Richardson’s

<sup>106</sup> M. de Wit to the Japanese Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Consulate-General of the Netherlands in the Japan, Yokohama, July 9, 1861, TNA, FO 410/4.

<sup>107</sup> H. D. HAROOTUNIAN, “Late Tokugawa culture and thought”, in: M. B. JANSEN, *The Cambridge History of Japan. Vol. 5: The Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 1989, p. 196.

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of a Conference with the Japanese Ministers of Foreign Affairs, March 12, 1862, TNA, FO 410/2.

<sup>109</sup> The Japanese Ministers for Foreign Affairs to Lieutenant-Colonel Neale, September 13, 1862, TNA, FO 410/6.

<sup>110</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Neale to Earl Russell, Yokohama, September 21, 1862, Inclosure 3: Minutes of a Meeting of the Merchants resident in Yokohama, held September 15, 1862, TNA, FO 410/6.

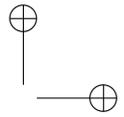
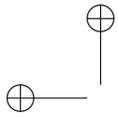
group was called upon to get off the road, and although according to the statements of the survivors they did so (though they did not dismount their horses), they were then attacked by Samurais; Richardson died of his wounds there, the other two men were injured and found refuge at the American consulate in Kanagawa, and the woman escaped without injury.<sup>111</sup> The British consulate urged the bakufu to take drastic action, with the support of other countries. They demanded the demotion of the daimyo (Shimazu Saburo) who had allowed the murder, the death penalty for at least five murderers from his entourage in the presence of British officers, and the Japanese government was to pay £100,000 as a fine for attacking an unarmed group of British citizens.<sup>112</sup> The government paid the sum in May of the following year, but it was unable to punish the perpetrators from the principality of Satsuma. Due to the delays and evasive negotiations, and the inability of the bakufu to create order, Colonel Neale decided to take action. With a squadron of seven ships (British, French and Dutch), he set sail from Yokohama on 6 August 1863. They arrived in Kagoshima Bay on 12 August, where the British demands were repeated (the principality of Satsuma was also to pay an extra sum of £25,000 and bring the murderers to justice) and they were given one day to respond.<sup>113</sup> The response was that the attackers had escaped and could not be found, and that the fine could not be paid without the shogunate's authorisation. Colonel Neale therefore decided to seize a number of steamships belonging to Satsuma as compensation, during which time they were fired upon by coastal artillery. The squadron returned fire, and this resulted in the destruction of a large part of the city of Kagoshima and a number of British ships were damaged, withdrawing back to Yokohama. Although there was no clear victor, the principality decided to pay the fine (using a loan from the government) and to punish the perpetrators if they could be found (during negotiations, however, those in question were present in Kagoshima, and as such this was merely an empty declaration).<sup>114</sup> It also, however, fuelled interest in

<sup>111</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Neale to Earl Russell, Yokohama, September 15, 1862, TNA, FO 410/6.

<sup>112</sup> Memorandum, Foreign Office, November 28, 1862, TNA, FO 410/6.

<sup>113</sup> KEENE, p. 75.

<sup>114</sup> BEASLEY, p. 293.



Western technology and warfare and the principality of Satsuma ordered a number of warships from Britain.<sup>115</sup>

The co-existence of Japanese and foreigners remained problematic in subsequent years, and although their cultures and traditions never mixed, it played a large part in the modernisation of Japan in both technical and political terms. Seeing the strength of the Western forces, opponents of foreigners sooner or later realised that without progress they could never be equals. Frustration at the presence of foreign traders, diplomats and citizens rebounded and hit the very heart of Japan, resulting in 1868 in the undoing of the over-two-hundred-year-old shogunate, which had to give in to demands for reform. The Emperor once again became the sovereign ruler. As such, the subsequent years are known as the Meiji Restoration, which led to the formation of modern Japan as we know it today.



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<sup>115</sup> REISCHAUER – CRAIG, p. 133.

