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Alcock and Harris

FOREIGN DIPLOMACY IN BAKUMATSU JAPAN

by JOHN MCMASTER

TWENTY-ONE times the guns shattered the noonday quiet of Edo Bay. As they roared, the red-ball flag of Japan was hoisted to join what Japanese called the flowery flag of the Americans. It was July 29th, the year was 1858 and the warship was acknowledging that a commercial treaty had just been signed on board. The roar, the smoke and the shudder throughout the wooden ship was appropriate. The proximate cause of the treaty had been cannon. Although the Japanese then had no ship to match the "Powhattan," the solitary vessel was not as important as the news she had brought from Shanghai. Other foreign vessels were on the way to Japan, not alone but in fleets. A British squadron was to be followed by a French, both fresh from forcing treaties upon China. A Russian fleet was expected soon. There had been little discussion. The American envoy, Townsend Harris, had said simply that to refuse to a single foreigner what it would shortly have to give up to mighty fleets would disgrace the Tokugawa *bakufu*, the military government of Japan, in the eyes of its own people. Better to make the best of the situation. The Japanese had done so but it cannot have been a happy group of *bakufu* officials who went ashore that afternoon.

By contrast the American must have been jubilant. The man who had left New York an alcoholic failure in 1849 had now achieved a fine diplomatic success for his country as well as his own personal redemption.

During ten years of exile Harris had roamed the Pacific and Indian oceans possibly even as a remittance man paid by his family to stay away.¹ That was over now. He had achieved an honourable place in the histories. Moreover no man had more reason to dislike Japan than Harris. The needless privations forced upon him by the *bakufu* at Shimoda and all the weary months of negotiation should have disgusted him with Japan and everything Japanese. "The mendacity of these men passes all belief," runs a typical entry in his *Journal*, "... I am really ill, yet I am forced day after day to listen to useless debates on points

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courtesy and assistance. The Dutch translations would have been impossible without the patient help of Miss H. Walburghschmidt.

¹ Hyman Kublin, "A Salute to Townsend Harris", *Japan Quarterly*, v, No. 3, July-September 1958, pp. 2-5.

that have been exhausted and are only varied by some new phase of falsehood.”² In spite of it all he was enthusiastic about “his beloved Japan and expatiates upon her beauties with all the ardour of an elderly lover contemplating the charms of a youthful fiancée.”³ “Even more eulogistic than the Dutch”, wrote another foreigner who knew him at the time.⁴

What this meant in practice was that Harris would give the Japanese the benefit of the doubt in any matter arising between them and foreign nations. Unlike some later foreigners who also loved Japan, he had no intention of remaining there. An interest in helping to put his treaty into force was enough to hold him for a few months but he was a temporary diplomat come to do a particular job. That job was done.

A sincere Christian, Harris hoped to bring Japan into the comity of nations under more reputable conditions than India or China. This was now possible as his treaty provided for a very gradual opening of relations with the West. It was as much as he could do. To put possibility into practice was beyond the power of Townsend Harris or any other American.

Wanderings that had touched Calcutta, Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai had taught Harris that British merchants formed the majority of the foreigners in Asia and did the bulk of its foreign trade. As soon as Japan was opened to trade, Britain would inevitably become the chief arbiter of its foreign relations. Harris’s importance would end with the arrival of the first British representative.

It had to be so. Even before the outbreak of its civil war in the spring of 1860 the United States had little interest in the commercial prospects of Japan and an almost complete indifference to the welfare of Harris.⁵ Its trade was small and its desire to back up a diplomat with warships even smaller. In contrast to Palmerston’s support of tenuous claims to British citizenship with a naval bombardment, American policy reckoned that its citizens who dared foreign adventures in hopes of profit should face the penalties when those hopes went sour. Although the *bakufu* feared colonization, most Western nations had as little interest in Japan as the Americans.

Napoleon III had instructed his diplomats to cooperate with Britain precisely because French interest in the area was so small. The Emperor hoped that British good will earned in China and Japan might be useful in some area of genuine French interest.⁶ Russian concern was confined to buying provisions for her Siberian colonies and the warm-water anchorage at Nagasaki for her fleet in winter. She would nibble tentatively at islands to the north and west but seems to have had little interest in the three most populated Japanese islands. Aside from the hope that the old relations of the East-India Company would

² Townsend Harris, *Complete Journal*, New York, 1930, p. 327.

³ E. B. Fonblanque, *Nippon and Pe-chi-li*, London, 1862, p. 105.

⁴ Laurence Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of*

Elgins Mission to China and Japan, 2 vols., New York, 1860, p. 345.

⁵ Kublin, pp. 3, 7.

⁶ Alexander Michie, *The Englishman in China*, 2 vols., London, 1900, I, 106.

give them a special business advantage in Japan, the Netherlands was almost entirely involved in Indonesia. Of all the Western powers only Britain combined a sufficient interest in the Japan trade with the power to enforce it.

As longest resident diplomat, Harris would have the honorary position of *doyen*. When the diplomatic corps as a group dealt with the *bakufu*, he would be its spokesman. It was a ceremonial honour. In practice the arrival of a British representative would relegate Harris to being merely the minister of a second-rate power. Personality or persuasion might help him to influence events but the major decisions must lie with the British ambassador. Pending his arrival, Harris had little to do but caretaking chores.

These had their importance. During the next eleven months the *bakufu* would decide how best to deal with the unwanted foreign trade. Much that it did in this interim period would determine the later history of Japan. As Donker Curtius stayed on at Nagasaki in his traditional position as Netherlands business agent, Harris was the only knowledgeable foreigner dealing directly with the *bakufu*. Unlike later foreigners, he was too humble to write. Not a wealthy man and hardly lazy with his pen, he yet turned down a publisher's offer,⁷ writing to a friend "We have quite enough of error relating to this country in the shape of books, and I earnestly hope that we shall have no more inflicted on us until some man fitted for the work by having fully learned the language . . . shall give us an honest, truthful work on Japan."⁸ Others were not to be so modest.

Chief amongst these and the only one to share a knowledge of diplomatic matters was Rutherford Alcock, the first British ambassador. In 1861–62, he wrote a book *The Capital of the Tycoon*, from which almost all later historical writing derives. So much so that it is scarcely realized that Harris remained in Japan more than four years after the last entry in his *Journal* on February 27th, 1858. Alcock wrote a book and burned his private papers. Harris refused to write but left his private papers. These are worth study because he was better qualified to write on Japan than Alcock. For many months they are also the only Western evidence coming out of Japan.

Given the widespread popularity of Alcock's book, it is a healthy corrective to look at Japanese affairs through the eyes of Townsend Harris. Unlike Rutherford Alcock, he was not a career diplomat looking to future promotion and a pension. Harris had done his work, recovered his reputation, and wanted only to return to his beloved Manhattan. With a deep love of Japan and its people, and no professional ambitions to colour his vision, he was perhaps the most disinterested observer of the scene.

Back from treaty-making, Harris settled into familiar surroundings at Shimoda and awaited the British fleet. A long letter to Secretary of State Cass in Washington explained various sections of his treaty.⁹

⁷ Harris Papers, City College of New York, Book 4, No. 20, to Childs & Peterson, Shimoda, 29 March 1859.

⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 157, to E. Garrett,

Edo, 22 August 1895.

⁹ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 37, to Cass, Shimoda, 7 August 1858.

Although it vexed many minds and tempers a decade later, the question of extraterritoriality was easily dismissed in 1858. Japanese municipal laws were "very peculiar" wrote Harris. It would be unfair to make foreigners live under them. It would be equally unfair to demand that the Japanese abrogate them. Seeing justice in neither proposal, Harris chose a separate foreign settlement where foreign consuls could apply their respective legal codes to their own nationals.

These consular officers themselves presented a problem. Aside from controlling their country's merchants and seamen, their main duty was to report upon the prospects for their nation's trade with Japan.

In most parts of the world consular officers made periodic horseback trips to visit farming and mining districts. It was a chance to get away from the routine of the seaport. Usually several foreigners would go together, combining duty with hunting, fishing and any other amusement that came their way. Having had a vacation they would return bringing a little commercial information with which to impress their superiors. The presence and price of foreign imports in inland towns, the state of the crops, possible improvements to increase exports, and a general comment on the prosperity of the district they visited made up a report in an age which did not teach its children economics. This right of consular travel was a standard practice in most countries, but once again the "very peculiar" laws of Japan intruded.

Having signed the treaty the *bakufu* now began raising objections to it. This travel of consular personnel outside the narrow limits of the treaty ports could embarrass them. Foreigners might intrude in the domains belonging to the "eighteen great Daimyos." They might also interfere with the "sanctity which attaches to Kyoto, the residence of the Spiritual Emperor."¹⁰ Verbally Harris gave way without giving up the treaty right, noting what was to be the touchstone of his Japan policy: he would not embarrass the *bakufu* on secondary matters but would hold firm to the essentials of his treaty.

One of these was his residence at the Edo capital. The *bakufu* wished to postpone this for a year and a half until January 1861, but Harris stood fast on this question. The changes would be so great that a responsible person must be there when trade starts, he wrote to Washington. Additionally, his interpreter, Heusken, had been told by Moriyama, his Japanese opposite, that many daimyo did not care about exchange or shipping regulations, but objected strongly to visible concessions such as the right of foreign diplomats to live at Edo.¹¹ As the *bakufu* did not take much interest in tariffs, Harris set the import tariff at 20% on most goods in order to ensure a sufficient income for the government.

If Harris was pro-Japanese, he was also reputedly anti-British. "Tell the truth, fear God and hate the British" was reportedly the keystone of his life-long conduct.¹² Of the first two there is little doubt. The third is open to question. There is little evidence of it in his

¹⁰ See also, W. G. Beasley, *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy*, London, 1955, p. 220.

¹¹ Harris, *Journal*, p. 538.

¹² W. E. Griffis, *Townsend Harris*, London, 1895, p. 4.

papers, yet it may be true. The aged Harris had one interview with his future biographer in New York in 1874. At this time he mentioned the influence of his grandmother whose home had been burned by British troops in 1812. As a youth in upstate New York he probably was anti-British. Again in his last years he may well have been so. Americans in general were bitter about British support for the rebel cause during its civil war. Harris in particular may have been bitter about recent British policy in Japan. However, his contemporary letters and despatches from Japan were not anti-British.

The final point in his August 7th letter to Washington put this matter in the proper perspective. In it he described the use of Nagasaki as one of the most important provisions of the treaty, for the present U.S. Naval depot at Hong Kong "is placed in one of the worst spots in the whole East, as it regards insalubrity and the vile population that exists there, to which may be added the important fact that the whole of the supplies for our Eastern Squadron are in the hands of our great political and commercial rival." Harris's desire to remove naval stores from the colony of a power with whom there might be war was only common sense. Britain and the United States had been on the verge of war over the Oregon boundary when Harris had left for Japan.

To describe Britain as "our great political and commercial rival" was a simple statement of fact rather than prejudice. Harris puts it at the end of his list after a climate which made recovery difficult for invalid seamen and a busy harbour which made desertion only too easy.

Harris was on good terms with Sir John Bowring, governor of Hong Kong. Bowring had written that he did not wish to bring a large fleet to Japan unless it was necessary. Harris had replied that it would not be needed.¹³ It therefore seems odd to claim a moral superiority for Elgin in employing fewer warships than the Perry expeditions,¹⁴ but foreign writers then and since have enjoyed abusing their own or each other's nations for intimidating the Japanese.¹⁵ There is not much in any of the claims.

By driving off the one or two ship missions which had attempted to communicate peacefully with Japan the *bakufu* had forced foreigners to use powerful squadrons. Once these had been seen and the number of cannon counted it did not matter much whether later squadrons were large or small. More ships could always be summoned. The question did afford Harris some later amusement.

A leading article in the Times of November 2nd, 1858 had stated that "the guns of the Peiho and the roar of the British Lion alone secured the American Treaty." Another leading article in the same paper two years later announced that the American Treaty had only been secured "by the presence of an overwhelming American naval force in the Bay of Yedo." As this "overwhelming force" had consisted of one ship, Harris sent the clip-

¹³ Harris, *Journal*, p. 624.

¹⁴ F. C. Jones, *Extraterritoriality in Japan*, New Haven, 1931, p. 20. Montague Paske-Smith, *Western Barbarians in Tokugawa Japan*, Kobe,

1930, p. 140.

¹⁵ E. g., P. J. Treat, *Diplomatic Relations Between U.S. and Japan*, Stanford, 1932, and W. L. Neuman, *America Encounters Japan*, Johns Hopkins, 1963.

pings along to her commander noting, "It is well said that liars should have good memories."¹⁶

To Lord Elgin, Harris admitted that his treaty had been secured by the Anglo-French action in China and went on to give the British negotiator all of the help he could. Elgin was briefed on the negotiations leading up to the treaty. More important, Harris loaned the services of his interpreter, Henry Heusken. These were invaluable as he combined Japanese with his native Dutch, the only Western language known to the Japanese interpreters. For their help both Harris and Heusken were awarded gold snuff boxes bearing the cipher of Queen Victoria in diamonds. These were presented a year later after a suspicious American Congress had approved the foreign gifts to its agents.

The urgings of Harris that Britain quickly accept the treaty, coupled with the stubbornness of the Japanese negotiators who fought long and hard over the slightest deviation from the Harris Treaty—"I say it to their credit," wrote Lord Elgin—brought the commercial treaty with Japan through almost verbatim to a final ham and champagne dinner aboard the warships. Harris had been able to keep his promise to the *bakufu* that it would get more lenient treatment by dealing with him before the British arrived. As Lord Elgin noted, the treaty concessions were "not, in some important particulars, as considerable as those acquired from China under the Treaty negotiated by me at Tien-tsin."¹⁷

The only major change made by Lord Elgin was to lower the import duty on cottons and woolens from 20% to 5%. As these were the major imports from Britain into Asia, this was a sizable loss to the Japanese treasury.

Lord Elgin had not acted in ignorance. A year previously, British merchants in China had written to him in response to his request for advice before making the Tientsin Treaty. One firm writing about tariffs had noted, "As merchants we of course desire to see these placed on the lowest possible scale, but as they are looked to by the Chinese government as a source of Revenue, we think in this view that, with some few exceptions, they are as moderate as they well can be, and certainly contrast favourably with similar duties in our own country."¹⁸

Knowing the importance of tariff revenue in influencing an Asian government to support foreign trade, why the only important change he made in the Harris Treaty was to slash that revenue is difficult to understand. Lord Elgin was much given to discoursing upon the Christian duty of Westerners to "civilize" Asians.¹⁹ He was also a Scot. Perhaps,

¹⁶ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 329, to Tatnall, Yedo, 26 July 1860.

¹⁷ Parliamentary Papers, Accounts and Papers, Second Session, 1859, Letter no. 199, Elgin to Malmesbury, "H.M.S. Furious", 30 August 1858.

¹⁸ Parkes Papers, University Library Cam-

bridge, Box 2, H. Wilkinson and Co., to HM Consul Canton, Hong Kong, 5 September 1857.

¹⁹ E. g., "This abominable East . . . strewed all over with records of our violence and fraud and disregard of truth", quoted in Richard Harris, *China*, BBC Publications, March 1966, p. 30.

as a German cleric wrote after a sojourn in 19th century Britain, "so hypocritical, they say Christ and mean cotton."²⁰

British merchants in Hong Kong were happy with the Elgin Treaty, its commercial arrangements being "on the most liberal possible scale." The low tariff on textiles was particularly welcome. "We are much mistaken if, from what we hear of the Japanese, the market thus created for our home manufactures will not rival that afforded by the vast empire lately thrown open by the Treaty of Tien-tsin."²¹

Lord Elgin had referred to the Harris Treaty as a "very material advance," but this Hong Kong British newspaper upped that rating to an "extraordinary advance" over the wood, water, and provisions treaty for which Sir James Graham "had the gall to take credit and Parliament the stupidity to vote money for the presentation yacht." It was in striking contrast to the recent Dutch treaty which in return for 200 years of commercial relations granted them a trade which passed entirely through the hands of the Japanese government officials "under the most annoying restrictions and subject to a duty of 35%." The article concluded by happily referring to the future Japanese treaty port of Kanagawa as "the Whampoa of Edo."

Its only lapse from optimism was to note that owing to the peculiarity of government in Japan under which some 360 feudal princes rule "separate and almost independent principalities", foreigners would not be allowed to travel in the interior.

Lord Elgin too had had some second thoughts about the situation in Japan. With Harris he considered that much depended upon the prudent conduct of the first foreigners. He had been impressed with the power of the Japanese police who had merely to tap with a fan anyone who pressed too close to the line of march to send him back into the crowd. Yet he had once strayed away from his police escort and been stoned by small boys from a hostile mob. They may have thought he was Chinese and, given the samurai contempt for commerce, had jeered him with "have you anything to sell?"²² The fact remained. Foreigners would not be popular in Edo.

Like Harris, Elgin refused to postpone the residence of a British ambassador at Edo. He had written the Minister of Foreign Affairs who had managed the Harris Treaty only to be informed that this man no longer held office, a new ministry having taken over. Lord Elgin was unable to obtain any accurate information about this change but assumed it boded no good. Apparently the men who had signed the Harris Treaty had been driven from office on that account. They had been replaced by men hostile to foreigners who had then been forced to sign even more treaties. "All that remained . . . after passing through

²⁰ Theodore Fontane, *Der Stechlin*, in the chapter "In Mission to England."

²¹ Jardine, Matheson & Co. Archive, University Library, Cambridge, news clipping from an

unidentified Hong Kong paper included in box labelled "Printed Miscellaneous."

²² H. S. Williams, *Shades of the Past*, Tokyo, 1960 p. 57.

these successive stages of humiliation was . . . to render . . . the Treaties . . . of non-effect in their working.”²³

At Shimoda Harris was also disturbed. His next letter to Washington was less optimistic. After noting that he had nursed eleven Russian sailors left ashore with scurvy—a diet of bread, fowls and claret pulled ten of them through—he went on to write of politics.²⁴ Epileptic and dropsical, the shogun had died that August. The resulting question of succession had caused the dismissal of “Hotta, Prince of Bitchū, (Hotta Masayoshi), Chief of the Great Council of State” (a *rōjū*) and minister for foreign affairs, as well as another *rōjū*, “Naito, Prince of Kii” (Naitō Nobuchika).²⁵ Their places had been taken by “Ōta, Prince of Bingo” and “Manabe, Prince of Shimoda” (Manabe Akikatsu).²⁶

As had Lord Elgin, Harris assumed these men had been dismissed for supporting his treaty. This was true enough as far as it went.²⁷ They had also been dismissed for supporting the candidature of Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu,²⁸ a mature man with some qualities of leadership and a fairly open mind towards foreign trade. These did not recommend him to Ii Naosuke,²⁹ who had been named regent in June—a position with dictatorial powers filled only in time of emergency. The signing of the Harris Treaty was the weapon he used in the power struggle of that summer to dismiss the more progressive of the *rōjū* along with their candidate Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu. The new shogun would have little to do with government. He was fourteen. Now firmly in power, the regent began to justify the forebodings of Elgin and Harris.

Following upon a cholera epidemic which reportedly killed 150,000 persons in Edo and took more than 100 lives in the hamlet surrounding the American consulate at Shimoda, the first problem seemed a petty one. A letter from Nagasaki dated July 9th was not delivered to Harris until October 28th. In order to educate the new ministers of foreign affairs, Harris demanded a full explanation, writing that it was a serious insult among Western nations to interfere with diplomatic mail. He regretted this evidence of *bakufu* ill-will, declaring that if refused his government would know how to secure redress.³⁰ It was bluff. Harris could not order a row boat, much less a gun boat, to his support. Ōta's reply merely referred Harris to a minor official for a verbal answer.³¹ “As Representative of the United States I do not acknowledge any superior on earth,” countered Harris, “I

²³ Foreign Office, Japan Correspondence, F.O. 46, III, Alcock to Malmesbury, Edo, 28 July 1859.

²⁴ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 38 to Cass, Shimoda, 1 September 1858.

²⁵ 堀田正睦, 内藤信親

²⁶ “Ōta, Prince of Bingo”: This man does not seem to appear in the biographical section of W. G. Beasley, *Select Documents*, which has been used for the other identifications. He is identified in French records as Ōta Bitchū of Kakegawa in Tōtomi. Manabe Akikatsu 間部詮勝.

²⁷ W. G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan*, London, 1963, pp. 72-73.

²⁸ 一橋慶喜

²⁹ 井伊直弼

³⁰ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 87 to Ōta, Shimoda, 29 October 1858.

³¹ Western diplomats resisted strongly owing to their China experience in which minor officials had been used to delay all negotiation. “I had at Foochow precisely the same battle to fight”. F.O. 46, III, Alcock to Malmesbury, Edo, 28 July 1859.

shall decline to receive any communications that carry with them any insistence of an intention to set up such a claim."³²

Postal service thereupon improved and the Nagasaki officials were punished. Harris regretted it but hoped that Ōta had learned that the "old Deshima days have passed away never to return."³³ It was doubtful that the lesson had been learned, for as 1859 began another anti-foreign move appeared. It came from a different quarter.

In order to quiet opposition, the *bakufu* asked a year's delay before sending its embassy to Washington to ratify the treaty. This was because "of a last effort which some of the daimyos are making with the Mikado, to preserve if possible the ancient law which inflicted the penalty of death on any Japanese who may leave the country."³⁴

One year earlier, *bakufu* officials had "roared with laughter"³⁵ when Harris suggested that Japanese held the emperor in veneration. They had replied that he was without money, political power or anything else that mattered in Japan. A month later, the same men told Harris they were having to send more bribes as things had come to a standstill in Kyoto.³⁶ Obviously, the position of emperor held some importance. He was no longer the subject of unrestrained laughter. This move to use the prestige of the man Harris referred to as "the Spiritual Emperor" was successful. Harris gave in and the embassy was postponed for one year. He was adding to his education.

