



Richardson Affaire: Great Britain and the Tokugawa Bakufu 1862–1863¹

Roman Kodet

In his famous novel *Clouds above the Hill* Japanese historical fiction novelist Shiba Ryōtarō wrote about the policy of the Great Powers at the end of the 19th century: “[...] *the world was nothing but a stage for the plotting and wars of the Great Powers, who schemed and dreamed only of invasion. It was the age of imperialism. In that sense, there has perhaps never been such an exciting time. The Great Powers were carnivores whose fangs dripped blood*”.² Although it can be considered as rather severe judgment of a whole era of the international relations, the same could be written about the Great Powers policy in the 19th century as a whole. One of the manifestations of this policy of expansion and enforcement of interests was the so-called gunboat diplomacy.³ Shiba’s critical assessment of this phenomenon of the 19th century could be a product of Japanese historical memory, because the Land of the Rising Sun itself experienced this kind of imperial policy.

The first and foremost of the use of the gunboat diplomacy against Japan was the opening of the country to the outside world itself. For more than 200 years Japan developed under the self-imposed seclusion (with the exception of the Dutch trade at the island of Dejima in Nagasaki). This policy of *sakoku* helped considerably through the exclusive control of foreign policy and trade by the military regime of the shogun to maintain the supremacy of the Tokugawa bakufu established in 1603.⁴ Thus

1 This study is one of the results of the grant project SGS-2015–014 *Velká Británie, Francie a Japonsko ve druhé polovině 19. století* on which the author participates at the Department of Historical Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen.

2 R. SHIBA, *Clouds above the Hill: A Historical Novel of the Russo-Japanese War*, New York 2015, p. 346.

3 In his classical book on the history of the 19th century Jürgen Osterhammel considered the gunboat policy as one of the main instruments of the British imperial domination, which helped Britain to maintain its predominance and influence beyond official limits of its empire. By this political tool many non-European countries were under control of British diplomacy by use of the system of unequal treaties backed up by constant threat of military intervention. J. OSTERHAMMEL, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton/Oxford 2014, p. 460.

4 M. S. LAVER, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony*, New York 2011, pp. 183–189. The sole responsibility for the foreign policy was one of the forms of legitimization of the régime. See R. P. TOBY, *Reopening the Question of Sakoku: Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, in: *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1977, pp. 362–363.



the politics of isolation was one of the cornerstones of the Tokugawa regime. However, since the turn of the 18th and 19th century the European countries started to have a growing interest in Japan. Firstly, it was Russia, which tried to establish mutual relations with Japan already at the end of 18th century.⁵ Other countries (especially Great Britain and United States) later joined the effort to open Japan. Their naval missions to the country were however unsuccessful and even strengthened the wish of the Japanese to maintain the isolation, which can be described on the examples of the edicts to expel any foreign vessels (*Ikokusen Uchiharairei*) and the antichristian opinions of nationalist thinker of the Mito school Aizawa Seishisai.⁶ All of the peaceable efforts to force Japan to change its policy therefore failed.

It was only after the U.S. government lost its patience after previous unsuccessful missions to Japan and thus decided to dispatch a powerful fleet under Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who was authorized to promote American interests under the threat of force.⁷ The consequent signature of the Convention of Kanagawa (March 31, 1854) triggered a domino effect. After this American success the European powers mounted subsequent expeditions, to enforce similar demands on the Japanese government as the Americans.⁸ The politics of *sakoku* collapsed and although most of the Japanese representatives tried to oppose further requests of the Westerners,⁹ they had to bend to the inevitable and signed a series of unequal treaties with the United States, Great Britain, Russia, France and Netherlands in 1858.¹⁰ This was of course due not so much to the skills of Townsend Harris and other western diplomats, but because of Japanese military weakness vis-à-vis to the power of the western fleets lurking around the coast of Japan.