In January 1859, Harris took up more important matters, going to choose the site for Americans to live at Kanagawa. As no other foreign diplomats were sent, he was in effect acting for all the Westerners. Kanagawa was an important advance in his treaty. It was a new port for foreigners, away from the restrictive practices of Nagasaki's Deshima or the natural limitations of Hakodate, a poor northern port useful mainly to supply booze and brothels to whalersmen. Kanagawa by contrast was a busy town some thirty miles from Edo which had a population of more than one million. It should have provided a good setting for the new free trade which Harris desired.

To build a market for Western goods, the foreigners had to be on or near the Tōkaidō. Along this highway passed most of the pilgrims, pedlars and travellers of nineteenth-century Japan. Then as now the Japanese delighted in buying souvenirs of a journey so that Tōkaidō travellers would take a knowledge of Western goods to many corners of the country. Above all, many of the great trains of daimyo, sometimes with more than a thousand retainers and servants, on their way to and from their enforced residence as hostages of the Edo *bakufu*, would trudge slowly past the Kanagawa shops, or pass the night at its many inns. These straggled along both sides of the narrow highway for some

³² Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 88 to Ōta, Shimoda, 22 November 1858.

³³ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 2, to Churtius, Shimoda, 10 January 1859. Note: the letter numbers of this collection are not in strict chronological order.

³⁴ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 66, to Cass, Shimoda, 29 January 1859.

³⁵ Harris, *Journal*, p. 517.

³⁶ Carl Crow, *He Opened the Door to Japan*, New York, 1939, p. 240.

three miles. Harris reckoned that half of the travel of the kingdom passed through this town.

Having himself gone in procession to Edo in 1857 he knew the value of this traffic and picked out two possible locations at Kanagawa. Both had shallow water at low tide, but Harris decided their other advantages made a long wooden landing jetty worthwhile.³⁷ *Bakufu* officials proposed a graver difficulty than shallow water. As the attendants of the daimyo were "insolent adventurers . . . who clear the road without any regard for person or nation,"³⁸ there might be incidents. The danger was real enough but as Harris pointed out, if the *bakufu* did not use its efficient police force to protect foreigners it would soon be in very serious difficulties.³⁹

Both the poor anchorage and the danger of clashes could be averted if a third location suggested by the *bakufu* was accepted. This had a deep-water anchorage but Harris thought the advantage too dearly bought. It was five miles from the Tōkaidō and seven miles from the center of Kanagawa. Separating it from the Tōkaidō were three wide pieces of water, then without bridges, and a precipitous hill. The only link with populated Japan was a footpath so steep as to be impassible on horseback. No trade could be hoped for except from those who went there expressly to buy or sell. Foreign residents would be almost as isolated as Harris had been at Shimoda.⁴⁰ The reason for Harris's choice of Kanagawa had been to break the *bakufu* tradition of imprisoning foreigners by geography. "For that reason I placed Yokohama out of consideration."⁴¹

"Finding that I could not be induced to accept of Yokohama they suddenly informed me that as no action was actually required before the 4th of July next, they would postpone any future consideration of the subject until that time. They probably feel that they cannot be in a worse position than now and are willing to trust to the chapter of accidents as to the future."⁴² Harris seems to have been worried about the *bakufu's* good faith. He was also planning to go home, for he closes his long and detailed letter: "I have felt it proper to give you this statement of the matter, so that whoever may have the future settlement of the question, may have all the facts that I possess."⁴³

As Harris was planning to leave, another man was being ordered to Japan. Far to the

³⁷ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 74, to Cass, Shimoda, 14 March 1859.

³⁸ C. P. Hodgson, *A Residence at Nagasaki and Hakodate*, London, 1861, p. 284. Hodgson was dismissed from the consular service late in 1860. The fulsome praise for British policy and Rutherford Alcock found in his introduction—contrasting as it does with much of his text—seems to be explained by the fact that he was then applying for another consular position in France and Alcock was due home on leave. His reporting of rumours on such things as mineral wealth or the armed forces of the daimyo are widely inaccurate. As a

trained observer with four books to his credit, he seems accurate in matters of personal experience. Previous service in Abyssinia and Australia had given him considerable training.

³⁹ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 74 to Cass, Shimoda, 4 March 1859.

⁴⁰ Henry Heusken, *Japan Journal*, Rutgers Press, 1964, p. 123.

⁴¹ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 74, to Cass, Shimoda, 14 March 1859.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

south, Rutherford Alcock, Her Britannic Majesty's consul at Canton, was writing to London acknowledging his appointment as consul general to Japan. Oddly enough, he was complaining about his promotion.

Instead of a position nearer home "I am now transferred . . . to the most outlying region in the world . . . either to die in these regions where so many have gone before me, with two or three years more service or to be expended, as naval stores are expended, so long as wear and tear will let them hold together, with no unnecessary regard to what is to become of them afterwards."⁴⁴ It was not a happy man who would take over as the chief foreign diplomat in Japan.

When his instructions arrived they cannot have improved his temper. They were simple of expression but very difficult of application. Alcock was to insist upon fulfilment of the treaty but also to content himself with gradual progress, making no threats and allowing for the supposed "timidity and ignorance" of the Japanese.⁴⁵ Memories of the Crimea were still fresh in Whitehall so that he was also to take every opportunity of spying upon the Russians and to prevent the *bakufu* from ceding any territory to them. Yet he was to do this without promising any British support for Britain did not aspire to paramount influence in Japan. This was curious advice. Owing to her dominant position on the China coast she would unavoidably have the most residents in Japan, the most ships entering Japanese harbours and the lion's share of the Japan trade. The answer was simple. Appeasement had come into vogue at the Foreign Office following criticism of the recent war in China. As there was to be such little support from home, perhaps Alcock was wise to begin complaining even before his task began.

In Japan Harris continued putting things into order for the opening of trade. The first oil wells in Pennsylvania had quietly begun to pump the death knell of the whaling industry, but Harris had no way of knowing this. One of his main interests in Japan was at Hakodate, the northern port to which the U.S. whaling fleet resorted each spring. The whalers had been getting firewood, drinking water and supplies there under the Perry Treaty since 1854. This was not enough. They "want women and must and will have 'em" wrote Consul Rice.⁴⁶ They also wanted sake and had been getting both, for they were a welcome source of revenue to this poor town. The people were willing but now that the *bakufu* had taken the town from the local daimyo the officials were not, following the Americans everywhere ashore to forbid or raise the price of each transaction.⁴⁷ Unless *bakufu* officials ceased interfering, the whalers promised to take and hold the town. "They can do it and their officers will lead them" wrote Rice. Five hundred whalers who could have been enjoying the delights of the Hawaiian Islands were not to be put off easily. The *bakufu* seems to have seen the error of its ways in time but Consul Rice was

⁴⁴ F.O. 391, I, to Edmund Hammond, Permanent Foreign Under-Secretary 1854-73, Canton, 22 February 1859.

⁴⁵ F.O. 46, III, Malmsbury to Alcock, 1 March

1859.

⁴⁶ Harris *Journal*, p. 503.

⁴⁷ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 106 to Ōta, Shimoda, 23 February 1859.

himself proving a problem for Harris. After complaining to the *bakufu* that the new governor of Hakodate was a man lacking in wisdom, overflowing in dislike of foreigners and given to drinking considerably beyond his capacity, Harris had in turn to admonish Consul Rice.

The consul's servant was taking sake to the crew of the "U.S.S. Mississippi." He was also selling them tickets to brothels on shore. Consul Rice was apparently involved as Harris wrote him not to let the desire for gain get the upper hand.⁴⁸ The remonstrance was wasted. Six weeks later Harris wrote Washington that U.S. Naval officers were still complaining that Consul Rice was profiting on supplies, pilotage, liquor and brothels. A copy was sent to Mr. Rice.

Things were brighter at Nagasaki where Harris found a steadier man, the American merchant, J. G. Walsh, and appointed him consul. At that time only Britain had a career service. All other nations appointed local merchants to handle consular duties in return for fees. Often he was not even a national of the country concerned. At smaller ports one man might represent several nations.

At the time Britain regarded the United States as an enemy, was attempting to contain Russian expansion and on the verge of war with France. "We are all turned riflemen here, with fine guns and uniforms, determined to barbecue every unfortunate French frog who may be rash enough to land on our happy soil,"⁴⁹ wrote an Englishman at home. In Japan all foreigners stood together. The British consul at Hakodate was French consul as well, flying the two flags side by side. A French missionary priest was his voluntary interpreter and translator. The French consul at Yokohama would be another British subject, Jose Loureiro, a Macoese. At Nagasaki, the French consul would be a Scot, Kenneth Mackenzie, the Portuguese consul would be an American named Evans, U.S. Consul Walsh would look after Russian affairs, whilst German merchants would become honorary British or Dutch subjects.

At Nagasaki, Harris was examined by a U.S. Navy doctor and sent to Shanghai for a rest.⁵⁰ While he was in China, M. Duchesne de Bellecourt, newly appointed consul general for Japan, wrote a note in Paris. He had been studying the Dutch records of Japan. When he arrived in that country he would take a doctor, a naturalist, a businessman and a mining engineer and begin a systematic exploration of the interior.⁵¹ It had the fine progressive sound of the Second Empire but in Japan events were moving in a different direction. Although France had been quick to follow Lord Elgin and obtain a treaty of her own, de Bellecourt did not reach Japan until mid-September of 1859.

⁴⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 23, to Rice, Shimoda, 21 April 1859.

⁴⁹ Charles Waterton, *Letters of Charles Waterton*, London, 1955, p. 126.

⁵⁰ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 126, to Cass, 26 April 1859.

⁵¹ Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Direction des Consulats et des Affaires Commerciales, Yeddo, 1859-61, 1, de Bellecourt to Ministry, 14 May 1859. Some commercial despatches are enclosed in volumes one and two of Direction Politique.

The British arrived at Edo in July, the Netherlands consul general arrived at Nagasaki at the end of February 1860. None of these powers bothered to inspect the Kanagawa location between Harris's visit in January and the opening of trade on July 1st. They were to pay the penalty of this neglect. While Harris appointed consuls and prepared for the opening of trade, the *bakufu* was working to nullify his free trade before it ever began. With the field clear of foreigners it worked rapidly to undo one of the most important of the treaty provisions. Hundreds of men were set to work to turn a fishing village into a seaport. The expense of a road, bridges, a seafront, houses, godowns (warehouses), and a stone-faced landing pier at Yokohama was far greater than the cost of a wooden jetty at Kanagawa. Expense was not the primary consideration. One of the world's greatest seaports began life as a deliberate effort to strangle trade.

The meaning of the previous summer's political turnover was now becoming clear. At Yokohama the regent Ii Naosuke was applying the traditional Japanese method of handling foreigners. It was simple enough—shut them into a cage.

Once in that cage, all transactions could be supervised by *bakufu* officials, thus deriving the maximum profit from the minimum amount of trade.⁵² With the foreigners shut up away from populated areas and confined within gates guarded by shogunal troops, some of the *bakufu*'s prestige might still be salvaged.

The main argument put to Harris that the Kanagawa location might provoke clashes between foreigners and followers of the daimyo may well have entered Ii Naosuke's calculations. As he was not a man afraid to use the police power of his office,⁵³ it was probably secondary to his wish to restrict trade.

What is clear is that he had decided to try and regain the ground lost by the Harris Treaty.⁵⁴ Neither Harris nor Alcock thought that the *bakufu* would fight but both believed it would try the foreigners' mettle to the point of war.⁵⁵ In January Harris had written that the *bakufu* had been pressing Yokohama upon him for several months so that the decision to challenge the foreigners must have been made soon after Ii Naosuke took power the preceding summer. It was a bold move, possibly taken against the advice of his subordinates.⁵⁶ Not only had the American been deliberately deceived but the *bakufu* was staking its prestige upon a very public issue.

Large numbers of workmen had been employed in building the customs house and landing stages at Yokohama. Government notices had been posted in Edo offering tax relief, land and houses to Japanese merchants who would move to the new port. Their result was plain. Yokohama's first Japanese population was heavy with adventurers whose small capital was matched with equally small scruples.⁵⁷ In place of the large wholesale

⁵² Hodgson, pp. 10–13.

⁵³ Beasley, *Modern History of Japan*, p. 75.

⁵⁴ Correspondence Commerciale, I, No. 18, to Walewski, Edo, 20 November 1859.

⁵⁵ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, Edo, 11 August

1859; Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 190, to Cass, 3 September 1859.

⁵⁶ P. J. Treat, I, 86.

⁵⁷ Joseph Heco, *Narrative of a Japanese, Yokohama*, 1899, I, 249.

merchants (*tonyas*) to whom Harris had been promised access for foreign businessmen,⁵⁸ they were to meet mainly small shopkeepers and pedlars who were often the dregs of Edo's business community.

To emphasize the challenge, workmen dug out the swamp in the back of the settlement linking the two rivers which bounded it, thus making the muddy beach flat into an island. The comparison with Deshima was now complete. When foreign diplomats arrived they would be faced immediately with an open violation of the treaties. It was a daring gamble for the *bakufu*. Western diplomats always travelled in warships.⁵⁹

All would depend upon the temper of the diplomats involved. Harris had already proven amenable on several issues. Although Alcock had used gunboats to good effect in China,⁶⁰ London had counselled appeasement in Japan. The *bakufu* was to be lucky.

On June 30th, the day before trade was to begin, the British diplomat finally arrived. Alcock had spent some three weeks in Nagasaki settling local matters which would better have been left to Consul Hodgson. It seemed reasonable enough at the time. Nagasaki was expected to continue as the main port of foreign trade at least until the opening of Osaka in 1862. There was also a small British colony already in residence trading under earlier Dutch and Russian agreements whom it was desirable to bring under the control of a British consul. It was all very understandable, but Alcock's late start from China and the lost weeks at Nagasaki were to have serious consequences at Yokohama.

Harris and Alcock both arrived on June 30th. The American still had a few days in hand for his trade was not to start until the 4th. Unable to see the humour of this, Lord Elgin had moved the date forward to the 1st in the British treaty. Confronted with the new town at Yokohama, Alcock had left himself less than one day to arrange matters.

Harris was the only foreigner who could really appreciate the change. When he had left in January, Yokohama had been a mud flat supporting a few scattered fishermen's huts. When he returned in June, the muddy beach had become a bustling town of many dozens of buildings. The air was filled with the buzz of carpenter's saws and the commotion of Japanese shopkeepers unpacking and moving into their new homes.

From the deck of the "U.S.S. Susquehanna," Harris and U.S. Consul Dorr surveyed the scene. "I suppose the Japanese Government intend this for a second Deshima, but of course we cannot accept that sort of thing," said Dorr. "Certainly not" replied Harris, "but that will be a battle you will have to fight since you are the consul of the port."⁶¹ Alcock and British Consul Vyse came aboard that day to discuss the situation while the foreign merchants began going ashore to see what the new port offered in the way of business.

⁵⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 5, to J. G. Walsh, Shimoda, 7 February 1859. Also *Journal*, p. 520.

⁵⁹ This was not from any desire to intimidate the Japanese. Mermet de Cachon, the Catholic priest who had assisted Baron Gros to negotiate the French Treaty, warned de Bellecourt not to

travel in a merchant ship as the *bakufu* despised merchants. Correspondence Politique, I, No. 2, to Walewski, Shanghai, 11 August 1859.

⁶⁰ A. Michie, I, 131.

⁶¹ Heco, I, 201.

The U.S. warship had towed Heard & Company's schooner "Wanderer" from Shanghai. Another American firm, Walsh & Co., was represented by Dr. Hall, while Joseph Heco and his partner E. M. Van Reed had come as passengers on the warship hoping to start trading in a small way. Jardine, Matheson & Co. had chartered the schooner "Nora" with a mixed sample cargo of textiles and Chinese medicines. Jardine's great rival Dent & Co., was represented by Jose Loureiro on board the chartered steamer "Carthage." Several Dutch traders had come up from Nagasaki to try their luck in the new port. Their goods and silver dollars to buy produce were on the Netherlands barques "Schiller," "Princess Charlotte" and "Jacob & Anna." The British steamer "Countess of Seafield" completed the list. It was a small group but in treasure and cargo they were ready to begin business. One optimistic Dutch merchant had 150,000 silver dollars with which to buy Japanese goods.

Joined ashore on the 4th by the officers of the "Susquehanna," Harris and Consul Dorr celebrated the national holiday in champagne. Tying an American flag to the tallest tree in its graveyard they transformed the Hongakuji Temple⁶² into the U.S. consulate. Leaving Dorr to handle trading problems, Harris left to establish his legation at Edo. Although both Harris and Alcock advised their nationals not to accept the houses and godowns offered at Yokohama by the *bakufu* they did not provide any alternative.

Rather than settle Consul Vyse in a consulate and begin trade on July 1st as per treaty, Alcock chose to take him to Edo. There they presented a ratified copy of the treaty to the *bakufu* and sought a temple for use as the British legation. Delay was one of the *bakufu*'s best weapons against foreign cannon. Alcock ran into "more trouble of a paralysing kind than I should have thought possible."⁶³ The two simple tasks, which had taken preference over the Yokohama trade, took three weeks to accomplish. Both seem to have been bungled.

Although both Americans and Dutch began trading immediately, Alcock was no doubt formally correct in instructing his consuls not to start work until he had handed over his copy of the Treaty to the *bakufu*.⁶⁴ In doing this he staged a parade of armed sailors through the capital. The Foreign Office had assumed that Alcock's experience in China would help him in Japan. This parade was one result of that experience. In China it might have gained respect. Japan was not China. Edo had the highest proportion of samurai population of any city in Japan. This proud military caste justified its parasitic privileges by claiming to be the warrior guardians of the national security. They had no equivalent in Chinese society. There could be no surer way to humiliate them than to parade armed foreigners through Edo.

For Harris the first few weeks in Edo passed quietly without parades. He settled happily in the Zempukuji Temple, much pleased with the ancient trees, the crepe myrtles

⁶² 本覚寺

⁶³ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, 14 July 1859.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, enclosure No. 3 in 15 June 1859 to Malmesbury.

in blossom and the huge “tame goldfish which eat out of my hand.”⁶⁵ He was homesick and planned to leave early in 1861.

Harris seems to have felt no jealousy in relinquishing his unique position to the British diplomat. Rather, he seemed pleased. “I need not say how vast a relief it is to me, and what a load of responsibility it removes”⁶⁶ he wrote a friend in Shanghai. Alcock corroborates this, writing to London that although Harris was his senior in rank as well as in time in Japan, the American “seemed willing, if not desirous, to see me move first.”⁶⁷

On the personal level Harris found “Mr. Alcock a kind neighbour, a good friend; the best understanding exists between us and our whole intercourse is cordial and agreeable.”⁶⁸ Although a kind neighbour, Alcock was a distant one. “I am further from Mr. Alcock than I could wish,” wrote Harris, for the Briton had turned down the proffered location in the centre of Edo in favour of a temple at Shinagawa, a mile and a half away.

This too had been a result of China experience. Running for the boats was a familiar custom with old China hands, so that Alcock’s choice of the Shinagawa site as being “nearer the ships”⁶⁹ represented good strategic sense if it did not show much confidence in the bodyguard furnished by the *bakufu*. As the grounds were extensive and still shared with the Temple priests it was difficult to defend. Worse, the Tōzenji Temple stood on the Tōkaidō in an area where “numerous *sake* houses abound with young and impetuous blood” anxious to try their blades.⁷⁰ The Britons could not leave their front gate without encountering samurai inebriates.

With three weeks of the month gone, Alcock sent Consul Vyse to open a British consulate at Kanagawa. As a salaried diplomat he could afford a leisurely pace. Foreign merchants with their ships off Yokohama could not.⁷¹ The charter of a simple sailing vessel could be \$2,500 a month.⁷² Day after day the ships swung idly at anchor, cargoes unlanded, and the Mexican silver dollars brought from China losing interest.

For its part the *bakufu* did not flatly refuse to allow trade at the Kanagawa location. It merely delayed matters on the one hand while offering immediate facilities at Yokohama. The cage was baited, its door was open, the foreigners walked in. Time is money. While diplomats talked, money decided the matter.

With the foreigners settled ashore it only remained to defeat their diplomats. The matter was spun out over many months with a fine combination of deceit and delay which

⁶⁵ 善福寺. Janvier letters, New York Public Library, Harris to Miss Drinker, 20 August, 1859.

⁶⁶ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 160 to Rev. Lyles, Edo, 22 August 1859.

⁶⁷ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, Edo, 13 July 1859.

⁶⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 159, to A. Heard,

22 August 1859.

⁶⁹ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, Edo, 9 July 1859.

⁷⁰ 東禅寺. Hodgson, pp. 80-81.

⁷¹ Hodgson, p. 14.

⁷² J-M & Co. Archive, Box Shanghai 1859, J. Whittall to J. Jardine, Shanghai, 21 October 1859.

lent force to a British consul's rueful comment that the Japanese had "evidently studied Machiavel."⁷³ *Bakufu* tactics can be followed in Harris's letters.

His immediate reaction was that Yokohama "can only be considered as a new Deshima."⁷⁴ Several weeks later after an interview with the *bakufu* foreign ministers, he reported that they had agreed to a Kanagawa site but wished to examine the ground again before selecting one.⁷⁵ A month later Harris wrote that the matter was so far advanced that he could state "the quarter will be on the *To Ky Do*, which as you know was the vital question."⁷⁶

Apparently a location was finally agreed for in mid-October. Harris wrote to Manabe Akikatsu that as the site had been selected the Yokohama customs home should be moved to Kanagawa.⁷⁷ Early in December he was still advising Americans that "the best interests of all will be advanced by refusing to reside at Yokohama, and I am also of the opinion that when the Japanese see that we are building at Kanagawa they will require all foreigners to go there as they do not desire to have two distinct settlements for them. In the meantime they will do all they can to induce short-sighted persons to prefer a residence at Yokohama."⁷⁸ In December Harris wrote that he had finally gotten the *bakufu* to accept Kanagawa.⁷⁹ By then it was too late. The trade was firmly settled at Yokohama.

In the winter of 1860 the foreign diplomats quietly accepted defeat. Skilful diplomacy in a little less than a year had undone a major advance of the Harris Treaty. At Nagasaki Japanese students told their Dutch instructor that the *bakufu* swelled with conceit as it broadcast its triumph over the foreigners.⁸⁰

The *bakufu's* victory did not alter the task of foreign diplomacy. It merely made it more difficult.

Because it made his job more difficult, Alcock complained to London.⁸¹ The Foreign Office replied philosophically that Yokohama was all right as long as the foreigners were not confined there.⁸² In the autumn Alcock issued a circular telling British subjects to move to Kanagawa. The larger merchant houses such as Jardine, Matheson & Co. tried to comply by renting lots at both places.⁸³ The *bakufu* accepted applications for Kanagawa lots but did not answer them. Nor did British merchants think that it would.⁸⁴ Alcock retained a grudge against the merchants who had moved into Yokohama throughout his

⁷³ Hodgson, p. 26.

⁷⁴ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 137 to Cass, 4 July 1859.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 181 to Cass, 22 July 1859.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 159 to A. Heard, 22 August 1859.

⁷⁷ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 227 to Manabe, Edo, 15 October 1859.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 267, to Mr. Warden, Edo, 9 December 1859.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 269, to E. Rice, Edo, 19 December 1859.

⁸⁰ J. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort, *Vijf Jaren en Japan*, Leiden, 1867, II, 57.

⁸¹ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, Edo, 14 July 1859.

⁸² F.O. 46, II, to Alcock, London, 7 October 1859.

⁸³ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Shanghai 1859, to W. Keswick, 20 October 1859.

⁸⁴ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1859, J. Barber to J. Whittall, 5 October 1859.

stay in Japan.⁸⁵ This too had been typical of his attitude in China where he had tended to blame merchants for behaving as merchants.⁸⁶

Yokohama was larger than Deshima. In addition the wish to stay within the letter of the treaty while violating its spirit called for more sophisticated measures. The object was the same. The major method by which the *bakufu* exploited its advantage was traditional. That method was money. Although in time the Japanese would come to use the Mexican silver dollar which financed most of the trade of Asia, Africa, and passed for legal tender in North America, it would be strange to them at first. Therefore Harris wrote a simple exchange provision into his treaty. It has been argued about ever since.

Reams of discussion have been written on the matter, yet it was easy of solution at the time. The two Perry expeditions had brought Mexican silver dollars with them from China. Having retained better than an 80% purity for more than three hundred years, this coin passed current nearly everywhere on the globe.⁸⁷ If you did not want it as a coin, you melted it up for ingots as they did in the interior of China. However you used it, silver remained silver. When Perry's officers went out souvenir hunting, they found that the good name of the Mexican did not help in Japan. For each dollar, the *bakufu*'s treasury officers at Shimoda and Kanagawa gave them only one oblong silver coin. This had several drawbacks. It took three of them to equal the dollar in weight, it bore the strange sounding name of *ichibu* and it did not buy very much at all. However, when they steamed north to the remote port of Hakodate all was changed. The American warship had outrun the *bakufu*'s orders, for here there was as yet no customs house to exchange monies. When their dollars were weighed in the scales which every shopkeeper seemed to possess,⁸⁸ they were given three *ichibus* instead of one for their dollars. Prices were accordingly cheaper. These shopkeepers had books with pencil impressions of foreign coins and their Japanese values written next to them.⁸⁹ They were not much interested in the American gold dollars which they weighed, tested for purity and pronounced as worth about 1,200 of their small round cash coins with the square hole in the centre.

By contrast the silver dollar was accepted eagerly. The Americans were told that its exchange value was three *ichibus* at 1,600 cash each or 4,800 cash coins for each dollar.⁹⁰ A few weeks of shopping at Shimoda taught Harris the same lesson. He began to fight for the three-for-one exchange, obtained it for himself, then for foreign ships buying provisions and finally wrote it into his treaty.

⁸⁵ Michie, II, 123.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 249-252, also Nathan Albert Pelcovits, *Old China Hands*, New York, 1948, p. 18, 67.

⁸⁷ John McMaster, "The Use of the Mexican Dollar in Asian Trade", *Historia Mexicana*, VIII, No. 3, January-March 1959.

⁸⁸ Scales were necessary for the Japanese used

silver lumps as well as coins. "Report on Weights, Measures and Currency of Japan," Parliamentary Papers, Accounts and Papers, LXIX (3869), 1867.

⁸⁹ H. A. Tilley, *Japan, the Amoor and the Pacific*, London, 1861, p. 133.

⁹⁰ J. D. Morrow, *A Scientist with Perry*, Chapel Hill, 1947, pp. 180-181.

On the surface it seemed unfair to the Japanese. At Shanghai the Mexican dollar exchanged for 1,300 or so cash. In Japan Harris was demanding that it exchange for 4,800 cash. His reasoning was that the purchasing power of cash in China was at least three times that of Japan.⁹¹ Harris claimed he could live more cheaply in Calcutta than in Shimoda.⁹² This difference between cash coins in Japan and in China had at least two causes. Cash in China was scarce at the treaty ports, in Japan it was abundant. Cash in China was of brass, its copper content giving it a small but real intrinsic value. Cash in Japan by 1859-60 was mostly iron.⁹³ On assay reports which took values down to $\frac{1}{10}$ th of an English penny the iron cash is succinctly valued "nil."⁹⁴

Although the worthless iron cash was the basis for calculating all Japanese prices⁹⁵ and useful for making small change, another and larger coin was in more general use.⁹⁶ This was a well-made oval coin of copper alloy. It was called the *Tempō-sen*.⁹⁷ On its face it bore the worth of 100 cash. In practice it shared a fate common to many late Tokugawa coins and actually circulated at about its intrinsic metallic value. Instead of its one-hundred cash face value it passed for about ten cash.⁹⁸ This discrepancy between a fine exterior and a low content was so striking that the epithet "*Tempō-sen*" was common slang for those whose intelligence was equally below par.

In copper its intrinsic value as metal was about two American cents. As it exchanged at about fifty to the dollar and seventeen to the *ichibu*, both Japanese copper and Japanese silver coins were at roughly world standards in metallic value as well as in purchasing power.

Harris proposed a simple system by which for the one year it should take Japanese merchants to become accustomed to foreign silver dollars, the *bakufu* would exchange money. It would give the foreigner, wishing to buy Japanese produce, three *ichibu* coins for each of his dollars. The Japanese merchant who accepted a dollar for goods would be given three *ichibus* for it. Although the dollars were rung for purity they were exchanged without weighing. It was a simple system and should have sufficed.⁹⁹

Instead, the *bakufu* were able to turn this instrument of free trade against its author with such good effect that a British consul could write, "Somehow or other, the Japanese Government and the foreigners could not agree at all on money matters: a remarkable fact, because they are the only nation on earth with whom we ever had such difficulties."¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, London, 1863, II, 412, makes the same point.

⁹² Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 193, to Ōta, 8 August 1859.

⁹³ F.O. 46, III, Enclosure 1 in No. 21 or 11 August 1859 to Malmesbury, also Hodgson, XIX, 293, 42, Tilley, p. 131.

⁹⁴ Hodgson, p. 295.

⁹⁵ Harris, *Journal*, p. 343, 373. Tilley, p. 131.

⁹⁶ S. Wells Williams, *Chinese Commercial Guide*, Hong Kong, 1863, pp. 255-257.

⁹⁷ 天寶錢

⁹⁸ Neil Gordon Munro, *Coins of Japan*, London, 1905, p. 149.

⁹⁹ Hodgson, p. 299.

¹⁰⁰ Hodgson, p. 16.

The device adopted for meeting the wording of the treaty while violating its spirit was ingenious and well in keeping with the *bakufu's* long history of coinage manipulation.

When foreigners first went ashore to exchange their dollars for *ichibu*s at the customs house, everything seemed in order. Treasury officials sat behind their sword racks, the inevitable tea cups on one side, piles of silver coin on the other. Expecting three *ichibu* coins, the foreigner passed over his dollar. He was given two strange new coins. A trial testing in the hand showed them as heavy as a dollar so that the weight-for-weight wording of the treaty was being met. The first attempt to buy souvenirs provided a rude awakening. Prices had gone up 200% in a single night. Tempers frayed, arguments grew heated and one Briton even remembers beating a Japanese merchant with his walking cane. Under cover of darkness the victim returned to apologize and provide the proper change.¹⁰¹

What had happened was shrewd but simple. To have the same purchasing power in the cash coins by which all prices were fixed, each of the new coins should have been marked one-and-one-half *ichibu*. Instead each was marked one-half *ichibu*. As a half *ichibu*, each new coin had the purchasing power of 800 cash. Two of them, or one dollar's worth, exchanged for 1,600 cash. Three of the old *ichibu*s, or one dollar's worth, brought 4,800 cash. A *bakufu* official had noticed that although the Harris Treaty provided for equal weights of silver exchange, it had said nothing about the purchasing power of that silver in cash. Harris had relied upon the good intentions of the contemporary *bakufu* negotiators. These were lacking in their successors. The foreigners were neatly duped. Overnight Japan became one of the most expensive countries in the world. There would not be much buying done.

What little was done would be very profitable for the *bakufu*. There was already a small silver half *ichibu* coin in circulation. It had been assayed after the Perry expedition at some 17 U.S. cents. Thus a Japanese who received the new heavy half *ichibu* from a foreigner had to turn it in at the customs house for its lighter namesake.¹⁰² Every time a pair of the new large coins was exchanged for the old small ones, the *bakufu* had bought 100 cents worth of Western silver for 34 cents. Each time a brace of these new coins made the round trip from customs house to foreigner to Japanese merchant and back to the customs house, the government made a profit of over 60% in pure silver. Unlike gold or copper, silver was in short supply in Japan.

There remained another loophole to be blocked. Japanese merchants might accept Western silver dollars. This was simplicity itself. When they brought their dollars to the customs house to be exchanged into Japanese coin they were given one *ichibu* for each dollar. Again the *bakufu* received an ounce of silver for one third of its weight. Once burned, Japanese merchants would not accept dollars again.¹⁰³ "If there is one money

¹⁰¹ Tilley, pp. 133-135.

¹⁰² F.O. 46, XXXIX, Arbuthnot to Hammond, Treasury, 15 January 1863.

¹⁰³ Edward Griffin, *Clippers and Consuls*, Ann Arbor, 1938, p. 222.

for Jack and another money for Bill and he will not take mine and I will not take his, there is not much business to be done, nor much free intercourse either."¹⁰⁴

"A triumph of financial skill," wrote Alcock, "the Treaty thus interpreted would remain a dead letter."¹⁰⁵ With his warship still in harbour and supported by Harris, he persuaded the *bakufu* to withdraw the new trade coin. Both men recorded success in their despatches home. The victories were illusory. Having knocked down one obstacle, they merely found themselves faced with another.

Exchange at three *ichibus* to the dollar would be provided. The treaty said that it must be. The treaty however did not say how much exchange must be provided. Jardine's, with more money to exchange than most, was able to exchange only \$5,000 of its \$60,000 in eight weeks. At Yokohama the exchange might be \$25 a day, while at Nagasaki a representative of one of the largest houses was given \$5 with which to trade.¹⁰⁶

The excuse is usually made that the *bakufu* mints lacked the capacity to furnish enough coins. It seems debatable. The combined capacity of the Edo and Osaka silver mints seems to have been about nine million *ichibus* a year or say \$3,000,000.¹⁰⁷ This could have financed foreign trade, particularly as foreigners themselves furnished the silver. Their needs were not so great. Of the twenty merchants at Yokohama only five can be easily identified, as connected with large China firms: Jardine's, Dent's, Fletcher, Sassoon's, and Walsh, Hall & Company. These could ask for and receive \$100,000 or \$150,000 a month from China. Others such as Michael Moss, Joseph Heco or his partner G.M. Van Reed could command no more than ten thousand at most. Again, there were at least five months in the winter when almost no produce would be available as well as dead spots during the summer. The Edo silver mint itself followed a simple operation of pouring melted silver into strips, cutting it into *ichibu* blanks with hand shears and then stamping the blanks with a mallet and die. There was no operation which could take more than twenty minutes to learn. Expanding production would have been simple. Since Alcock was offered 16,000 *ichibus* a day in 1859 and total production was recorded as being 20,000 a day in 1866, there was obviously not much effort made in this direction.¹⁰⁸ The mint was recorded as being a sinecure for incompetent officials.¹⁰⁹ Combined with a work year of only 240 days, it did not help production.

Alcock knew the falsity of the argument. When *bakufu* officials explained that there was no steam machinery for the mint which had to rely upon human labour, the Briton pointed out that the *bakufu* had no difficulty in finding three or four thousand labourers to erect a new fort threatening the foreigners at Yokohama.¹¹⁰

The pittance of money exchanged had the desired effect. Foreigners grew bored with

¹⁰⁴ Hodgson, p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, 13 July 1859.

¹⁰⁶ Hodgson, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ Munro, p. 220.

¹⁰⁸ Parliamentary Papers, Report on the Cur-

rency of Japan, 1867.

¹⁰⁹ Harris, *Journal*, p. 322.

¹¹⁰ Correspondence Politique, I, No. 19, to Walewski, Edo, 10 December 1859, also No. 31 of 26 December 1859.

their idle life. Japanese merchants drifted away in disgust. At the end of August the boredom ended suddenly.

A Russian squadron carrying over one hundred cannon on nine ships appeared in Edo Bay. It had come to negotiate the northern boundary on Sakhalin. The *bakufu* may have been impressed by this display. Certain samurai were also impressed. The fleet provided an opportunity both to embroil the *bakufu* with a powerful foreign nation as well as earn reputation and possible promotion for themselves. On the evening of August 26th they acted.

A Russian officer and two seamen were ashore at Yokohama buying fowls and fresh vegetable for their ship's mess. Burdened with purchases they had just passed a cross street when they were attacked from behind. The officer and a seaman went down immediately under a flurry of chopping swords. The other seaman escaped wounded into a Japanese shop whose owner bravely slid fast the door in the faces of his pursuers.

Although a single blow of the Japanese sword was usually fatal, the victims had been hacked savagely while lying on the ground. The officer had been "fearfully wounded by two cuts extending over the shoulder blade and crossing at the spine, so deeply as even to have injured the lung, another gash had opened the skull, while a fourth had cut through the fleshy part of the thigh . . . But if the officer's wounds were fearful, no words can describe those . . . of the poor sailor . . . his head was split in two down to the nostrils, his right shoulder cut through and through so that his arm was merely attached to his body by a piece of flesh. His arms and hands had the flesh sheared off in several places . . . he presented a picture of the most barbarous mutilation."¹¹¹

The officer lived for several hours and died at midnight calling for his mother. Huddled in the lamplit room, the little group of listening foreigners realized for the first time the dangers of their position in Japan.

There is only one excuse for quoting young interpreter Cowan's gory despatch to Alcock. The habit of not merely killing but of hacking every bit of life out of a victim, coupled with the terrible butchery of the Japanese blade, made a strong impression upon the foreigners. This coloured all of their later actions.¹¹²

At Yokohama they had the resiliency of youth and the comfort of companionship. At Edo, an older man cut off by position and personality from his fellows was also impressed. An army surgeon in the Carlist Wars, Alcock was to write that he had never seen such horrible wounds on any battlefield as he saw in Japan.

At Yokohama, some of the foreigners were "panic stricken . . . and not to do things by halves, they swaggered about the streets, armed to the teeth with swords, revolvers and other horrible affairs."¹¹³ After several days of painful tumbles caused by their swords

¹¹¹ F.O. 46, III, No. 23 enclosure, to Malmesbury, Edo, 3 September 1859.

¹¹² Ernest Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, Seeley,

Service, London, 1921, p. 53.

¹¹³ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 250, to Heard, 1 November 1859.

getting inconsistently between their legs, they gave it up. Harris did not think this display had caused the Japanese much concern.

Russian retaliation however did worry them, and the *bakufu* suddenly became friendly towards Alcock and Harris.¹¹⁴ The former had suggested that the *bakufu* take in foreign dollars, re-coin them into *ichibus* and return them a few days later to the foreigners. The figure he had accepted was 16,000 *ichibus* or just over \$5,000 a day. Harris did not think that Alcock should have agreed to any figure putting a limit upon exchange but saw no reason why Americans should not use the arrangement.¹¹⁵ Alcock had actually told the *bakufu* that 16,000 *ichibus* per day was not enough for even one foreign trading firm. The figure had only been accepted upon the *bakufu* promise that it would rapidly increase the sum available for exchange.¹¹⁶

Jardine's, which had been able to exchange only \$5,000 all summer quickly exchanged and invested \$25,000 in Japanese produce, and went another \$35,000 into debt to Japanese dealers. Letters were hurried off to China for more funds. The summer's minute quantities of mushrooms, raw silk, silk cloth, seaweed, beans, isinglass (a fish glue used in India ink), *bêche de mer* (sea slugs or *iriko*), peas, fish oil, cuttle fish, shrimps, tea and gold coins, now became respectable shipments.

All of these had been kept to small quantities by the lack of exchange. Now as the good news went out that exchange was available, dollars began to pour in from Shanghai to meet produce coming in from the countryside. By September 16th Jardine's agent could report that an unusual quantity of silk had come on to the market. He contracted for \$30,000 worth of it. He also collected 1,000 tubs of oil. Others were also doing well. The Dutch had opened the market at near China prices for silk. This enforced caution upon foreign buyers. Dent's felt it worthwhile to bring in a silk inspector from China. With his help they bought and shipped off "a large parcel" of 200 piculs (the picul was 133 and $\frac{1}{3}$ lbs.). Jardine's shipped 170 piculs of silk, received \$15,000 from Shanghai, another \$10,000 from Nagasaki, spent both and still owed \$35,000 on October 24th. After four months at Yokohama, Jardine's loaded its first substantial cargo from Japan.¹¹⁷

This was in mid-November when the "Chryseis" took 2,500 piculs of oil, 2,000 piculs of seaweed, 250 piculs of silk, 3,300 pieces of cotton cloth, 500 pieces of silk cloth, a few hundred piculs of "muck and truck" isinglass, shrimp, mushrooms, etc., a box of bad dollars which the customs house had rejected and five boxes of Japanese gold coins.

As "Chryseis" was leaving port, others were loading for sea. The "Henry Ellis" carried seaweed for Shanghai, Dent's had chartered the "Dennis Hill" to take peas to Hong Kong, the Dutch barque "Princess Charlotte" was loading seaweed and general cargo for Hong

¹¹⁴ Alcock, I, 247.

¹¹⁵ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 203, to Dorr, 12 September 1859.

¹¹⁶ Correspondence Politique, I, enclosure in No. 19, to Walewski, 10 December 1859.

¹¹⁷ All trade references are from the twenty-four Yokohama letters of 1859 in the Jardine-Matheson collection. Dates are mentioned when they seem to have some topical value.

Kong. Another Netherlander, the “Maria Louisa” was taking on the same cargo for Shanghai. With it all, Keswick of Jardine’s was able to assure his superiors in China that “no one has gotten a greater share than yourself.”¹¹⁸ He was out of money, too deeply in debt to go on buying and even giving I.O.U.’s at the customs house for export charges. It was just as well, for he also regretted to inform that the exchange was “again almost entirely suspended and now only change is given for about \$25 per diem.”¹¹⁹

Assured now that there would be no immediate Russian retaliation and surprised by the sudden burst of business at Yokohama, the *bakufu* had again cut back the exchange. The trade slowed with it. The excuse given was that the money was needed to rebuild the shogun’s palace which had just burned.¹²⁰ To make the matter more certain, it forbade Japanese merchants to bring in more than token quantities of silk, oil or seaweed.¹²¹

Although enough money for trade was never supplied,¹²² individuals could gain a temporary monetary advantage over others, through the system itself. Alcock described this as being “so entirely without system or impartiality that injury has been inflicted on individual merchants without reason or justification.”¹²³ The system could, however, be burlesqued. Exchange was doled out by a simple rule. You never got what you requested, but the more you requested, the more you received. If you asked for \$50 worth of *ichibus* you might get \$5. If you asked for \$100 worth, you might get \$10. One perceptive foreigner noticing this, simply multiplied his demand and walked off with the bulk of the day’s limited exchange. There was much laughter that night and several imitators on the morrow. As there was so little available anyway, it did not matter much who got it. Requests for exchange skyrocketed past the thousands, through the millions, up to the billions and on into the trillions until one gentleman solemnly asked for \$1,200,666,777,-888,999,222,231 worth of *ichibus*.