These events caused an internal uproar in Japan. While negotiating with the “barbarians” the Tokugawa bakufu showed much indecision. This was partially caused by previous turbulent decades marked by famines and revolts, during which the ruling regime proved little effectiveness to cope with them and many of the feudal domains had

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- 5 To this question see G. A. LENSEN, *The Russian Push toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697-1875*, Princeton 1959.
- 6 J. L. HUFFMAN, *Modern Japan: A History in Documents*, New York/Oxford 2011, p. 35; C. N. VAPORIS, *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life During the Age of Shoguns*, Santa Barbara 2014, pp. 120-121.
- 7 R. HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution: The Dawn of Modern Japan Seen Through the Eyes of the Shogun's Last Samurai*, Tokyo/Rutland/Singapore 2014, p. 30; the willingness to force Japanese government to submit to American demands was demonstrated in the letters of the U.S. President Millard Fillmore and Commodore Perry addressed to the Japanese Emperor. F. L. HAWKS, *Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan: Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, 1852-1854*, Stroud 2005, pp. 251-254.
- 8 W. McOMIE, *The Opening of Japan: A Comparative Study of the American, British, Dutch and Russian Naval Expeditions to Compel the Tokugawa Shogunate to Conclude Treaties and Open Ports to their Ships*, Folkestone 2006, pp. 326-342.
- 9 C. TOTMAN, *From Sakoku to Kaikoku: The Transformation of Foreign-Policy Attitudes, 1853-1868*, in: *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 1980, p. 9.
- 10 W. G. BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, Stanford 1972, p. 115; for the details of the signing of the unequal treaties see M. R. AUSLIN, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*, Cambridge/London 2006.



to deal with the economic and social problems themselves.¹¹ The regime felt weakened a therefore it tried to sanction its drift from the policy of seclusion by the consultation with the daimyos and most important retainers (*hatamoto*) — a move unprecedented in its whole history.¹² In 1858 during the negotiations of the unequal treaties Ii Naosuke, their instigator, multiplied this mistake by asking the opinion of the imperial court. His aim was to gain the imperial sanction of his moves, but in this he didn't succeed and what was more serious he violated the long term monopoly of the decision making in the foreign policy on the part of the bakufu. For hundreds of years the political power of the Japanese Emperors dwindled — the custom was, that they bestowed the political power into the hands of succeeding military governments and remained in their seclusion in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. The last serious effort of the emperor to wrest power from the hands of the samurai class occurred during the 15th century. During the Tokugawa rule, “all honor was shown to the court, but it was nearly powerless. All governing authority rested in the hands of hereditary Tokugawa shogun”.¹³ Naosuke's move however had made “the imperial court a full-fledged participant in the decision of public policy”.¹⁴

This situation activated not only the existing advocates of imperial loyalism, but also triggered a whole new movement led by young thinkers like Yoshida Shōin.¹⁵ The critics of the bakufu were claiming, that “the shogun was merely an Imperial agent commissioned by the Emperor to protect the country from foreign invasion. But since the shogun had upset the Emperor by failing to expel the barbarians, he no longer warranted his title”.¹⁶ Some as Yoshida himself even called for killing the shogun if he did not concur with the wishes of the Emperor to expel “the barbarians” and cancel the treaties.¹⁷ The signing of the treaties with the west therefore led to the growing of the pro-imperial movement in the lower echelon of the samurai class. The dissatisfaction of this social group was primarily based upon its gradually worsening economic situation and many of them “often faced a real struggle for existence on their income”.¹⁸ Their grievances were centered on the bakufu which proved unable to improve their plight after the Tenpo famine in the 30s.¹⁹ After the Westerners came, they united under the banner of the slogan *sonnō jōi* — Revere the emperor, expel the barbarians. The advocates of this policy cried for respecting the sovereign and abolition of the unequal treaties which were an offence in the face of Japan. The xenophobic movement was in this way combined with the dissent against the bakufu and shielded itself with the authority of the Emperor as a theoretical head of all Japan.²⁰

11 C. TOTMAN, *Early Modern Japan*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1995, pp. 511–525.

12 BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, pp. 89–90; HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 33.