This request was for a Mr. Jack Ketch. Foreigners had discovered a variation on the joke. Chits would be accepted for persons not physically present in the building, in Japan or in life itself. Among those requesting exchange were to be found Mr. Weller out of Pickwick, Mr. Bones of the then popular minstrel shows, the ubiquitous Mr. Lucky Cove, such Biblical gentlemen as Moses and Aaron, and a few obscenities.¹²⁴

These flights of fancy seem mainly to have been confined to two merchants, Tatham and Eskrigge. They ventured several extensive efforts. Initiator seems to have been a Mr. Telge with a simple request for \$250 million worth of exchange. The final offender, young Jardine’s clerk, Mr. Barber, requested a mere four million for himself, Jones (A

¹¹⁸ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1859, to J. Whittall, Yokohama, 11 November 1859.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Correspondence Politique, I, Manabe to de Bellecourt, 15 November 1859. In No. 16 to Walewski, Edo, 15 November 1859.

¹²¹ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1859,

to J. Whittall, 16 November 1859.

¹²² Michie, II, 21.

¹²³ F.O. 46, III, enclosure No. 2 in No. 42, to Russell, 10 December 1859.

¹²⁴ Parliamentary Papers, Printed Correspondence Respecting the Stoppage of Trade in Japan, presented to the Commons, 21 February 1860.

Jardine's captain), Troas (his ship), and "A. Friend." As Barber's business letters were so vague that his superiors did not know what he was doing in the market,¹²⁵ he was soon sent back to China where there would be more senior men on hand to supervise him.¹²⁶

The jokes of young men at Yokohama did not seem very funny to an older man at Edo. When the exchange supply he had negotiated was cut off by the *bakufu* after only six weeks, Alcock sat down to write a despatch to London. There it was printed in Parliamentary Papers and has become part of almost every subsequent history of Japan.

In common with all of his despatches it is lengthy. Even after tutoring by Heusken, *bakufu* translators could only write short letters in bad Dutch. With almost no English what these men can have made of Alcock's tortuous logic and fulsome Victorian style cannot have been much. Presumably most went unanswered as simply being incomprehensible.¹²⁷ Alcock rejected a *bakufu* complaint that his letters were not understood and took many days to translate,¹²⁸ but his French colleague described one of Alcock's consular notices as "a veritable volume" which he did not have time to translate for his superiors.¹²⁹ One is carried along on a powerful flow of excellent prose through which the underlying facts are seen but dimly. Although it is an arduous business the November 10th despatch is worth some attention.¹³⁰

Alcock begins by looking "to the indiscreet conduct, to use the mildest term, of many, if not all the foreign residents." Harris thought that "a portion of them are neither prudent nor discreet."¹³¹ Arriving in Japan two or three years later, a British diplomat wrote that "a small minority"¹³² misbehaved. Given "the innumerable and daily recurring causes of dispute and irritation between the Japanese officials of all grades and the foreign traders, both as to the nature of the trade they enter into, and the mode in which they conduct it, open in many instances to grave objection," Alcock could not but wonder "at the existence of much ill-feeling." A favourable biographer, who had also been a British merchant in China and Japan during Alcock's service there, noted that years before when Chinese officials had impeded trade, Alcock had not blamed them. Refusing to admit any deeper or more general causes, he had claimed that rudeness or imprudence by British individuals was solely responsible for treaty violations.¹³³ Greater age had merely settled this opinion. It was a convenient line to take absolving the diplomat from enforcing a treaty. Some eight days later the French chargé mentions nothing about the

¹²⁵ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Shanghai 1859, to W. Keswick, 22 October 1859.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, to Joseph Jardine, 28 November 1859.

¹²⁷ For a similar situation see W. G. Beasley, "The Language Problem in the Anglo-Japanese Negotiations of 1854", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIII, part 3, 1950.

¹²⁸ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 91, encloses Alcock to *bakufu*, 11 July 1861.

¹²⁹ Correspondence Politique, I, No. 21, to

Walewski, 3 December 1859.

¹³⁰ F.O. 46, IV, No. 41, Alcock to Russell, Edo, 10 November 1859, enclosure No. 7, Alcock to *bakufu* foreign ministers, 8 November 1859.

¹³¹ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 7, to Cass, 1 August 1860.

¹³² Lord Redesdale, *A Tragedy in Stone*, London, 1912, p. 173.

¹³³ Michie, I, 253-254.

exchange, devoting his homedespach to the *bakufu*'s thoroughgoing restriction of trade.¹³⁴ Writing at the same time as Alcock, Harris mentions no troubles caused by foreign merchants, only that his old *entente cordiale* with the *bakufu* is gone, its animosity is now very real.¹³⁵

Having charged all the foreign residents with misbehaviour and gone on to claim that same misbehaviour caused Japanese animosity towards foreigners, in both of which opinions he was apparently alone, Alcock moved on to surer ground. Everyone agreed with him when he mentioned the drunken disorder of sailors ashore. Burlesquing a consular court, Japan Punch noted that "several sailors were fined for having returned to their ships sober in violation of the practice of the service."¹³⁶ Two months before the Alcock despatch, the British consul at Nagasaki had hired a constable and paid \$10 for "a pair of handcuffs—much needed."¹³⁷ In Japanese ports W.S. Gilbert's British tar was indeed a soaring soul, and no doubt his fist was ever ready for a knock-down blow. That this should bother the Japanese authorities very much is doubtful. Japanese merchants did quite well doing business with sailormen. If a Japanese merchant profited from the foreigners, a *bakufu* official shortly profited from the merchant. Japanese police were accustomed to dragging sword-waving samurai drunks to the ground with long fire hooks.¹³⁸ A foreigner's fists cannot have been very frightening. Yokohama was a kindergarten compared to the brothel quarters of nearby Edo.

After two false notes Alcock had struck a true one with his drunken sailors. He went on to another: "The foreigners have, without distinction of nation, the enmity of a large class of feudal princes and their retainers . . . the happy state of order and obedience on which Kaempfer and Thunberg have been so eloquent . . . are pictures which have but little foundation in reality . . . they neither desire our trade nor our friendship." Leading from this solid ground upon which all foreigners were agreed, he launches on to a personal opinion. "All commercial and political relations under such circumstances must be in great degree unsatisfactory and unpromising for the future were there no other grounds of distrust and irritation. But our own people . . . take care that there shall be no lack of these. Utterly reckless of the future, intent only on profiting, if possible, by the present moment to the utmost, regardless of Treaties or future consequences, they are wholly engaged just now in shipping off all the gold currency of Japan. This can only be effected surreptitiously in defiance of Japanese laws and edicts and with small regard to Treaty objects or obligations."

The phrase "regardless of Treaties" is a surprising one from a diplomat. The treaty specifically allowed for the export of Japanese gold coin. Harris had prohibited it in his

¹³⁴ Correspondence Commerciale, I, Edo, 1859–61, No. 16, to Walewski, 18 November 1959.

¹³⁵ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 257, to Cass, 7 November 1859.

¹³⁶ A magazine irregularly issued at Yokohama. This is from an 1866 issue.

¹³⁷ M. Paske-Smith, p. 256.

¹³⁸ Alcock, I, 243.

draft of the proposed treaty. It was the *bakufu* itself who had proposed the export of gold and silver coin to the astonished American.¹³⁹

As to being wholly engaged in shipping off gold, this would have left precious little time for the shipment of silk, seaweed, tea, oil, shrimps and the rest. Many of these articles required considerable repacking before shipment, as well as a great deal of time in weighing, passing through customs, loading on to lighters, and checking on to the ship's deck. Tea, for example, arriving at Yokohama in jars had to be repacked into tea chests. Alcock must have known this. The thin gold coins would not ballast, much less fill a ship, and loaded ships were leaving Yokohama.

The gold coins themselves were brought to Yokohama by Japanese and offered to the foreigners. The latter did not go out and seek them. On November 17th Keswick of Jardine's wrote that he had to refuse gold coins as he had no more money. It was one of the few products the Japanese had to offer, and some small businessmen are said to have gotten their start by selling gold to foreigners. The French consul at Yokohama, Jose Loureiro, was also a merchant buying and shipping gold coins. He reported that they were sent to Yokohama by daimyo. The profit to these was supposedly about 30%. After the trouble of shipping and sale at Shanghai, the foreigner earned 50%.¹⁴⁰ One sale of shirtings and chintzes is recorded as being paid for in gold coins, 200 of them.¹⁴¹ As the coins were boxed and passed through the customs it is doubtful that the *bakufu* officials did not know what was in the boxes. When it chose to stop the export it did so, simply by its police powers.¹⁴² The thin gold coins sold for seven or eight *ichibus*, say \$2.30 to \$2.50 to foreigners at Yokohama, and were insured for shipment at \$3.50.¹⁴³ As the Japanese coast was treacherous, and without lighthouses, it may be assumed that the insurance value was fairly close to the sale price.

That all the gold coinage of the country was shipped off is also unlikely. The *bakufu* did not complain of it. Gold was reported as being in plentiful supply, whereas the silver which purchased it was scarce and welcome.¹⁴⁴ Gold was simply lumped with all other produce being exported by foreigners.¹⁴⁵

Following its traditional method of meeting financial difficulties, the *bakufu* was causing an inflation by increasing the quantity of coinage in the country. Millions in iron cash, copper *tempōs*, other metal varieties and paper money were being issued. To this could be added the surplus of foreign silver left by a very favourable balance of trade. Inflation

¹³⁹ Harris, *Journal*, p. 529

¹⁴⁰ Correspondence Commerciale, Edo, 1859–61, I, No. 12, to Walewski, 29 October 1859.

¹⁴¹ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1859, to J. Whittall, 21 November 1859.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 3 December 1859.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1859.

¹⁴⁴ E. g., rather than melt and use foreign gold coins, the *bakufu* sold them to Harris for silver.

Journal, p. 409. The profit Harris mentions is not on Japanese but on foreign gold and was owing to the exchange rates between Asia, through London to America. He was not profiting at the expense of Japanese. Cf. W. L. Neumann, p. 56.

¹⁴⁵ J. McMaster, "The Japanese Gold Rush of 1859", *Journal of Asian Studies*, XIX, No. 3, May 1960.

was useful as a national defense measure, but as always the economy suffered rapidly rising prices.¹⁴⁶ These were blamed upon the foreign export of goods including gold.¹⁴⁷ The *bakufu* did not want its gold back. Jardine's could not sell them gold bars six months later.¹⁴⁸ These bars were such a glut on the China market that Jardine's cancelled all further shipments from San Francisco.¹⁴⁹ Had there been any need for gold in Japan, the California ships usually stopped at Yokohama and/or Nagasaki before proceeding to China.

If the gold export was not actually doing Japan much damage, Alcock's reporting of it thoroughly blackened the reputations of the British merchants in that country. It achieved such a success that the Secretary of the India and China Association wrote to the Foreign Office regretting that the conduct of British merchants had caused the Japanese to stop the trade.¹⁵⁰ Since it was the stoppage of trade by the *bakufu* which had caused the misconduct this was a tour de force of misrepresentation. Its ripples spread far afield. The London Times eventually reached Batavia where the Netherlands governor general wrote to his representative in Japan not to let Dutch citizens take part in the robbery.¹⁵¹ This note arrived in Japan during the summer of 1860 some six months after the gold export had ceased.

The French consul general ordinarily cooperated fully with Alcock, but the attack upon the foreign merchants was too much for him. He wrote an article attacking Alcock in a Paris paper and sent along clippings from the China Coast Press pointing out that only sailors caused any trouble.¹⁵² To his superiors he wrote that the pranks of some of Alcock's nationals did not in any way justify the *bakufu* treaty violations which had given rise to them.¹⁵³

As to the actual gold export from Japan it was solved easily enough. With the defeat of its special trade coin in July the *bakufu* had to think again about its coinage. One of its foreign ministers wrote to Harris on the subject.

Old ideas were dying hard. The *bakufu* did not wish to give up its traditional profit on coinage operations, above all on silver coins. Harris pointed out that whereas Japanese silver was at world values, Japanese gold coins were not. The answer he suggested was simple.¹⁵⁴ Gold coins were not in circulation at their book value of one gold coin for

¹⁴⁶ Paul Einzig, *How Money is Managed*, Penguin, 1954, p. 38, 199.

¹⁴⁷ E. J. Hamilton, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain*, Harvard, 1934, pp. 283-285 describes a similar situation in Spain.

¹⁴⁸ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Nagasaki 1860, to J. Whittall, 3 May 1860.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Box Hong Kong 1860, to Parrott and Co., Hong Kong, 10 August 1860.

¹⁵⁰ Parliamentary Papers, Correspondence Respecting the Stoppage of Trade in Japan, presented

to the Commons, 21 February 1860.

¹⁵¹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 1, Batavia, 7 May 1860 to de Wit enclosing the London article as reprinted in the *Javasche Courant*.

¹⁵² Correspondence Commerciale, 1, clipping from *La Patrie* of 19 February 1860.

¹⁵³ Correspondence Politique, 1, No. 21, to Walewski, 3 December 1859.

¹⁵⁴ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 193, to Ota, Edo, 8 August 1859.

four silver *ichibus*. Rather, they were hoarded by daimyo, upper-ranking samurai and wealthy merchants. In a country which knew no banks these lightweight coins were the best means of concentrating wealth. If a new gold coin worth intrinsically four *ichibus* were struck and issued, there would be no problem. There were already several issues of gold coins of different metallic values and different ages selling for different prices. The new coin would merely fill the empty slot at the official rate. As it would not be worth exporting, Japan would have a gold currency. The *bakufu* finally took this advice six months later. The export stopped. What had happened in the interim was its own fault.

Although accepting Alcock's claim that the Yokohama merchants were scoundrels, Lord Russell made the same point as had Harris some seven months earlier. The remedy to any gold export lay in the hands of the *bakufu* which had only to adjust its coinage to world values. Russell also reminded Alcock of his power to deport any British subject who misbehaved.¹⁵⁵ As there had been time for reflection no one was deported.

Alcock does not mention a far more damaging coinage export. That was in the shipment of old copper cash coins from Nagasaki. Unlike the gold, it was prohibited by treaty. Unlike the gold coins which probably did not exceed 100,000 pieces, the copper cash were exported by the millions. In the single year of 1860, 93,869,900 cash were reported as reaching Shanghai.¹⁵⁶ Again unlike the gold which was kept in private hoards, the copper cash was the actual currency of the country. Its replacement by great quantities of iron cash cannot have helped but raise prices for the poor.¹⁵⁷ As it had been for years, this trade was in Chinese hands and remained so. Although willing, Europeans could never seem to bribe their way into the operation by which *bakufu* customs officials and Chinese traders drained Japan of its copper cash. This happened at Nagasaki, which is perhaps why Alcock does not mention it. Gold is more interesting, and in this case it was only twenty miles away at Yokohama.

Alcock had built up a picture of an entire foreign merchant community recklessly insulting *bakufu* officials and breaking Japanese laws to ship off all the gold coin of the country with no thought to the future and at the expense of all legitimate trade. His colleagues in Japan did not recognise this picture at all.

It is only at its very end that the motive behind this blend of fact and fiction is disclosed. Although the murderers of the Russians were well-known popular heroes,¹⁵⁸ or perhaps because they were well-known popular heroes, the *bakufu* made no arrests. The day before writing his despatch, Alcock had received word that a Chinese servant, a British national from Hong Kong, had been murdered in Yokohama. An employee of Dent's, he had been

¹⁵⁵ Correspondence Politique, II, Cowley to Thouvenel, Paris, 28 February 1860 enclosing Russell to Alcock, London, 25 February 1860.

¹⁵⁶ Paske-Smith, p. 211.

¹⁵⁷ Official Tokugawa records on coinage do not always coincide with actual usage so that

this subject is best investigated from Japanese business records, personal letters, diaries, etc. The author hopes that Japanese scholars will add to his knowledge on this subject.

¹⁵⁸ Satow, p. 138.

killed on the firm's doorstep. A lantern had been thrust into his face to blind or identify him whilst he was run through from behind. Counting on the protection of their masters, the Chinese made a point of insulting samurai customs.¹⁵⁹ Often they wore European clothes, so whether the man was killed for some misbehaviour of his own, simply as a foreigner, or mistaken for a European, is unknown. The night was dark. To an isolated man at Edo it did not make much difference. He had hardly finished reading of this killing when his own life was threatened.

Riding for exercise on the Tōkaidō, only a few yards from the gate of his legation, a drunken samurai blocked the way. When one of the grooms tried to stop him pushing Alcock's horse towards the roadside, he put his hand to his sword and threatened to cut the man down. Armed only with a riding whip, Alcock writes that he was ready to interpose himself between samurai and groom. At this point his interpreter, Dan Kitchie, pointed a pistol at the samurai. "But for this, both the groom and myself might have very probably been wounded if not murdered by this ruffian, maddened with drink and armed to the teeth."¹⁶⁰

In consequence what has been described as a "truly brave despatch"¹⁶¹ seems to have been just the opposite. The attack upon Alcock coming as it does at the end of the long despatch seems to tie together the whole lengthy skein of truth, half-truth and misinformation. If it is the panic response of a frightened man, then the story makes sense. If later on, after emotions had cooled, Alcock realised that he had gone too far, the story had been given too much publicity to be retracted.

His consular circular written at the same time is posed in rather different terms than his despatch to London.¹⁶² The Yokohama merchants were better informed than his Foreign Office superiors. The major theme of this notice is that the acts of any one foreigner react upon all foreigners. The innocent may suffer for the guilty. There have been murders of great "atrociousness and vindictiveness." The Russians were killed because of the misconduct of other sailors ashore. The Chinese was killed because of the misconduct of some other foreign resident.

Alcock attacks Keswick of Jardine's. Surely Mr. Keswick cannot mean it as an excuse that his firm made a false application to the treasury for exchange because others were doing so? He cannot mean it as a justification that he was defending the interests entrusted to his care. He might as well seize the treasury officials by the throat and demand exchange. The last phrase is literary fancy but the earlier attack displays a curious lack of understanding of the British trade he was paid to promote. When Keswick justified a false claim at the treasury as defending the interests entrusted to his care it was the simple truth. He was entrusted with investing other people's money in Japanese produce. If

¹⁵⁹ Hodgson, p. 284.

¹⁶⁰ F. O. 262, III, enclosure No. 9, Alcock to *bakufu*, 8 November 1859, in despatch No. 37, to Russell, 10 November 1859.

¹⁶¹ Lord Redesdale (Mitford), p. 173.

¹⁶² Enclosed in Correspondence Politique, I, No. 21 to Walewski, 3 December 1859.

the Japanese government would not adhere to the treaty then each foreign merchant must do the best he could under the circumstances. The responsibility lay with the foreign diplomats to enforce the treaty. The notice closes with a statement that it was better there should be no trade at all than a trade which included gold coins. It is a curious statement from a diplomat sent to enforce a commercial treaty.

If a combination of ignorance and fear had caused the attack upon the British merchants, the ignorance was gone a month later. Early in December the three foreign diplomats joined together at Alcock's request against what all now recognized as a deliberate *bakufu* campaign against foreign trade.¹⁶³ Reports from Nagasaki, Hakodate and Yokohama were similar. The only exception was that restrictions were more severe at the first two ports. From all three came the story of *bakufu* officials forbidding Japanese merchants to bring certain goods for sale, fixing high prices on goods sold, allowing only small quantities to be sold, demanding squeezes from Japanese who sold to foreigners and from foreigners who wished customs permits, coolies or lighters. A limited exchange was unfairly distributed. Japanese who attacked foreigners went free. Japanese who broke contracts with foreigners shared their advance payment with the officials and both enjoyed the profits of the theft. It was a melancholy picture.

Acting as leader of the foreign diplomats Alcock wrote the two *bakufu* foreign ministers for an appointment. The answer was insulting. They did not have an hour to spare, he had best see two subordinate officials. Alcock replied that as it was a question of peace or war they had best find an hour.¹⁶⁴ They did.

On December 9th the three foreign representatives jointly accused the Japanese of deliberately violating almost every clause of the treaty. They carried on the attack for four hours. Most severe was Harris speaking as a man betrayed. After warning the interpreters not to water down his meaning, Alcock carried the attack until he was too tired to speak any longer, upon which de Bellecourt took it up. The joint effort was an utter failure. The foreigners were answered with the standard argument. Foreign trade was draining the country of necessities, therefore prices were rising. Rising prices caused suffering and anger among the people. This anger resulted in the murder of foreigners. Foreigners must leave Edo and Yokohama and go back to Nagasaki and Hakodate. Then they would be safe. Alcock demanded they stop the murder of foreigners. The Japanese replied that there was no lack of young swordsmen in Japan anxious to demonstrate their courage. Through his interpreter, the Abbé Girard, the French diplomat asked if this was an excuse or a threat? The priest replied that it was the latter. The final word was from the Japanese side. Were the cannons being sent as a gift by Napoleon III rifled?

De Bellecourt summed it up simply. "In truth the treaties no longer exist, we merely

¹⁶³ Correspondence Politique, I, No. 21, to Walewski, 3 December 1859.

¹⁶⁴ Correspondence Politique, I, No. 23 to

Walewski, 6 December 1859 enclosing *bakufu* to Alcock, 5 December and his reply of the 6th.

play with promises and words." Against *bakufu* reaction there existed no further weapon except force. "It is the last card to play."¹⁶⁵

The interview was much more than a temporary setback for the Briton had finished by threatening the *bakufu* with war. The Japanese would not be bluffed. Although there were usually one or two British warships visiting Japanese ports there was no British squadron stationed in Japan. Having suffered a defeat at the hands of the Chinese at the Peiho the previous summer, Alcock knew that naval energies would be tied up in China when summer brought good sailing weather again. From London he earned a rebuke, Lord Russell writing, "You should not have threatened war . . . we risk . . . earning a reputation for quarrelling with every nation in the East."¹⁶⁶ Worse, Alcock had earned the contempt of the *bakufu* for threatening a war he could not make.¹⁶⁷

Harris hopefully asked for another interview alone. At the joint interview he had scorned the *bakufu* as not being the ruler of Japan as it claimed but merely a delegate for the daimyo. If it continued in its present path, war would be inevitable. With war the *bakufu* would lose its power of negotiating as the government of Japan. He developed this theme at his private interview on December 13th, taunting them that the daimyo, not the *bakufu*, were the *de facto* government of Japan. If war came, the foreigners would no longer recognize the *bakufu* but would negotiate with the Mikado at Kyoto. These last remarks had a profound effect.¹⁶⁸

Whether it was impressed by this threat or whether it trusted Harris personally, as a man whose veracity had been tested for more than three years, is uncertain. In contrast to the gloomy reports of the British and French, he was able to write Washington that the *bakufu* had promised to make 20,000 *ichibus* available a day for trade, to stamp foreign dollars with the value of three *ichibus* and the *bakufu* seal, to punish officials interfering with trade and to take his advice of the previous August and strike a new gold coin.¹⁶⁹

Whether or not the officials were punished, some dollars were stamped, more exchange was made available, and the new gold coin was issued. Harris who had been given a deliberately insulting reception by the shogun in November was promised another with proper ceremonial. Harris assumed that his insistence on this had caused the removal of Manabe Akikatsu from his office as *rōjū* in charge of foreign affairs.¹⁷⁰ A week later he could

¹⁶⁵ Described by de Bellecourt in Correspondence Politique, I, No. 19 to Walewski, 10 December 1859. The Japanese negotiators were Manabe Akikatsu and a new *rōjū* for foreign affairs identified as Wakisaka Nakatsukasa 脇坂中務. The latter commented on swordsmen.

¹⁶⁶ F.O. 46, IV, No. 44, Russell to Alcock, London, 28 February 1860.

¹⁶⁷ Hodgson, p. 163.

¹⁶⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 278, to Cass,

16 January 1860.

¹⁶⁹ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 278, to Cass, 16 January 1860.

¹⁷⁰ 間部詮勝. *Ibid.*, No. 279, to Cass, 1 February 1860. De Bellecourt thought Manabe was merely tired of negotiating with foreigners noting that he retained his position as *rōjū* 老中. Correspondence Politique, II, No. 23, January 1860.

write that his relations with the new ministry were so pleasant as to remind him of his first visit to Edo in 1857.¹⁷¹

Whether it was the force of Harris' argument, the embassy leaving for the United States in February, or the feeling it might have gone too far for the moment, the *bakufu* did relax its restrictions.

Writing Washington of his success, Harris begged indulgence for the Japanese government owing to its long exclusion and ignorance of commerce. He answered its fear of exports causing hardship by offering to prohibit any export which it could prove was causing suffering to the Japanese people.¹⁷² This offer was never accepted.

Alcock showed the Dutch consul from Yokohama the government's letter announcing that dollars would pass at three for one and that this notice would be posted throughout the country. Van Poelsbroek thought that relations between *bakufu* and diplomats were better. In spite of this, Alcock told him he loathed the *bakufu* for all the difficulties it had made. Because of them Japan must be made to repent her deeds. At this moment, Harris came to call and defended the *bakufu*. Resentfully Alcock said "Harris, you always excuse Japanese misdeeds."¹⁷³

A small opening crack had begun to appear between the two men who had previously worked so well together. The immediate reason for Alcock's feelings seems to have been another murder, to which his reaction cannot have suited Harris very well.

Alcock's Japanese interpreter had been a common fisherman. As a castaway working on American ships he had learned spoken English. Now under the protection of the foreigners he swaggered about wearing Western clothes and carrying a Colt revolver. When out riding with his foreign employers he returned samurai insults freely. By pointing his revolver and threatening to shoot he may have saved Alcock's life in November, 1859. The presence of this man at negotiations must have infuriated *bakufu* officials. More practically he is said to have interfered in the profits of the Japanese guarding the British legation. These samurai marked up the price of all supplies entering the legation, the difference augmenting their own meagre salaries.

The *bakufu* warned Alcock of the man's danger. Neither the warning nor Dan Kitchie's Colt did him any good. While talking to some children he was run through from behind in full daylight. At least a dozen people saw the murderer. Dan was not only figuratively but literally under the protection of the Union Jack. He was leaning upon the legation flagstaff at the time. With death at his own gate Alcock had reason for nerves. When the governors of Yokohama refused to attend the funeral of the commoner, Alcock threatened to land the entire crew of "H.M.S. Roebuck," send to China for a fleet¹⁷⁴ and even quit

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, No. 280, to Cass, 6 February 1860.

¹⁷² Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 278, to Cass, 16 January 1860.

¹⁷³ Algemeen Rijksarchief, the Hague, Con-

sulaat Yokohama, Bundle I, No. 22, 21 February 1860 to de Wit.

¹⁷⁴ Correspondence Politique, II, No. 28, to Walewski, 4 February 1860.

Edo to live on board the warship at Yokohama.¹⁷⁵ This last must have been a blow for Harris. The Edo residence had only been secured with the greatest difficulty. The threat worked the first time. The officials attended the funeral. Presumably the interview was written down for consideration at a higher level. It was customary.¹⁷⁶ A fortnight later Alcock was told that the “Roebuck” should leave. Her presence was “exciting the populace.”¹⁷⁷

A week after writing of his interview with Alcock the Dutch consul had burials of his own to think about. On the evening of February 26th, two Dutch sea captains finished their meal at the Yokohama Hotel and walked out into the moonlit street. One was middle-aged, the other sixty, neither were armed. They were going to buy some soy sauce to liven up shipboard meals. Ten minutes later they were both dead. Attacked from behind, both had been hacked to bits in the main street of the little settlement. Each had been slashed more than a dozen times, the head of one having been deliberately severed with many cuts. Fingers, hands, an arm lay about the bodies. Nothing was stolen, one still had one hundred *ichibus* in his pocket. Watches and rings had not been touched. As in most Japanese towns, every street was closed and gated in the evening and every gate had its watchman. These gates had been closed at the time of the murders. The watchmen were on duty but the assailants were never found.

There was no need for Alcock to threaten a retreat to compel Japanese attendance at the funeral. The captain of a Prussian warship in port simply informed the two Japanese governors of Yokohama that if they did not attend he would send marines to bring them. They attended. The Prussians were joined by Russian marines, British sailors, the consuls and the small foreign community in their trip to the little foreign cemetery which was growing steadily larger. There had now been six killings without the efficient Japanese police having found a single killer. As five of the murders had been at Yokohama, Ii Naosuke's claim that the location was for the protection of foreigners no longer seemed very valid.

The foreigners began to provide their own protection. At night a squad of Russian marines patrolled the streets, a duty they later alternated with other naval vessels. The Netherlands stationed a warship at Yokohama, foreigners wore a revolver all day and put it beneath the pillow at night. The clumsy revolvers were not much use as weapons. It took a trained man to use them accurately, they were slow firing and almost useless at night. Against the usual ambush from behind they were totally without value. But they did have a deterrent effect. There were no more killings inside Yokohama.

Twenty miles away at Edo life was not so safe. To the *bakufu* Harris wrote that the six killings in six months without an arrest was the conduct of cannibals in the South

¹⁷⁵ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 1, No. 22, 21 February 1860 to de Wit.

¹⁷⁶ Hodgson, pp. 46, 48-49.

¹⁷⁷ Correspondence Commerciale, No. 56, included in Politique II, 23 February 1860.

Seas exciting the indignation of the whole civilized world. Continued, it must bring war and the subversion of Ii Naosuke's government.¹⁷⁸ The daimyo of the Mito fief, whose adopted son, Hitotsubashi, had been passed over for the shogunate,¹ was said to have ordered the killings to bring a foreign war which might mean his own restoration to power.¹⁷⁹

Whatever the truth of that, there were Mito men involved in the next killing. This time it was the regent, Ii Naosuke himself, who fell to the swords. As March ended in a day of rain and snow, the regent's cortege approached the shogun's castle. The body-guard in straw rain capes had their sword hilts wrapped for protection, heads bent low into the storm. Their master was shut into his palanquin. A sudden rush, the slash of swords, and a body tumbled from a shattered carriage. An attacker rushed away, the severed head of Ii Naosuke gripped by its hair.

Fighting broke out in the Mito fief, the Japanese guards furnished by the *bakufu* to the foreign legations were doubled and a general civil war seemed imminent. Although Ii Naosuke had been the author of their misfortunes, his demise did the foreigners little good. Probably the only man in the *bakufu* with the resolution to really govern, his loss was a serious blow. He had been too conservative to encourage foreign trade and gain thereby the alliance of those daimyo who profited from it, yet by allowing a minimum of trade he had left himself open to the charge of being pro-foreign. Thus a sordid political murder became a deed of high patriotism.

Although Alcock's diplomacy had been a failure, he had been able to improve his own position considerably. Alcock had come to Japan as consul general. Harris had just been promoted to minister. The American suggested Alcock ask for the same rank to help him negotiate with the *bakufu*. It met a consul general with members of its second council, whereas a minister could deal directly with the *Gorogio's* two ministers for foreign affairs.¹⁸⁰ Using Harris as a reference, Alcock promoted himself and asked London to approve the move. This was done. News of his promotion arrived in the winter of 1860. With promotion came a rise in salary from £1,800 to £3,000 a year. As June ended Alcock found a means to add almost one third again to this figure.

After June 1860, the *bakufu* was no longer bound by treaty to provide foreigners with Japanese money. "On the issue must wholly depend what answer can be given the question of trade or no trade," Alcock wrote of the exchange.¹⁸¹ Oddly his French colleague complained that in practice the British minister was indifferent to the matter.¹⁸² Whatever the case, the foreign merchants were abandoned to the *bakufu*. The dollar which had

¹⁷⁸ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 293, to *bakufu* foreign ministers, 27 February 1860.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 302, to Cass, 10 March 1860.

¹⁸⁰ Correspondence Politique, 1, No. 4, to Walewski, 10 September 1859. De Bellecourt

used the same argument to achieve his own promotion. Sadly it was merely honorary.

¹⁸¹ F.O. 391, 1, to Hammond, 3 August 1860.

¹⁸² Correspondence commerciale, No. 86, to Thouvenel, 6 March 1861.

begun to circulate freely at three *ichibus* was now cut suddenly to two and a quarter.¹⁸³ Alcock did not join his countrymen in this financial loss. Rather he accepted a proposal which the *bakufu* had been making for some time.¹⁸⁴ This was to continue the old exchange for himself, his subordinates and all army and navy personnel.

The arrangement fitted in with samurai ideas that the official class, even if foreigners, should be privileged. The *bakufu* apparently regarded this new special exchange for officials as a bribe. Although it cost the government money the *bakufu* refused to give it up when asked to do so by the Prussians. It admitted that three for one was correct but said then that its currency needed reform. This would take time.¹⁸⁵ In the interim the diplomats would get the right exchange. The assumption apparently being that Japanese and English officials should not bother themselves about monetary losses by common merchants.¹⁸⁶ Alcock did not press the *bakufu* again on the exchange question. Whether through honest ignorance or deliberate intent, both *bakufu* and British diplomat profited by the arrangement. The *bakufu*, exchanging dollars at just over two *ichibus*, pocketed a profit of about 30 cents worth of silver on every dollar. Alcock and other foreign officials, given *ichibus* at three per dollar, sold those they did not want to foreign merchants and pocketed the profit. Ernest Satow, then a young student interpreter, was ashamed of the business.¹⁸⁷

When the *bakufu* proposed the same system at Nagasaki, the American and French consuls joined the Netherlands consul general in refusing it. It could only lead to ill feeling between diplomat and merchant as well as being open to misconstructions. Although, as merchants, it would have given them a distinct business advantage, it was the two trading consuls, Walsh and Mackenzie, who suggested the refusal. The three agreed to go on fighting for the old exchange for all.¹⁸⁸

Four years later the Foreign Office reached the same conclusion. It did not like the printed remarks about bribery in China Coast papers.¹⁸⁹ It had taken four years and as many investigations at London to clear up the question. For Alcock in Japan they had been profitable years.¹⁹⁰

When he had first arrived in Japan, Alcock had told the *bakufu* that the Foreign Office had a strict rule that its servants should accept no presents from a foreign government. The new special exchange posed a question: how to explain to one's superiors that a sizeable increment to one's salary is in effect being paid by a foreign government?

¹⁸³ Correspondence Politique, I, No. 68,—this is a commercial despatch included in a political volume—to Thouvenel, 19 August 1860. In *Capital of the Tycoon*, II, 422, Alcock gives the impression that he suggested the exchange.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Correspondence Politique.

¹⁸⁵ F.O. 262, CDLXXX, to Alcock, Edo, 27 October 1864.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Fortune, *Edo and Peking*, London, 1863, p. 295.

¹⁸⁷ Satow, p. 26.

¹⁸⁸ Consulaat Yokohama. Bundle 1, No. 213 de Wit to Walsh, Deshima, 11 July 1860.

¹⁸⁹ Alcock, II, 433. F.O. 46, XLIX, Treasury to Foreign Office, 9 July 1864.

¹⁹⁰ Satow, p. 26.

It was done by claiming that foreign merchants would cheat British diplomats in exchanging their salaries. It was a matter of simple justice not to leave the diplomat at the mercy of the Yokohama merchant.¹⁹¹ During the gold export days Alcock had written a North China paper calling the merchants scum. It would no doubt be embarrassing to ask banking services from these same men. That they would cheat him is, on the face of it, ridiculous. Alcock had the power to fine and deport them from Japan. They competed with each other for banking business and they looked to the British minister to assist them in their claims against the Japanese. Refusing an offer to waive the commission Harris exchanged his salary at Yokohama. The change was one per cent.¹⁹² Alcock made the claim anyway, and his November gold export despatch helped lend authenticity to it.

Alcock did not actually mean the claim that foreign merchants at Yokohama would cheat the diplomats.¹⁹³ This was only for public consumption. At the Foreign Office he told a different story. "Sir R. Alcock always used to admit that the privilege—viz. a premium on the exchange of something like 33% was indefensible in principle, only he said if you take it away you must raise our salaries."¹⁹⁴ Why a lowly paid student interpreter found himself drinking champagne and running a pony on £200 a year while the British minister complained of hardship on £3,000 takes a little explaining. A part of the answer is simply that Alcock was a careful man who was putting as much aside towards retirement as possible. Another element also enters the picture. At Yokohama prices of foodstuffs were high but it was a relatively free market as so much came in by ship from China, Europe and North America. At Edo all supplies for the legations had to pass through the hands of their samurai guards. On one occasion the French interpreter, the Abbé Girard, slipped away from his escort and found that normal Japanese prices were 200% less than what the diplomats had been forced to pay.¹⁹⁵

If the foreign diplomats were the victims of an extortion racket at Edo then this should have been admitted. If nothing could have been done about it then a special allowance could have been made limited to the Edo legations. A more devious path had been chosen.

Having made a false claim in support of the official exchange Alcock had still to explain why it was right for diplomats but wrong for merchants. This he did by attacking the Harris Treaty. It was "erroneous and vicious and the sooner it is departed from the better."¹⁹⁶ Others followed his lead. It was a "monstrous stipulation"¹⁹⁷ and an "extraordinary" monetary article.¹⁹⁸ It seems odd that a merchant by training should have gone so far wrong. In fact he had not. Eventually the treasury in London decided Harris had

¹⁹¹ Alcock, II, 422.

¹⁹² Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 144, to J. Loureiro, Edo, 3 August 1859.

¹⁹³ Alcock, II, 422.

¹⁹⁴ F.O. 46, xxxix, memo Arbuthnot at Treasury to Hammond at Foreign Office in re Prussian request to drop the special exchange,

10 June 1863.

¹⁹⁵ Correspondence Politique, II, No. 48, to Thouvenel, 25 September 1860.

¹⁹⁶ Alcock, II, 414-416.

¹⁹⁷ Michie, II, 18.

¹⁹⁸ Paske-Smith, p. 213.

been right and Alcock wrong. It recommended that the Foreign Office drop the Alcock exchange, which it did in 1864.

For the merchants in July 1860 the *bakufu* began depreciating the dollar, giving fewer and fewer *ichibu*s for it at the customs house. Things never went back to the year before when at the opening of trade two half *ichibu* coins worth 35 cents or so had purchased a silver dollar. Trade had now built a flooring under the value of the dollar, for if it fell too low Japanese merchants would not bring it to the customs house at all. Instead they would buy Western imports, usually cotton or woollen cloth, to sell in the interior. There thus sprang up a free exchange independent of the government customs house which now had to compete with Japanese merchants to buy dollars. Sometimes falling as low as two *ichibu*s, often between 220 and 240, the exchange still left the *bakufu* a profit on buying and melting silver dollars.¹⁹⁹

Trade in general slumped. The smaller merchants who had to turn over their capital quickly and almost constantly to stay in business began to be forced out.²⁰⁰ The larger Western firms who could ride out a bad season or two persevered, for there were some bright spots. Japan was beginning to develop a demand for imported textiles which helped work off surplus stocks from the depressed trade in China. Ships could now take some cargo instead of going to Japan in ballast. The trade in foodstuffs to China had been a temporary thing. In 1860, an Anglo-French force fought its way to Peking. As a result of this victory, new river and coastal ports were opened. These, rather than Japan, fed the populations of Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Copper, the old money-maker of the Dutch trade, was seldom allowed for export by the *bakufu*. When it was, those shipments which did go out often proved disappointing against the new Indian industry at Calcutta. Japan tea was not popular in Britain but began to sell in North America. Its export increased steadily at a pace which allowed for the planting of the quickly maturing shrubs and the harvesting of previously unpicked leaves.

Another product with a surplus for export was silk. Unlike tea, its export boomed with amazing speed. It quickly became the life-blood of Japan's foreign trade, a position it held well into the present century. Mulberry plantings took more time to expand than tea bushes but apparently there were unused trees available as well as new plantations. Japan's opening coincided with the silkworm disease which decimated European production for the decade of the sixties. By the time that Pasteur discovered its cure in 1870, Japanese silk had become established in the European market. As European silk production fell, prices boomed in Asia. As export prices soared in Japan, domestic prices increased apace. Roughly ten per cent of the population were samurai families. Many of these suffered from the price rise. True, they could have worn cottons or woollens, but wearing silk was one of the privileges which set their class apart from the commoners. Not all

¹⁹⁹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 4, P. F. | 6 June 1861.
Von Siebold to Minister of Colonies, Yokohama, | ²⁰⁰ J. Heco, I, 277-278.

samurai suffered. With agents at both Nagasaki and Yokohama, the daimyo were doing well out of foreign trade.²⁰¹ Their profits, however, were going into their own coffers and not into increasing the stipends of their dependent samurai. The rise in silk prices was certainly to be blamed upon the foreigners. Other things had also increased, including rice, which Westerners did not export. Foreigners were blamed for everything. As the lower-ranking samurai were almost the only group in Japanese society who were not benefiting from foreign trade, it was these men who had been striking at foreigners. Although their motives were often those of personal advancement, the price rise was a real enough grievance. Blame for it was another matter.

As the price rise was one of the excuses for killing foreigners Alcock was worried. His promotion and the special exchange rate would be of little use to him if he were killed. A year's home leave was also owing to him if he could remain alive until 1862. His panic-born despatch of November was not a passing thing. As the new year began de Bellecourt wrote Paris that Alcock was deeply worried by the insecurity of their position at Edo. He enclosed Alcock's letter to Lord Russell.²⁰² "With a perpetual menace of assassination on the one hand and of incendiarism on the other, while earthquakes almost every week shake the houses to their foundations, I cannot say the post of diplomatic agent in Edo is to be recommended for nervous people."²⁰³ Hearing a rumour in May that a new French diplomat was to be sent to Edo from Shanghai, he wrote the Foreign Office to try and stop it. The man was so devoid of discretion "it might cost us all our lives."²⁰⁴ Alcock was suffering as well from his self-imposed solitude. "You little know at the Foreign Office *what* a life this is to lead—away from all civilizing influences . . . no man can bear it for many years without deterioration. . . . I am utterly used up and all the springs of life so spoiled and weakened that life anywhere will be without savour or value."²⁰⁵

That same summer Harris did some shopping for the widow of Commodore Perry—she wanted Japanese vases—sent off his subscriptions to the *Evening Mail*, *Punch*, and *Independence Belge*, joined a French scientific society sending them some Japanese seeds, asked the U.S. consul at Singapore to send him some upland rice seeds as these would be "a great boon" to the Japanese, had a properly ceremonial reception by the shogun, wrote happily of the good reception given the Japanese embassy in America and of the growing foreign trade. As the year ended finding Alcock utterly used up, Harris wrote that the cordiality of the *bakufu* left nothing to be desired.²⁰⁶

For Alcock there was no such contentment. Autumn was the hunting season and this hunting brought him again into conflict with his fellow Britons at Yokohama. These had

²⁰¹ Charles David Sheldon, *Rise of the Merchant Class in Tokugawa Japan*, New York, 1958, p. 162. Hodgson, p. 199.

²⁰² Correspondence Politique, II, No. 23, to Walewski, 7 January 1860.

²⁰³ Enclosure in above, Alcock to Russell,

7 January 1860.

²⁰⁴ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond; 5 May 1860.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 September 1860.