13 TOTMAN, *Early Modern Japan*, p. 50.

14 H. WEBB, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*, New York/London 1968, p. 245.

15 BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, pp. 142–160.

16 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 94.

17 WEBB, p. 256.

18 M. B. JANSEN, *The Making of Modern Japan*, Cambridge/London 2002, p. 109.

19 J. L. McCLAIN, *Japan: A Modern History*, New York, London 2002, p. 129.

20 G. SANSOM, *A History of Japan 1615–1867*, Stanford 1963, pp. 236–238. It is interesting, that although the Emperor Kōmei himself was a proponent of the antiforeigner movement (*jōi*),



Although there were a lot of domains (*han*) and court nobles who later embraced this call for their own political aims, it was at first connected with young dissatisfied samurai. These “patriots of high aspiration” (*shishi*) were determined to enforce the expulsion of the foreigners (whose demands were viewed as an insult of the country) even at the price of their own lives²¹ and thus save Japan from subjugation by the Westerners, whom the bakufu was evidently unable to contain. While the *shishi* were comprised mainly of middle or rather lower samurai without any notable connections to the upper echelons of the society,²² they resorted to political violence.

At first the wreath of dissatisfied samurai turned against the bakufu officials connected with the conclusion of unequal humiliating treaties. Their main target became the head of the council of elders (*rōjū*) Ii Naosuke, who was the main culprit of the treaties and during his tenure in the office of *tairō* (the head of *rōjū*) he initiated Ansei Purge in order to strengthen his power, during which many opponents of his politics and the members of the reform movement among the daimyo, as was xenophobic Tokugawa Nariaki, were removed from the government and arrested.²³ Also his planned policy of Union of the Imperial Court and the bakufu (*kōbu gattai*) was criticized as using the Court for the selfish interests of the bakufu. After that many leaders of *shishi* gradually started to embrace the idea of destroying the bakufu and replacing it by imperial rule.²⁴ In order to accomplish this difficult task, the “traitors” had to be removed. On March 24, 1860 a group of young samurai of the Mito domain (from which Tokugawa Nariaki came) attacked the palanquin of Ii Naosuke. His guards were totally unprepared for anything like that and gave little resistance. The all-powerful *tairō* was dragged out and beheaded.²⁵ This was a start of an era of political violence, which engulfed Japan until the Meiji restoration.

he wasn't making plans for the restoration of the Imperial rule, because he was well aware of the dependence of the Imperial Court on the bakufu. His main aim was to enjoy peace in his palace in Kyoto. D. KEENE, *Emperor of Japan. Meiji and His World, 1852–1912*, New York 2002, p. 34. The prevalent opinion among the supporters of the *sonnōjōi* can be illustrated by a citation from a contemporary chronicle sympathizing with the activists: “*The Imperial Court hated profoundly the doings of the outer barbarians, and it was evident that they might make a sudden inroad at any moment. Yet the bakufu was supine and wasted its time, which greatly grieved the Imperial mind.*” B. BABA, *Japan 1853–1864: Or, Genji Yume Monogatari*, Tokyo 1905, p. 23.

21 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 94; McCLAIN, p. 144.

22 BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 223.

23 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 104.

24 R. HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Tales: Courage, Fidelity, and Revenge in the Final Years of the Shogun*, Singapore 2010, pp. 192–193.

25 JANSEN, *The Making of Modern Japan*, p. 295; BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 173; it is interesting, that the first news received by the representatives of the Great Powers were speaking about the failure of the attack. Alcock to Russell, 2. 4. 1860, The National Archives, London-Kew (henceforth only TNA), Foreign Office (henceforth only FO) 46/7. Despite of this disinformation the British minister to Japan sir Rutherford Alcock considered this incident as an obvious evidence of the state of the country. His French colleague Gustav Duchesne de Bellecourt concurred, although he attributed the attack to the faction disputes in the Japanese government. Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 29. 3. 1860, Archives