²⁰⁶ Harris Papers, Book 5, to W. Russell at Shanghai, Edo, 11 December 1860.

precious little available by way of recreation, nor very much variety to their diet. In consequence they hunted. It was not forbidden by treaty but it was said to be a violation of a Japanese edict—there was no codified law—which forbade the use of fire-arms within twenty-five miles of Edo. As the two places were only about twenty miles apart, foreigners who were allowed to travel about twenty-five miles from Yokohama were bound to clash with this domestic edict. After the accidental wounding of a Japanese in Hakodate the matter had been settled simply. Any shooting in the town, except in self-defence, would be punished. Hunting outside the town would be allowed. At Yokohama it was not so simple. Riding horseback and carrying weapons were samurai privileges forbidden to commoners. In Japanese society the merchant class was officially the most despised section of the common people. Samurai who might have allowed foreign officials the privilege were infuriated to see foreign merchants riding and shooting. They may have feared the example might spread to their own people.²⁰⁷ As samurai themselves demanded fire-arms of every European at Yokohama, they did not object to the weapons as such, so long as they kept a monopoly of their use.²⁰⁸

As the first hunting season opened at Yokohama, one of its governors approached the foreign consuls asking them to forbid shooting. Apparently they all did so. The notices did not carry much force. There was no penalty attached, so that many Britons and Americans hunted daily.

In October of the following year a Yokohama governor said that a Japanese woman had been accidentally shot by a foreign hunter. Would the consuls again forbid hunting? The Dutch consul at least did so, this time adding a \$200 fine. He reports that his countrymen lost their love of the sport. Other foreigners did not. Led by the French consul and the interpreter from the British consulate many still took the field. The governor became angry and ordered his police to take them in.²⁰⁹ This was unknown to the foreigners who had assumed from watching their own officials shoot that the notices would have no more force than the previous year. As there were only some forty or so foreigners at Yokohama, it was simple enough to report them to their consuls for punishment. The governor seems to have preferred seizing the foreigners bodily. The first victim must have been a welcome catch. He was a German named Telge, living under British protection. To the rudeness of customs officials he always replied by being at least equally rude himself.

Seized in the field, tied and hidden within a sedan chair he was being carried to Yokohama when a passing group of British hunters noticed his boots hanging out of the carriage. One presented a revolver at the police and Telge was freed. Two days later, a Briton was deprived of his game and his weapon by the police, but otherwise untouched. The following day a small trader named Michael Moss shot a goose, hired a Japanese to carry it for him and turned homewards to Yokohama. At the Kanagawa ferry a group of police

²⁰⁷ Hodgson, pp. 371-374.

²⁰⁸ Alcock, I, 330.

²⁰⁹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle I, No. 174, to de Wit, 30 November 1860.

seized the goose and advanced upon Moss. Whether deliberately or accidentally, his shotgun went off in the ensuing scuffle and wounded one of the police seriously, but not as it was feared, fatally.

The police tied up Moss, took him to a Japanese jail and gave him a beating with their iron police staves. Beaten and bound, he was left in a cell. The foreign consuls, upon hearing of the matter, went to the governor. He said the man was a Netherlander. The Dutch consul said to keep him overnight and he would pick him up in the morning. British consul Vyse was there at the time and advised the governor to treat Britons the same way.

The two men then went to have dinner together. As they were eating, the French minister de Bellecourt came in. An excitable man, he declaimed heatedly that police had no right to beat the man Moss with iron staves. Polsbroek told the Frenchman that no one should shoot police officers, after which they parted with a certain coolness. Vyse, now realizing it was a Briton in jail, did not know what line to take. Polsbroek reminded him of his promise to the governor to leave the man overnight in jail, but he left the hotel in an excited frame of mind.²¹⁰

Consul Vyse reversed his previous decision. The only warship in port was Prussian. He contacted her commander. The latter landed a squad of armed sailors. At midnight they freed Moss and took him to the British consulate. Polsbroek wrote disgustedly that the British officials thought their countrymen were too good to be touched by Japanese police. As he also mentions a group of some thirty armed merchants who were preparing to free Moss by force, Vyse was probably wise to get there first with a disciplined and sober group. As the Prussians had not yet negotiated a treaty, they hardly had the right to be sending armed men ashore to break into a Japanese jail, but it was probably the best course at the time.²¹¹

Vyse, who was on his first consular post,²¹² quickly passed the problem to Alcock at Edo. Writing to London on January 1st, Alcock begins his letter by saying he is lucky to be alive to see a new year. The samurai assassin is a type of "bravo" unknown to his China experience. The British merchants are "a lawless class of filibusters." Evidence of this was the case of Moss; not only a merchant but doubly damned as "of Jewish connection." Alcock apparently shared the anti-Semitism which started with the Sovereign and permeated much of the ruling class of Victorian England. "I felt the absolute necessity of making a severe example." The reason for this necessity emerges, for his letter ends as it began. It is rumoured that Mito *rōnin* plan to massacre all foreigners at Yokohama and at Edo where "we are under a perpetual menace of massacre."²¹³

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Hodgson, p. 188.

²¹² Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 1, to de Wit, 17 February 1860, records that the British agent of the P and O Steamship Company asked the Dutch consul to handle his affairs as Vyse was not

competent. As Vyse was dismissed from the consular service in 1868 for bungling a consular court case the Dutchman was probably right.

²¹³ 水戸浪人. F.O. 391, 1, to Hammond, 1 January 1861.

Spurred by this fear the older man bungled the job. He first ordered that in violation of treaty Moss would not be tried by a British consular court but would be turned over to the Japanese courts. In these there was no codified law, torture was standard practice, the evidence given was unreliable and the accused was not allowed to question his accusers.²¹⁴

Moss wrote to his friends "to send me my pistols as I had determined not to go into Japanese hands once more."²¹⁵ They had as little confidence in *bakufu* jails as Moss. Almost the entire community, some thirty men, turned out with revolvers and sporting guns at the British consulate. Four of them saw Alcock personally. They told him that if he did not keep Moss in British custody they would take him by force and stand the blame as a community. Alcock gave way. The incident is not mentioned in his despatches home, but perhaps explains the term "filibusters."

Alcock's next move with Moss was equally unfortunate. He had the man tried on the charge of deliberately shooting a Japanese policeman in the course of his duty. As the Japanese evidence on this point was contradictory, some saying Moss aimed the gun, others that it went off when it fell striking the ground, and one shopkeeper even saying it was in the hands of one of the police when it went off,²¹⁶ it was impossible to prove. Nevertheless Consul Vyse found him guilty and sentenced him on two counts.

Alcock felt this was inadequate and added a third. From distant Nagasaki a merchant wrote to Hong Kong, "Matters continue in an unsatisfactory state as a Japanese officer has been accidentally shot by a British merchant, a Mr. Moss; that gentleman had been tried and acquitted by three assessors called in by H.M. Consul but Mr. Alcock had sentenced him to deportation, the payment of a fine of \$1,000 and three months' imprisonment in Hong Kong gaol!"²¹⁷ Alcock's additional jail sentence showed how he felt about British merchants. Mackenzie's exclamation point was nearer to the general consensus. All three penalties were revoked by the Foreign Office in London which ordered Alcock to return the \$1,000 fine to the Yokohama merchants who had subscribed it for Moss. Additionally, the Foreign Office had to pay Moss \$2,000 damages awarded by a Hong Kong court for the prison sentence.

The Moss case seems to have been bungled because it was not tried on its own merits. Rather, it was decided by fear. The previous winter, all three Western diplomats at Edo had believed in the danger of attacks by fanatics.²¹⁸ Alcock was afraid that the wounding of the samurai police officer would provoke a retaliatory attack upon the foreigners. Isolated in his Edo legation, he would be a prime target. Therefore a stern example must

²¹⁴ F.C. Jones, pp. 79, 104.

²¹⁵ F.O. 46, xxx, to D. Moss, Yokohama, 3 December 1861. Related by Moss in a letter to his father, forwarded to the Foreign Office.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, transcript of the trial.

²¹⁷ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Nagasaki 1861, Kenneth Mackenzie to Jardine's, Nagasaki, 4 January 1861.

²¹⁸ Correspondence Commerciale, 1, No. 60, to Thouvenel, 29 March 1860.

be made. It was the same motive which had inspired his gold export despatch a year earlier.

Harris was considering this same problem of samurai killers but from a less personal angle. By treaty the city of Edo was to be opened for residence and trade by foreign merchants in January 1862. On this subject the three foreign diplomats who lived there were united with the *bakufu* in opposing the treaty. Eighteen months' residence had shown Harris that this provision of his treaty might seriously damage relations between Japan and the West without doing foreign merchants much financial good. Edo was not a production center but a retailing one, importing its needs and exporting nothing. Like Alcock, Harris was afraid of the samurai swordsmen. "The aggregate number of these retainers and followers, all of whom are armed, is very great—it is said to be over 300,000 men—the character of this class is an important consideration; they lead a life of idleness and many of them are exceedingly dissolute; towards those whom they regard as being their inferiors, they are arrogant and aggressive, they haunt the streets in great numbers—frequently in a state of intoxication—and being always armed are not only prompt in taking offence, but ready to seek it."²¹⁹

Harris was not personally afraid. "I have no cause for complaint for myself but whenever I leave my residence I am attended by a retinue that commands respect, and in addition to this my official position is well known. But the merchant could have no such protection. He could not afford to support such an escort, and even if he did retain one, his social position would deprive him of nearly all the benefit of it."²²⁰

He did not find the entire merchant group "filibusters" but did note that "a portion of them are neither prudent nor discreet" which, combined with the pugnacity of the samurai, could lead to murder. Admitting he had been wrong to include this in his treaty, he joined with Alcock and de Bellecourt in asking his home government to postpone opening Edo to commerce.

Harris's estimate of the dangers of Edo was cruelly demonstrated in January 1861 when the American lost his oldest companion in Japan. To help the Prussians negotiate a treaty with Japan, Harris had loaned them the services of his interpreter, Henry Heusken. Although warned by Harris not to expose himself at night, Heusken was young and enchanted with the night life of the city. *Bakufu* officials had remonstrated with him for endangering foreigners at night by taking some Prussians to watch a fire.²²¹ Heusken had taken little notice and fallen into the habit of visiting the Prussian legation almost nightly, returning between eight and eleven with only two Japanese mounted guards and a lantern bearer. The night of January 15th was rainy and dark. Passing a side street he was ambushed by a group of about seven swordsmen. As was the usual custom, his

²¹⁹ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 7 to Cass, 1 August 1860.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 5, to de Wit, 18 April 1862.

bakufu guards deserted the scene. Armed only with a riding crop, Heusken whipped his frightened horse through the circle of attackers but shortly fell to the ground. He was brought into the American legation at nine-thirty where he lay dying for three hours. The middle-aged American and the young Dutchman had been together for more than five years. As suited their generations Harris had sometimes complained that Heusken had carelessly let the stove go out or spent an amount of time with teahouse girls at Shimoda that was not befitting the consular service, but "our relations were rather that of father and son than chief and employee."²²²

A *bakufu* official had demanded Heusken keep off the streets at night. Heusken had replied with spirit, rudenesses had been exchanged on both sides. When his superiors refused his request for police powers against foreigners in the streets at night, the man had committed suicide. His followers were suspected of doing the killing. No proof was forthcoming. Harris took the more sensible view. When first coming to Edo he had been warned by *bakufu* officials that they never went out at night unless absolutely necessary and then only with a large escort and many lanterns.²²³ Heusken's routine flouting of this caution had made him an easy target. Harris was warned by a *bakufu* official not to attend the funeral as he might also be assassinated. "I answered that I should do so regardless of any danger."²²⁴ De Bellecourt was furious that the *bakufu* had the gall to utter this threat. All foreigners attended. All carried loaded weapons.²²⁵

Heusken had been personally popular with all ranks of Japanese. As a diplomat, the first to fall to the assassins, there were no problems of social rank connected with attending his funeral. Oguri Tadamasa²²⁶ and four other daimyo led the funeral procession with their escorts. They were followed by the massed foreign flags, an honour guard of Prussian marines, the band from the Prussian frigate, a second guard of Prussian and Netherlands Marines, the diplomatic and consular officers and the officers of the Netherlands and Prussian warships.

Harris erected a memorial, surrounding the grave with his own favourite *camelia japonica*, and arranged for flowers at Christmas, New Year's, All Souls' Day and the anniversary of his death.²²⁷ Heusken's diamond snuff box from Queen Victoria, his gold watch and chain from Lord Elgin, his seal ring, a lock of hair and two photographs were sent home to Amsterdam. The young man's picture had been taken on the day of his death. The little foreign cemetery had now claimed seven victims of murder. No one had yet been punished.²²⁸

Harris had lost his only Western companion. He was now completely alone at the

²²² Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 88, to Cass, 21 January 1861.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 66, to Thouvenel, 25 January 1861.

²²⁶ 栗忠順

²²⁷ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 186, to Mrs. T. T. Heusken, 21 December 1861 and *ibid.*, No. 139, 23 July 1861.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 89, to Cass, 23 January 1861.

American legation. Yet it was not Harris who broke under the strain but Alcock. As the year began he had spoken of going on board a British warship if Edo became too dangerous.²²⁹ At the end of the first week in January *bakufu* warnings of a *rōnin* attack upon foreigners had upset him visibly.²³⁰ Although living at the water's edge surrounded by his staff, the young Dutchman's death proved too much for the elderly Briton.

Three days after Heusken's murder Alcock called a meeting of the five foreign diplomats: Harris, de Bellecourt, Eulenberg, the new Prussian minister and de Wit, who was making one of his periodic visits from Nagasaki. As *doyen* of the diplomatic corps it was Harris who should have acted when the group approached the *bakufu* in a joint effort.²³¹ Ever since July of 1859 Harris had voluntarily allowed Alcock to take the lead.²³² When the three men had joined ranks to threaten the *bakufu* in December of that year it had been done on Alcock's initiative and with full support from Harris. As a courteous recognition of the realities of naval power in the China Seas the American had allowed Alcock leadership of the group. The fact remained that it was not a position to which the British diplomat was entitled but merely a courtesy from Harris.

It was Alcock who felt a joint action was necessary and called a meeting. The five men met at the British legation on January 19th. Describing the meeting de Bellecourt made the natural mistake of referring to Alcock as "*doyen* du corps diplomatique."²³³ The Briton began by stating his view of the situation. The foreign diplomats at Edo were in imminent danger of their lives. A foreign representative was not justified in submitting to terrorism "for the sterile duty of dying at his post."²³⁴

In order to force the *bakufu* to protect them at Edo they should jointly retire to Yokohama. It was a curious strategy. Two weeks earlier Alcock had written London that the *bakufu* wanted the diplomats to leave Edo.²³⁵ Now in order to bring pressure upon the *bakufu*, he proposed that the diplomats leave Edo. All agreed except Harris. Having cooperated with his colleagues for eighteen months, he now broke ranks. It was very regrettable, wrote de Bellecourt, because without him the action would lose much of its force.²³⁶

In the 26-page summary of the meeting Alcock devotes the first 14 pages to putting his view of the case. The remaining pages contain the views of the other four men. The opinion of Harris was given roughly three quarters of one page. This was not necessarily

²²⁹ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 63, to Thouvenel, 3 January 1861.

²³⁰ Same, No. 65, 10 January 1861, "a frappe assez vivement".

²³¹ Harris Papers, Book 4, No. 323, to Rice, Edo, 23 July 1860. To consul Rice he explains that Alcock as "Minister plenipotentiary" has a higher rank than himself as "Minister resident" but "if we desired to speak to or receive from the Tycoon for the *corps diplomatique* I should do so as

'doyen' or longest resident."

²³² F.O. 46, III, to Malmesbury, 13 July 1859.

²³³ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 68, to Thouvenel, Yokohama, 30 January 1861.

²³⁴ *Compte-rendu* of meeting by Alcock enclosed in above despatch.

²³⁵ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, 1 January 1861.

²³⁶ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 66, 25 January 1861.

discrimination. Harris always spoke shortly and to the point.²³⁷ The foreigners should unite at Edo against the very bad situation which existed at present rather than run away in fear of a future calamity. If they left Edo they might not be able to return. If they landed troops to protect themselves at Yokohama the Japanese might consider this an attempt at colonization and go to war.²³⁸

The four other ministers quit Edo with full ceremony. Alcock had a guard of British sailors, de Bellecourt borrowed one from the Prussians. At Yokohama the diplomats were given twenty-one gun salutes as they went on board the warships. The next day de Bellecourt went ashore to live at a Dutch hotel which also housed the twelve men of the British Consulate at Kanagawa who had just moved the short distance into Yokohama for safety. The hotel was guarded by armed British sailors.

Writing to Paris, de Bellecourt explained their plans. Troops would be landed to defend Yokohama from the Tōkaidō junction to the sea-front. Those samurai attached to the governors would be the only ones allowed to wear swords in the town and their number would be kept to a minimum. The surrounding hills would be garrisoned. The *bakufu* would pay damages for any foreign property that burned. The dollar would circulate at three *ichibus*. All foreign merchants would be taken on the ships at the first alarm. The *bakufu* would pay for all ensuing business losses. Finally, as in China, the foreigners would take over all customs receipts at Yokohama.²³⁹ Harris had struck very close to Alcock's intent. Had the Briton's plan been carried out Yokohama would have been little different from a foreign colony.

Harris did not write a dissenting opinion nor would he sign the *compte-rendu* Alcock had written even as a witness that it was a true statement. Partly this was because it contained material from a second conference on January 25th at which Harris had not been present. The American excused his colleagues of any deliberate attempt to exclude him. His understanding had been that the second meeting would not discuss policy but merely ratify Alcock's *compte-rendu* as a true statement. As he had given his opinion and had an appointment with the *bakufu* to push the search for Heusken's killers, Harris did not attend. He wrote Alcock that he assumed the decision to go ahead with the discussion, which ended in the flight from Edo, had been taken on the spur of the moment rather than as a deliberate slight to himself.

The American had other and more personal reasons for not signing the *compte-rendu*. He does not mention them in his own letters but the situation is described in the French archives.

During the first meeting after Harris had given his reasons for opposing the flight to Yokohama, the Prussian minister had charitably noted that perhaps the American could be excused as he enjoyed better relations with the *bakufu* and had suffered fewer indignities

²³⁷ P. J. Treat, p. 88.

²³⁸ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 68,

Yokohama, 30 January 1861.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

at Japanese hands. To this Alcock countered that he would pass over the Prussian's remark in silence. If he included it in his *compte-rendu* he would also feel obliged to include his own opinion of Harris. This was that the American attributed to himself a special role in Japan merely because he had been there first, that he was no different from the other diplomats in his relations with the *bakufu*, that his treaty was gained solely by Anglo-French victories in China and that Harris's false view of his own influence with the *bakufu* could be flattered if the situation were not so important. With pain Harris noted the omission of this personal attack from Alcock's summary of the meeting and refused to sign the document as correct.²⁴⁰

Aside from the lack of diplomatic courtesy involved this personal attack upon Harris is a curious one. The American had never concealed the fact that his treaty was owing to Anglo-French victories in China. Whether Harris felt himself to have a special influence with the *bakufu* is difficult to say.²⁴¹ He did not conceal the humiliating reception he had been given by the shogun in November 1859 from his colleagues. When the Netherlands minister wrote Harris for help in obtaining a treaty for Denmark in the spring of 1861, the American replied that he would do all that he could but that he no longer had as much influence with the *bakufu* as when the Prussian treaty had been negotiated.²⁴² As to a special position in Japan he had quite simply been dealing with *bakufu* officials for at least three years longer than any of the others. The good relations the Prussian mentioned seem to have sprung from Harris's refusal to go out at night or in the daytime without his escort. The French minister had written that the diplomats' habit of riding out without a large escort made them appear ridiculous to all, particularly to samurai. The insults, the stones and the threats arose from this habit.²⁴³ There seems no way to explain such a gratuitous attack except the state of Alcock's nerves. He was undoubtedly annoyed at the American's opposition. He may also have considered the American, a former merchant, as being beneath him socially, he may have been jealous as well, but the outburst itself does not speak well for the self-control of the British ambassador at the time.

There had been no point upon which Harris had had to fight harder than to gain the Edo residence.²⁴⁴ When his four colleagues quit the scene on January 25th, the American remained. At Yokohama, Keswick of Jardine's wrote that Alcock "had struck his flag but not having vouchsafed to furnish the community with any information on the subject, I am unable to give you any further particulars."²⁴⁵ The retirement from Edo "has been a pet scheme of the Japanese of late," commented the China Record, "and having succeeded in all their other little games they were confident in the success of this one also, and they were right." Tongue in cheek, the newspaper went on to conclude that the "much abused

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ See Beasley, *Select Documents*, pp. 204-205.

²⁴² Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 3, No. 38, Harris to de Wit, Edo, 29 April 1861.

²⁴³ Correspondence Politique, 1, No. 12, to

Walewski, 1 November 1859.

²⁴⁴ Quoted in Heco, 1, 274.

²⁴⁵ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1861, to A. Percival, 26 January 1861.

'swamp' " and " 'second Deshima' " of Alcock's diplomatic despatches had become a "sanctuary for fugitive ambassadors."²⁴⁶ Writing later that year on "the modern tactics of deserting legations and giving up consulates," Consul Hodgson noted "where the flag is, or where there was a Consul, I ever thought that he should have been the last to run away."²⁴⁷ From his cabin aboard "H.M.S. Encounter" Alcock wrote to the British merchants ashore "I did not run to Yokohama for my own safety but for your benefit."²⁴⁸ To his own government he wrote that Harris was playing the old American game of peace at any price, that if the *bakufu* could not be forced to protect life the foreigners had best leave. He also adds the rumour that Harris was drinking again and even suffering from delirium tremens.²⁴⁹

No one else mentions Harris as drinking but it may have been true. He was heartbroken over the American Civil War. "I cannot bear to write about it. I can only pray God in His Mercy to bring this awful contest to an end."²⁵⁰ Drinking or not, the American remained alone at Edo negotiating with the *bakufu* over Heusken's death and keeping up a regular correspondence.

To the new secretary of State he wrote, "The murder of Mr. Heusken . . . produced a panic terror among my colleagues, who all left this city . . . the English and French Representatives are both extremely nervous men and for the last sixteen months they have been in a chronic state of excitement and alarm. Should they succeed in impressing their respective governments with their peculiar views of affairs here, I do not see how a war with this country can be avoided."²⁵¹

From Yokohama Alcock began writing to Harris. The first letter asked Harris to approve the action taken as a result of the January 25th meeting. Harris refused. He had not attended the meeting and he did not approve of its conclusions.

Once again Harris stated his position. *Bakufu* officials had warned foreign diplomats to take the same precautions as they did themselves. The retirement to Yokohama relieved the *bakufu* of responsibility and expense. Finally, Japan was not a civilized but a semi-civilized country. To hold a government responsible for the acts of individuals was unknown in international law and not even practiced by the most advanced Western nations.

He concluded upon a sad note. "The people of Japan cannot be raised to our standard of civilization by the stroke of a diplomatic pen, not even if they have 50,000 soldiers for their schoolmasters. It is only *time*, *patience*, and *forbearance*, that can produce the desired

²⁴⁶ F.O. 46, xxx, News clipping dated Hong Kong, 2 February 1861.

²⁴⁷ Hodgson, p. 165.

²⁴⁸ Alcock, II, 455.

²⁴⁹ F.O. 391, 1, to Hammond, "H.M.S. Encounter", 26 January 1861.

²⁵⁰ Janvier Letters to Miss Drinker, Edo, 16 September 1861.

²⁵¹ Harris Letters, Book 5, No. 109, to Seward, 13 February 1861. In Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 4, Batavia to de Wit, 9 November 1861. The governor of the Netherlands Indies counsels de Wit to use his influence upon his British and French colleagues to calm them and encourage them towards a peaceful policy "vredelievend staatkunde."

result. I had hoped that the page of future history might record the great fact that in *one* spot in the Eastern world, the advent of Christian civilization did not bring with it its usual attendants of rapine and bloodshed. This fond hope I fear is to be disappointed. I would sooner see all the treaties with this country torn up and Japan returned to its old state of isolation than witness the horrors of war inflicted upon this peaceful people and happy land."²⁵²

Living in security aboard "H.M.S. Encounter," the British minister began to realize from the attitude of the naval officers and the civilians ashore that he had been hasty. At Yokohama men carried revolvers and were prepared to take their chances. The mere presence of the solitary American at Edo, while Alcock had fled with all his staff, was a tacit reproach. Although Harris had made no personal accusations Alcock wrote him that he was not a coward but had only left Edo as his death would involve his country in war. It was a thirty-three page letter.²⁵³

The answer was shorter. Harris disclaimed "any intention to cast any aspersions on the actions of my colleagues, or to cast any aspersions on their motives."²⁵⁴ The Briton charged Harris with threatening the Japanese with war in December 1859. Harris answered that all three had done so and any war was an action reserved to the U.S. Congress. Alcock then charged the American with exacting undue ceremony from the *bakufu*. Again all three had agreed upon this. Alcock had postponed his own reception by the shogun until Harris had been received with proper courtesy.²⁵⁵ It was a small but constant battle to prevent the *bakufu* from returning to the humiliating conditions it had forced upon the Dutch.

Alcock then came to the main issue, the safety of diplomats at Edo. "Have not you yourself been assaulted by one of these two-sworded retainers in your own courtyard and placed in bodily fear of your life? Were you not warned by the government that if you prosecuted your assailant you would be in danger of a vendetta from his companions which would very likely cost you your life?"

To this the American replied that he had been jostled by a drunken samurai "and it was no doubt a technical assault for which a jury in my country would have awarded me a farthing damages had I applied to them. To admit that a man in the last stage of intoxication put me 'in bodily fear of my life' would be to impeach my own manhood." The "warning of the Government" was merely the voluntary advice of an interpreter. The offender was arrested and punished.

Harris ended his letter: "I have read with great surprise and deep regret your declaration that you feel authorized to make use of my private conversation with you because

²⁵² Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 94, to Alcock, 12 February 1861, quoted in Heco, pp. 275-276.

²⁵³ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 76, 10 March 1861 enclosed Alcock to Harris, Yokohama 16 February 1861.

²⁵⁴ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 96, to Alcock, 23 February 1861.

²⁵⁵ Correspondence Politique, I, Nos. 15 & 16 of 9 & 15 November 1859 and II, No. 42, 30 August 1860.

you were not placed under the seal of secrecy. I must decline to follow your example believing as I do that it is calculated to destroy all confidence between man and man and to make social intercourse impossible. I am fain to believe that the expression escaped you in a moment of excitement, and that cool reflection will cause you not only to regret but to retract it.”

To Washington Harris wrote that he would not allow himself to be drawn into an angry correspondence with Alcock.²⁵⁶ Although he refused to meet the Briton, Harris wrote agreeing to join his colleagues in any “well-considered measures that may be calculated to improve the state of our relations with the Japanese Government.”²⁵⁷

The relationship which had started so sunnily in July 1859 was finished. For the fifteen months remaining until both men left Japan they did not speak. Alcock had taken the quarrel deeply to heart, the French minister could not persuade him to a reconciliation with Harris.²⁵⁸

Three weeks after the flight to Yokohama, Alcock had also realized how futile the action had been. The *bakufu* was not at all impressed. It had not contacted him in the interim. He proposed writing to China for the British fleet. De Bellecourt advised him not to appear too anxious. The better plan was to write the *bakufu* announcing a trip in the interior.²⁵⁹ It was very sensitive on this point. Alcock agreed.

There was little choice. British admiral Hope had rejected Alcock’s plan for garrisoning Yokohama and taking over its customs house. Writing to London, Jardine’s Hong Kong office gave the mercantile opinion. “We understand that Admiral Hope in the absence of instructions from the Home Government declines making any demonstration in support of Mr. Alcock’s pretensions, so that whether the latter returns to Yedo or remains at Yokohama, it can now only be at some sacrifice of prestige.”²⁶⁰ In Edo, Harris urged the *bakufu* to ask the British and the French back. Whether this succeeded, as he thought, or whether the French suggestion of travel in the interior had the desired result, the two diplomats were asked to return.

Their reply to the invitation was lengthy. One section demanded the removal of all trade restrictions at Yokohama. The other, which ran to twelve pages, concerned their own security at Edo. New police stations must be built, no daimyo troops were to guard foreigners but only the shogun’s mounted escort, these must immediately arrest any Japanese showing insult or violence towards a foreigner, all who have attacked foreigners must be arrested, and any *bakufu* guard who extorted money from Japanese tradesmen supplying foreigners must be dismissed.

“Finally, as it is generally known that the Representatives aforesaid left Yedo under

²⁵⁶ Harris Papers, Book 5; No. 111, to Seward, Edo. 25 February 1861.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 152; to Seward, 31 July 1861.

²⁵⁸ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 77, to Thouvenel, 12 March 1861, “parait avoir pris

tellement à coeur la lutte.”

²⁵⁹ Same, No. 71, 16 February 1861.

²⁶⁰ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Hong Kong 1861, to Matheson and Co., 2 March 1861.

menaces of assassination, derogatory to their position, and their departure has further tended to unsettle the public mind," it was essential that they be received back with due ceremonial and publicity. This included that they be met at the boat landing by the foreign ministers of the *bakufu* and escorted to their legations. A twenty-one gun salute was to be fired for each and the *bakufu* was to write a letter humbly begging them to return.²⁶¹

The *bakufu*'s reply was short. One page announced that the diplomats were invited back and that it would comply with the conditions. Reading of these conditions in England a former British consul in Japan did not think they would be honoured by the *bakufu*.²⁶² He was right. By mid-summer they had all been broken.²⁶³ How much ceremonial was given the two foreigners is unknown. De Bellecourt wrote a colleague "We have returned with the honours of war."²⁶⁴ Neither he nor Alcock stayed very long. The French minister rented a house at Yokohama and became a permanent resident there, only coming to Edo on "flying visits" while Alcock went off to China for three months.²⁶⁵ The Moss Case demanded his presence in Hong Kong. This further lowered his standing with the *bakufu* which could not understand why an official should have to defend himself in court against a common merchant.²⁶⁶ The Netherlands consul general had long since returned to his headquarters at Deshima while the Prussian minister had gone off to negotiate a treaty with China. "My life is almost as isolated as it was at Shimoda", wrote Harris, adding that the weather was charming and the crops good.²⁶⁷

By splitting the foreign diplomats and remaining at Edo, Harris believed he had made hostilities almost impossible.²⁶⁸ He had certainly weakened Alcock's position, which hinged upon the claim that Edo was unsafe for diplomats. If this could not be guaranteed then the foreign nations should withdraw from Japan.²⁶⁹ It was a curious claim to make as the foreign presence in Japan was not to provide a secure ambience for diplomats at Edo but to provide a trade at the ports. For better or for worse the American's lonely act of courage had forced his colleagues to a peaceful compromise with the *bakufu*.

The next threat of war came not from the actions of Alcock and de Bellecourt but from Harris's own superiors in Washington. In that city his Democratic party had been replaced by a new political group headed by an unknown president named Abraham Lincoln. In contrast to the custom of the time which handed out all diplomatic posts to loyal supporters of the winning party, Harris was asked to stay on in Japan. The new administra-

²⁶¹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 3, to de Wit, Yokohama, 7 March 1861 encloses Alcock and de Bellecourt's demands upon the *bakufu*. "Nederig zou verzoeken" is the phrase used in Dutch.

²⁶² Hodgson, p. 187 footnote.

²⁶³ Correspondence Commerciale, I, No. 94, to Thouvenel, 16 August 1861.

²⁶⁴ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 3, to de Wit, 21 March 1861.

²⁶⁵ Janvier Letters, to Miss Drinker, Edo, 1 July 1861.

²⁶⁶ Correspondence Politique, III, No. 81, to Thouvenel, 18 April 1861.

²⁶⁷ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 132 to Eulenberg, Edo, 2 July 1861.

²⁶⁸ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 112, to Seward, 6 March 1861.

²⁶⁹ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, 26 January 1861.

tion's first contact with Japan arose with the *bakufu*'s "two cities, two ports," letter to all the foreign powers asking that the opening of the cities of Edo and Osaka, and the harbours of Hyōgo and Niigata be postponed. It arrived in Washington in mid-July. The other places could wait but Edo had to be decided before the treaty date for its opening next January. At first Harris's suggestion that it remain closed had been received favourably. Then the news of Heusken's murder arrived.

Secretary of State Seward consulted with President Lincoln and then wrote the British, Netherlands and French ambassadors in Washington asking for a joint naval demonstration against Japan. Seward's argument was that to give way on the Edo question following the murder of Heusken would merely encourage the anti-foreign elements in Japan towards a civil war during which all the ground gained by the treaties would be lost.²⁷⁰ As the *bakufu* had an excellent police force it was only necessary to make a show of force to encourage its use for the protection of foreigners.²⁷¹ Under the proposed convention, each treaty nation would send steam warships to Edo Bay. A joint note would be presented demanding the execution of every treaty provision. A time limit would be set, the warships would return to their normal duties coming back to Edo on the date set. If the *bakufu*'s answer was evasive or negative the foreign diplomats were to be removed from Edo. The naval commanders were then to commence hostilities.

Foreign jealousies intervened in favour of the *bakufu*. The Netherlands Ambassador in Washington wrote that the proposed convention should take place at the Hague, where all of the long Dutch experience in Japan could be utilized, and not at Washington with a new and untried government. Seward had unfortunately tied the convention to approval by the U.S. Senate so that all of the powers might have agreed, only to have the plan rejected by that body.

Seward's initiative fared no better at London. Alcock was told that "Lord Russell has no intention of postponing the opening of the ports," and further advised not to let the Americans use him as "a catspaw" in negotiating Heusken's murder.²⁷² They had tried in Washington and been rejected. There was a note of satisfaction in the closing sentence that Lincoln had troubles enough at home, his army having just been defeated at Bull Run. The Palmerston-Russell government in Britain was on the side of the rebels in America.²⁷³

Fortunately for Seward, he was able to retreat gracefully. Before he had been completely rejected by the other powers, Harris's letter of May 8th arrived, advising that Edo be kept closed. In explanation he pointed out that the sudden price rise of from 100 to 300 per cent since the opening of trade was falling heavily upon "all official persons of fixed and limited incomes, and it is from this class that the loudest complaints are heard and

²⁷⁰ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 4, Seward to Roest van Limburg, Washington, 14 May 1861.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Roest van Limburg to van Zuijlen van Nijevelt, Washington, 22 May 1861.

²⁷² F.O. 391, 1, to Alcock, London, 25 August 1861.

²⁷³ See Chapter X, *The Education of Henry Adams*.

these complaints will continue while they are in a transition state towards a higher salary."²⁷⁴ Harris also put his finger upon the culprits. "The Dimios receive a large portion of their revenues in kind and as they dispose of all their surplus, they find their incomes greatly increased. The effect of this is clearly shown by the fact that when I first came to Yedo in November 1857 only thirteen of the Dimios out of some three hundred were in favour of opening the country while at the present time about one half of them are in favour of the new order of things." Harris closed by asking for discretionary power to settle matters on the spot. Seward withdrew his proposed demonstration admitting his lack of knowledge and the difficulty of operating at such a distance. In closing he warned Harris about the diplomatic residence at Edo. "The principle however seems to us too important to be abandoned. If the western states can keep their representatives safely in Japan they can perhaps wait for the facilities stipulated; but if their ministers shall be obliged by force or terror to withdraw, all will be lost that has at such great cost been gained."²⁷⁵

Heusken's death was left to Harris for settlement in Japan. Meeting with Andō Nobumasa and Kuze Hirochika,²⁷⁶ the two *rōjū* in charge of foreign affairs, Harris did the best he could. Demanding a salute, as had the British and French upon their return to Edo, was useless. The harbour forts were practice firing all day long. No one in the city would realize that twenty-one shots fired at intervals represented an apology from their government to the foreigners.

More practical would be the punishment of the murderers. Andō answered that this would be done but "Whether it could be done in a month or a year was more than he could foresee."²⁷⁷ The *bakufu* had found it politically unwise even to arrest those involved in the killing of its regent the previous March. What else did the American want? Harris then explained that Heusken had been the sole support of his widowed mother. The *bakufu* agreed to pay \$10,000 to purchase an annuity for Mrs. Heusken. Beyond assuring them that he was not selling Heusken's blood and that they must continue the search for the murderers, there was little else Harris could do. The mounted guards who had deserted Heusken were dismissed from their positions. The four street watchmen involved were punished.²⁷⁸

Harris had used his influence to prevent a clash with Japan. In the Netherlands, the government was glad that the Washington negotiations had fallen through but thought the plan of an armed demonstration worth pursuing. Consul general de Wit had suggested the same thing even before Heusken's death.²⁷⁹ It seemed that appeasement had

²⁷⁴ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 121, to Seward, 8 May 1861.

²⁷⁵ Harris Papers, Loose Letter Box, No. 129, to Harris, Washington, 1 August 1861.

²⁷⁶ 久世広周

²⁷⁷ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 124, to Seward,

Edo, 27 November 1861.

²⁷⁸ Same, No. 124, to Seward, 7 July 1861.

²⁷⁹ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 4, No. 26, Van Zuijlen van Nijeveld to Minister of Colonies, The Hague, 5 June 1861.

been the wisest course. Neither Lord Russell nor the French wanted war. Since the Western powers had been giving ground ever since the opening it did not seem wise to suddenly take the drastic move suggested in Washington.²⁸⁰

It was only from Europe that Japanese affairs seemed quiet. In that country Lord Russell's peaceful intentions were receiving a severe trial. After three months spent in China, Alcock returned to Japan. Instead of coming directly to Yokohama by sea, he chose to make the trip overland from Nagasaki. A British warship carried him through the Inland Sea to Osaka. It was a useful thing to exercise the treaty right to travel. It was also a brave thing to do. Although samurai hostility was concentrating at Edo, Alcock and his companion, the Netherlands consul general, might have been attacked upon the way. A year earlier the Russian envoy, M. Gaskevitch, had thought nothing of travelling overland from Edo to his post at Hakodate but then the Russians were widely respected in Japan.²⁸¹

Alcock arrived back at the British legation in Edo on the 5th of July. It was a fine night. The little group of Britons stayed outside until late watching a comet and singing the songs of home. They did not retire until after midnight and were not yet asleep when the sounds of a scuffle and the barking of a pet dog alerted them. Emerging from their rooms into the darkened corridor they were slashed at by swordsmen in masked helmets and armour. Two were wounded. Expecting discovery and death at any moment the eight men cowered behind a screen in the dining room listening to the smash of glass, the slashing of partitions and the ripping of bed clothes as their assailants flailed about seeking them in the darkness. Their Japanese bodyguard then counterattacked and drove off the assailants. Still in his nightdress one of them remembers the body of one of the attackers upon the dining room floor and stepping barefooted upon a human eye. It was enough to shake the strongest nerves.²⁸²

Alcock had been very close to death. After bandaging Morrison and Oliphant, he wrote to London. "We are all resting on our arms; and otherwise quiet, with beacon fires, watch lights and patrols much like a besieged place. . . . If I can secure the Admiral's support and some material means of protection I am loath to abandon the field; since by so doing H.M.'s Government will be more or less committed to a decided course of action. What a triumphant vindication of the view I took in January of the reality of the danger! Even Harris seems convinced."²⁸³

This last was not quite true. Harris wrote Alcock in sympathy expressing his horror at the attack, his gladness at Alcock's truly providential escape and offering his appointment with the *bakufu* to the Briton so that he could complain immediately. Alcock apparently took this as a complete surrender by Harris, so that the American had to write

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, P.V.C. Maesen de Sombreff to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 22, July 1861.

²⁸¹ Correspondence Politique, II, No. 31, to Thouvenel, 1 March 1860.

²⁸² L. Oliphant, "The Attack on the British Legation", *Blackwoods Magazine*, CXXI, No. DCCCLV, January 1887, pp. 45-57.

²⁸³ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, 6 July 1861.

a second letter saying "You misconstrue my meaning," he had not given up hope that the *bakufu* would protect foreigners and would abide the future.²⁸⁴

Although a guard of armed British sailors was sent to protect the British legation, Alcock did not think them sufficient in number and retired to Yokohama for the second time.²⁸⁵ Remaining in Japan until the end of 1864 he never again lived at Edo. Neither did de Bellecourt. "We have driven the Ministers from Edo," the *bakufu* is supposed to have boasted.²⁸⁶

Writing to de Wit the day following the attack Alcock noted, "Such a deed of atrocity perpetrated in the capital of a Government to which Foreign Representatives are accredited by the Western Powers needs no comment. What measures it may be expedient to adopt for the future security of this, and the other Legations in Yedo; and the maintenance of those International rights and immunities, so grievously attacked, becomes a serious consideration."²⁸⁷ It was the same tone to which Harris had objected at the time of Heusken's killing. Alcock was again holding the *bakufu* to standards achieved only in a few of the most advanced European states.

Harris may have been convinced of danger but he remained alone at Edo trusting to his *bakufu* guard for protection. His trust was vindicated for when the American legation was attacked the following month the assailants were driven off.²⁸⁸

To Washington, Harris wrote that he had interviewed the *bakufu* foreign ministers to impress the seriousness of the British attack upon them. They complained that Alcock had not let them post the guard as they wished. This was partly true. Because these bodyguards normally acted as spies upon the foreigners all the Western diplomats refused to have them share the same building. The temple site which Alcock had chosen, in place of the one selected by the *bakufu*, had spacious grounds and many buildings. Some of these were still occupied by the priests. It was not an easy spot to defend. Harris reported the *bakufu* opinion that the attack had been an effort to embroil it in a war with Britain.²⁸⁹

At Yokohama British merchants took the same position as Harris. "Everything is going pretty quietly here at present, but our officials have been much disturbed by an attack that was made on the British legation a few nights ago. . . . He (Alcock) was successfully protected, however, by his native guard, and the Government have taken measures to ensure his safety."²⁹⁰

The attack upon the British legation had several results. British warships were now stationed at Yokohama instead of making regular visits as heretofore, an armed guard of

²⁸⁴ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 91, 19 July 1861 encloses copies of the two Harris letters.

²⁸⁵ Same, No. 96, 8 August 1861.

²⁸⁶ J. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort, *Vijf Jaren*, II, 35.

²⁸⁷ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 4, to de Wit,

6 July 1861.

²⁸⁸ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 100, to Thouvenel, 19 August 1861.

²⁸⁹ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 142, to Seward, Edo, 9 July 1861.

²⁹⁰ J-M & Co. Archive, Box Yokohama 1861, to A. Percival, 12 July 1861.

sailors and marines protected Alcock ashore at Yokohama and Alcock wrote to London that the *bakufu* should be held to all its treaty obligations.

The time lag of at least four months in which it took a letter to reach Europe and the answer to return to Japan, could have its humorous aspects. Alcock's despatch describing the legation attack and demanding the *bakufu* now be held to its treaty obligations crossed the Foreign Office's letter noting with satisfaction that President Lincoln's proposal to hold the *bakufu* to its treaty obligations had been refused. New orders telling Alcock to concede nothing arrived in Japan that autumn. Alcock's emotions had cooled and he now had to explain to his superiors why he was conceding the Edo residence for foreign merchants. Harris was amused.²⁹¹ All the powers agreed to keep foreign merchants out of Edo. Harris remained its only foreign resident.

As the new year began Alcock wrote the Foreign Office that he was glad to still be alive. He had also started writing a book to make the British public realize the necessity of using force in Japan.²⁹²

Having given up the Edo location in spite of his orders to be strict, Alcock now wrote his French and Netherlands colleagues that he intended to take a strong line with the *bakufu*. In a secret memorandum to them he summarized his orders from London. He was to make no concessions without equivalents, he was to do nothing that would curtail trade and he was to uphold the honour of the British name. As Hyōgo and Osaka were very important to trade their opening could not be postponed as this was very much a curtailment of trade. After seeing Osaka, Alcock had told de Bellecourt that it was the center of Japan's economy. "Our trade must be there."²⁹³ As to the honour of the British name and the furnishing of no concessions without equivalents, Alcock thought that Edo and Niigata—a west coast port which had been surveyed by the Netherlands brig "Balli" and given a negative report owing to its poor harbour—should be exchanged for a port on the island of Tsushima and the Japanese-garrisoned harbour in Korea (probably Pusan). This disgusted his French and his Netherlands colleagues, both of whom wished to discuss ports of commercial advantage with the *bakufu*. De Bellecourt noted that Alcock did not bother to disguise his purely political motives, refusing even to discuss other ports with his French colleague.²⁹⁴ The three diplomats addressed a joint note to the *bakufu* insisting that Osaka be opened on schedule.

As an alternative to these rearrangements of the existing treaties Alcock thought that the foreigners might go directly to Kyoto and negotiate for the Mikado's approval. Harris had been warning the *bakufu* that this might happen ever since December 1859.

Alcock closed his memorandum noting that *bakufu* promises were worthless, that any delay granted to them before opening the new ports would only be used to prepare re-

²⁹¹ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 59, to Seward, Edo, 30 December 1861.

²⁹² F.O. 391, 1, to Hammond, 10 January and 7 February 1862.

²⁹³ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 88, to Thouvenel, 4 July 1861.

²⁹⁴ Same, v, No. 140-bis, 26 February 1862.

sistance.²⁹⁵ Indeed any concession would encourage resistance. "Might not everything be gained peaceably by firmness and determination in our dealings with the government at this moment? That seems possible, probable even."²⁹⁶ Russian behaviour, he added, seemed to prove the point.

All three men agreed that *bakufu* promises were useless. Indeed in a private interview the Japanese ministers had admitted as much to Alcock telling him they could not promise any future improvement but could only hope.²⁹⁷ They were optimistic that the Kazunomiya²⁹⁸ wedding would slowly improve conditions. Foreigners feared that a condition of the wedding had been that the new ports remain closed.²⁹⁹ De Wit thought that Osaka and Hyōgo must be opened. As to equivalents for Edo and Niigata he wanted either more ports or that the existing ones be made free ports on the example of Singapore and Hong Kong. Enclosing the British and Netherlands opinions to his home government, de Bellecourt added that Harris was leaving the matter for his successor.³⁰⁰ The latter arrived with instructions to cooperate with the British and French.³⁰¹ There was no hope that Alcock could negotiate the matter in Japan before going home as the *bakufu* expected to get much better results from the embassy it then had in Europe. De Bellecourt closed his despatch on the same note as Alcock had taken in his memorandum. So many foreign complaints had gone unanswered that if foreigners did not put on the brake now, the *bakufu* would go too far.³⁰²

The foreign diplomats must use strong language, continued de Bellecourt. This was precisely the point upon which Alcock wavered. Whenever foreigners demanded the treaties be upheld, the *bakufu* replied that to do so would mean civil war. At Canton the same argument had been met and found to be false. Foreign policy was merely the most convenient weapon to hand with which its opponents could attack the *bakufu*.³⁰³ Opening new ports would provide *bakufu* opponents with additional material for their propaganda campaign. If the ports were kept closed the attack upon the government as the friend of the foreigners would not stop. As long as Yokohama remained it could continue in use.

Opening new ports would bring the profits of foreign trade to a greater number of daimyo. Some of these already profited from foreign trade on the one hand while verbally attacking foreigners upon the other. As in China the danger of civil war would remain whether the foreign treaties were enforced or not.

Having been consul at Canton Alcock knew this history. All of his experience in Japan brought him to the same belief as his French and Dutch colleagues. The *bakufu* would give

²⁹⁵ Same, No. 140, 26 February 1862.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Also in Beasley, *Select Documents*, p. 211.

²⁹⁷ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 99, to Thouvenel, 16 August 1861.

²⁹⁸ 和宮. Cf. pp. 290–304 above.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, v, No. 136, 2 February 1862.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, v, No. 140, 26 February 1862 encloses Alcock's memorandum of 14 February. Also in Beasley, *Select Documents*, p. 211.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, v, No. 153, 8 May 1862.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, v, No. 140, 26 February 1862.

³⁰³ F.O. 391, 1, Alcock to Hammond, 19 August 1861.

way before firm pressure. It always had. Yet on the other side lay the private theme which set Alcock apart from his colleagues, the fear of massacre. As in his writing at the time of the gold export or the Moss Case it is this theme of danger upon which he closes his memorandum of February 14th. Firmness with the *bakufu* involved such peril of war that it must be decided in London. He would not attempt it in Japan.

In mid-March Alcock wrote his last letter to the *bakufu* before going home on leave. It accused the Japanese of violating the treaty for three years, of following a policy marked by bad faith and of making the false claim that the Japanese people were hostile to foreigners. Popular discontent was “purely of a factious origin traceable to those who seek from personal motive to embarrass the Tycoon’s government or overthrow it.”³⁰⁴ Concessions wrested from foreigners would merely whet their appetite, leaving both foreigners and *bakufu* worse off.

Having stated this opinion of concessions the British minister did an about-face and finished his letter by telling the *bakufu* he would help it get the Osaka concession in London. The brave words of February were forgotten in March. There was no more talk about equivalents, the honour of the British name or the importance of Osaka. This reversal has never been clearly understood unless the attack upon and wounding of Andō Nobumasa was the final act of terrorism needed to break Alcock’s resolve.

Andō Nobumasa was one of a group of relatively low-ranking officials whose ability in dealing with the troubled times had brought them rapid promotion. His rise had been so rapid that his old nickname of “*Bimbō* Andō”³⁰⁵ (Poor Andō) still clung to him. In mid-February his escort had been attacked in Edo. Scrambling from his carriage and drawing sword he had helped his bodyguard drive off the attackers. He had been seriously wounded. The affair worried Alcock as firearms had been used by the attackers. As Andō had previously warned Alcock that all public men, Japanese or foreign, must expect attack, his own fate lent credence to the already considerable anxiety of the British diplomat.

Whether it was Andō’s wounding coupled with two meetings with Kuze Hirochika during which the *bakufu* minister dwelt upon the domestic difficulties of his government or whether Alcock merely continued his opinion after the legation attack of the previous summer that enforcing the treaties meant war, is unknown.³⁰⁶ If the latter, then the joint front of February was persiflage to satisfy his superiors that he was carrying out their orders to be firm and his colleagues that he was not selling out the foreign position in Japan. In either case the Briton was already well along the road to believing the *bakufu*’s argument of danger.

Alcock left Japan in May to go home for one year’s leave. His last letters home continue earlier themes. Harris comes under pretty steady attack. He is “like a badger in his hole,” only making occasional visits to Yokohama.³⁰⁷ Harris has gotten Heusken’s indemnity

³⁰⁴ F.O. 262, CDLXX, to *bakufu* foreign ministers, 15 March 1862.

³⁰⁵ 貧乏安藤

³⁰⁶ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, 19 August 1861.

³⁰⁷ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, Yokohama, 27 February 1862.

at the price of "the unlimited concessions" his government is now ready to make.³⁰⁸ Alcock also sent the Foreign Office a clipping from a San Francisco paper to which U.S. merchants had written complaining that Harris was allowing the *bakufu* to conduct "a system of swindling and extortion unparalleled in the history of nations."³⁰⁹ It was a strange point to make to one's superiors. British merchants at Yokohama suffered under the same system.

From Malta, Alcock wrote the Foreign Office to give way to *bakufu* demands as Kuze Hirochika had pointed out "how small our commercial interests really are."³¹⁰ Later he wrote that they were small because of *bakufu* restriction.³¹¹ They would remain small until something was done about that restriction.

At Paris, Alcock continued the same argument, telling the French foreign minister that to demand enforcement of the treaties would mean a long and costly war.³¹² This advice was repeated to Lord Russell. The result was the London Protocol of June 6, 1862. This document agreed to a five-year delay in return for the removal of all restrictions to trade and social contact between Japanese and foreigners. As it noted, this was no less than what the *bakufu* was already bound to do by the 1858 treaties. Twelve days after the Protocol, Alcock was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.

When news of the protocol reached Edo the *bakufu* ministers, although pleased by the victory, told the French minister that the promised improvements would take much time. Popular opinion was against foreigners. Trying to change it was like throwing oil upon a fire.³¹³ Alcock had not told British merchants at Yokohama that Osaka might be kept closed. They only discovered it after he left. Their letter of protest does not seem to have reached London in time for the negotiations. If it did, it did not influence them. In Japan, Osaka merchants were reported as eager for foreign trade. They believed that if Britain insisted Hyōgo would be opened. A Dutch consul reported that the *bakufu* had already appointed a governor for Hyōgo.³¹⁴ A French Naval officer summed up Alcock's protocol simply; "l'inanité de ces concessions."³¹⁵ Entering a horse in the first Yokohama race meeting that summer, a British merchant listed him as "Shut Up, formerly named Osaka."

In Europe, the Netherlands Colonial Minister talked to the *bakufu* embassy about the London Protocol. They were not sincere, was his simple judgement. Enforcing the treaty will be more difficult in five years.³¹⁶

Seen through *The Capital of the Tycoon* or the edited selection of his despatches published in Parliamentary Papers, Alcock's view of Japanese affairs is a reasonable one. Set into the

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 28 November 1861.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 10 January 1862.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Valetta, 22 May 1862.

³¹¹ Alcock, II, 351.

³¹² Correspondence Politique, v, Thouvenel to Flahault (in London), Paris, 27 May 62.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, VI, No. 184, to Thouvenel, Yoko-

hama, 22 August 1862.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, No. 161, 11 June 1862.

³¹⁵ André Roussin, *Une Campagne sur les côtes du Japon*, Paris, 1866, p. 48.

³¹⁶ Consulaat Yokohama, Bundle 5, p.v.d. Maesen de Sombreff to de Wit, the Hague, 24 October 1862.

matrix of British business letters, the personal papers of Townsend Harris or the French and Netherlands diplomatic correspondence, a different picture emerges.

It is the picture of a frightened man. "We are under a perpetual menace of massacre"³¹⁷ typified many of his despatches. No one else believed this.³¹⁸ Harris and de Bellecourt thought they were individually in danger from fanatics but neither mentioned any general massacre. Indeed, de Bellecourt assumed that rumours of it were deliberately used by the *bakufu* to frighten foreign diplomats into giving up Edo. If so, Alcock took the bait. Even such a commonplace event as the absconding of two Japanese servants caused him to write the *bakufu* demanding to know if there was a plot against his life.³¹⁹

Secondary characteristics were also involved. Bored or humiliated by the role of a simple commercial agent, Alcock seems to have wished to cut a figure on the political stage by countering the southward expansion of the Russian Empire on the Asian mainland. When he writes of going to the Mikado it may be that he was jealous of Harris. A new treaty negotiated at Kyoto by himself would undoubtedly provide more personal renown than the mere enforcement of the existing trade treaties. Whereas Harris had wanted only one warship, Alcock found that three were not enough to protect him.³²⁰ It was partly fear perhaps, and partly the desire to be in command of large fleets and armies natural enough to an ambitious man in a minor diplomatic post. Finally there was the question of the career diplomat. The drawback of this was that its members were loathe to sacrifice their careers for the interests of their nationals abroad. It was only human for Alcock to let British merchants lose money rather than risk the displeasure of his superiors. If the postponement of the opening of Osaka meant greater fleets and armies in 1867, it also meant greater importance for the diplomat involved. If Alcock stayed in the good graces of the Foreign Office for a few years more he would have a respectable pension. Twenty years of service was not to be risked lightly and Lord Russell did not want war with Japan.

Townsend Harris also went home in the spring of 1862. He had hoped to leave a year earlier. He had been in Japan for five-and-one-half years with one month's vacation in China. "Your long residence here must be wearisome" said the shogun at the American's last audience.³²¹ The Portuguese consul at Yokohama was an American. As he thought olive trees might be useful in Japan one of Harris's last official acts was to write to San Francisco for saplings. It was a typical action. As usual there was no American warship in port so that Harris left on a Jardine's steamer. The *bakufu* refused to fire the customary salute to a merchant ship. With commendable decency, de Bellecourt ordered the French warship "Le Monge" to fire the salute for Harris. The *bakufu* was forced to return the compliment. It was all over.

³¹⁷ F.O. 391, I, to Hammond, 1 January 1861.

³¹⁸ F. V. Dickens, *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, London, 1894, II, 34.

³¹⁹ F.O. 262, CDLXX, to *bakufu*, 3 February 1862.

³²⁰ Correspondence Politique, IV, Nos. 95-96, to Thouvenel, 4 & 8 August 1861.

³²¹ Harris Papers, Book 5, No. 213 to Seward, Edo, 26 April 1862.

At home in New York, Harris was swallowed up by the excitement of the Civil War. No one wanted to listen to an old man reminisce about Japan. A young man just back from Tokyo went to see Harris in 1874. He found him in a corner at the Union Club. As always he was alone. Harris's first question summed up his efforts in Japan; "What do the Japanese think of me?", he asked.³²²

In their lives the two men epitomized foreign diplomacy in Japan. It cannot be claimed that Harris was a great diplomat. His sins however, are attractive ones. He was too friendly towards the *bakufu* for its own good. He was too willing to trust to the good intentions of men who did not possess them. He was too patient, too forbearing. He did not excuse the shady dealing of individual Western merchants but he was not too proud to represent merchants. He was not a pacifist but he only wanted one warship to apply limited pressure. He refused a fleet. Being denied that one ship through the exigencies of civil war at home he was also denied any real chance to take an independent role in dealing with the *bakufu*.³²³ As Alcock told the *bakufu*, the Americans could do nothing in Japan.³²⁴ Pushed back upon his own personal resources Harris did the best he could. He insisted on proper ceremonial and frequent meetings with the *bakufu* foreign ministers. On the one occasion when his own personal courage could keep the *bakufu* to its treaty obligations he remained alone in Edo, the only foreigner in what all agreed was a dangerous city. Throughout he encouraged the *bakufu* along the path towards its own survival, but example and persuasion had their limits.

In his task Harris often admitted ignorance of the complexities of Japanese politics. No one will ever know how much of his success was owing to the linguistic abilities of Hendrik Heusken. It must have been considerable. Until the young man's death Harris was the best informed of all the Western diplomats. The Dutch consul at Yokohama was also a business man and does not seem to have read Japanese although, in common with the Western merchants, he was a master of that amazing dialect, "the Yokohama pidgin." The French were better served. Their archives are correspondingly more reliable than the British for these years. The Abbé Girard spoke, but did not read or write Japanese, but a young Netherlander, Bleckman, seems to have been fairly proficient as a translator for the French legation after 1860. Additionally the French minister kept open all the Yokohama sources of intelligence which Alcock had denied his nation by attacking the merchants in his gold export despatch. At Yokohama the Western merchants were in constant contact with Japanese traders coming in from the country and with *bakufu* customs officials. The French also utilized several Japanese officials and at least one Buddhist priest as an intelligence source. The British had to depend upon what they could pick up from other diplomats until the spring of 1862 when young Siebold began to achieve proficiency.

³²² W. E. Griffis, "Townsend Harris, Centre of Japanese Drama", *New York Times Magazine*, 28 December 1919, p. 26.

³²³ H. Kublin, "A Salute to Townsend Harris,"

Japan Quarterly, 1958 v, No. 3.

³²⁴ Correspondence Politique, v, No. 146 to Thouvenel, 22 March 1862.

Harris's policy of some concessions but of clinging to the essentials of the treaty by a limited show of force offered the only alternative to British policy. The Netherlands started out siding with Britain. After the fiasco of the retreat from Edo they switched to Harris.³²⁵ The French were committed in advance to support British policy regardless. The Prussians came, made a treaty, and then went off to China to make another. Foreign policy towards Japan had to be British policy. Before the telegraph came in, a nation was very much represented by an individual so that foreign policy was, in effect, Rutherford Alcock. Whereas Harris lacked neither judgement nor courage, Alcock seems to have lacked both. Although less noisy than gunboat diplomacy, appeasement is also a policy. Beguiled by Alcock's lack of determination during those early years the *bakufu* misjudged foreign resolution to stay in Japan. It badly weakened its own position thereby. Told by Alcock that he would support its claim to keep Osaka closed for another five years, in the summer of 1862 the *bakufu* gave way to its Kyoto opponents. The shogun promised to go to Kyoto and do homage. New officials were named to high positions in the government.³²⁶

These new men knew little or nothing about foreign affairs. In the autumn they accomplished the downfall of the *bakufu* by abolishing its last effective control over the daimyo, the *sankin kōtai*³²⁷ hostage system.

Having seen the foreigners retreat steadily under pressure for more than three years, the *bakufu* undoubtedly felt it easier to push the foreigners than to discipline its own domestic dissidents. The chance that the foreigners might retaliate with a force greater than it could match must have seemed very slight. After London, the foreigners must have seemed very pliable material indeed.

Yet this is what happened. With its power much diminished, the *bakufu* was slowly forced to give up its efforts against foreigners and attempt to reassert control over the daimyo. In this it failed. Having shown such astute diplomacy against the foreigners, why had the *bakufu* made this miscalculation?

A possible answer is Rutherford Alcock. It can be argued that the actions of this one man unwittingly did much to engineer the downfall of the *bakufu*. When trade began in 1859, it was feeling its way in a new situation. Its policy of chipping away at the Harris Treaty, up to, but not past, the point of war depended heavily upon foreign responses. If foreigners met each probing operation with a firm but limited response, then the *bakufu* would have been forced to accept most of the treaty and turn to increasing its domestic power. Neither the regent Ii Naosuke nor the *rōjū* Andō Nobumasa were afraid to use their police powers to purge political opponents. Given foreign pressure that police power could have been used to enforce the treaties.

The history of Japan during the first years of foreign residence should not be discussed

³²⁵ Correspondence Politique, IV, No. 95, to 164 of June 11 & June 15, 1862. Also Beasley, *Modern History*, p. 82, *Select Documents*, p. 60.

³²⁶ Correspondence Politique, VI, Nos. 161 & ³²⁷ 参勤交代

merely in terms of a tightrope performance in which the *bakufu* traded off political concessions to a still nebulous group at Kyoto against concrete concessions by the foreign powers. This balance did not depend upon Kyoto agitation or *bakufu* diplomatic skill. It could only exist if one man, representing the West, allowed it.

The extent to which Rutherford Alcock enforced the treaty determined the pressure the *bakufu* must put upon its opponents. The enforcement of the commercial treaty had been the single major instruction given Alcock by his home government. Rather than concentrate upon his assigned mission, he chose to follow a phantom search for personal security which involved him in a complete break with the merchants whose interest he was paid to serve. The merchants themselves bought revolvers and went on doing business.

There are limits to the extent any nation can interfere in the domestic politics of another. In the interests of his own present security and the future interests of his diplomatic career, Alcock chose not to explore them. There was almost always at least one Royal Navy ship at Yokohama. While Naval commanders balked at grandiose actions without authority from home, they generally were willing to land a few squads of sailors. Other nations, including the Russians, also cooperated in defending what was primarily a British interest. Alcock in China was a different man from Alcock in Japan. The samurai assassin had not existed in China.

The continuing appeasement in which Alcock's had been the deciding voice left the foreigners with no alternative but hostilities. Western diplomacy had thus failed. Whether or not this had to be so will always be a matter for conjecture.

During the last century the British Foreign Office was chronically short of competent men to handle its expanding responsibilities. The field of choice was further limited by the British class system. The large number of former army officers in the foreign service often give it the appearance of a dumping ground for out-of-work gentlemen. The distant posts in Asia were the least desirable in the service. They involved little political ability, being almost purely commercial in importance.³²⁸ It is to be doubted that the best men were sent to Asia. All three of Alcock's consuls in Japan left the service under a cloud, while Alcock's charge during his home leave was bitterly complained against.³²⁹ Although the last century did not demand the specialization of the present one, it is not unfair to question whether Alcock's training as a surgeon fitted him for diplomacy.

In a sense he is a sad figure. Nervous and self-isolated, he was experienced enough to know he was doing the wrong thing in Japan, but afraid for life and career to do otherwise. He had hoped that London would back him up with a strong policy and a strong fleet. Lord Russell left him to fight his battle alone. He could not face it. It was not the first nor the last time that the course of Japanese history was determined by assassins.

³²⁸ N. Pelcovits, p. 58.

³²⁹ F. Jones, pp. 49-50. John R. Black, *Young*

| *Japan*, London, 1880, I, 141.