After the death of Ii Naosuke more attacks followed.²⁶ One of the most important occurred in February 1862 against a member of *rōjū* Andō Nobumasa who was connected to Ii's politics.²⁷ However, although the anger of the proponents of the expulsion of the Westerners turned against the officials of the bakufu, they also directed their wrath to the members of the foreign community in Japan. A young officer and a sailor from a Russian man-of-war, were ambushed and killed in the streets of Yokohama on August 25, 1859.²⁸ This was a start of a series of attacks on the foreigners or their servants in Japan: in November 1859 a Chinese servant of French Vice-Consul in Yokohama was killed; in 1860 the Japanese interpreter of British minister to Japan sir Rutherford Alcock was slain near the gate to the British legation in Edo; only a month later two Dutch captains of the merchant fleet were killed in Yokohama; in October 1860 a servant to the French minister in Japan Gustave Duchesne de Bellecourt was killed in Edo and at the beginning of 1861 the secretary of the U.S. legation was murdered when he was returning from a dinner-party at the Prussian Embassy.²⁹ Although such incidents caused considerable indignation and calls to the government for "*immediate apprehension and speedy punishment of the assassin, as shall [bakufu] yield some assurance of future security of myself and colleagues*";³⁰ they continued to occur with terrifying regularity. Their daring and brutality gradually increased.

On the night of July 5, 1861, the security of British emissary was indeed in peril. A group of armed samurai from Mito domain penetrated into the temple Tōzen-ji in the search of Rutherford Alcock himself. When they were trying to find the minister, they encountered two British diplomats — Alcock's secretary Laurence Oliphant and the British Consul of Nagasaki George S. Morrison. A short skirmish ensued during which Morrison fired two shots killing one of the assailants. Oliphant had only a hunting whip in his hand. Its wooden handle deflected a blow of one the attacker's katana. Both men were nevertheless seriously injured.³¹ Alcock later commented, that only the narrowness of the corridor and wooden beams hindered the intruders to effectively use their weapons and kill both men.³² Only after endless minutes the Japanese guards of the legation assigned by the bakufu appeared and drove the assailants away.

du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (henceforth only AMAE), La Courneuve Paris, Correspondance politique, Japon 2. According to Genji Yume Monogatari the incident can be considered as an act of revenge for the fall and subsequent death of Tokugawa Nariaki, who was in favor of the Emperor who "*had been pleased with [his] patriotism and loyalty [...]*". BABA, p. 37.

²⁶ BABA, p. 51.

²⁷ BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 176. To the details of this incident see Memorandum on the attack on Andō Nobumasa, undated, TNA, FO 46/23.

²⁸ LENSEN, pp. 381–382; R. ALCOCK, *The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three Years Residence in Japan*, Vol. 1, London 1863, p. 240.

²⁹ J. DENNEY, *Respect and Consideration. Britain in Japan 1853–1868 and Beyond*, Leicester 2011, pp. 43–44; ALCOCK, Vol. 1, pp. 347–359.

³⁰ Alcock to Russell, 29. 1. 1860, TNA, FO 46/7.

³¹ DENNEY, pp. 44–45; Oliphant had to return to England to cure his wounds. A letter from the Shogun to the Queen Victoria was dispatched with him. R. ALCOCK, *The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three Years Residence in Japan*, Vol. 2, London 1863, p. 171.

³² Alcock to Russell, 7. 7. 1861, TNA, FO 46/12.



Alcock was nevertheless furious at the careless behavior of the shogunate troops and immediately identified the main problem behind the attack: “Whatever hostility is felt for foreigners in Japan comes from above, and not from below. The real enemies of the foreigners are all to be found among the daimio class and their armed followers, mere creatures of their masters will.”³³ Alcock’s reaction was quick — with the help of French Embassy he secured the building with troops and immediately proposed to temporarily move the foreign representatives to much safer Yokohama.³⁴ He also, with the help of the French and United States Embassy, pressured the Japanese government to protect the foreign community in Japan and to find and punish the initiators of the attack.³⁵

Although some of the samurai participating in the attack were arrested and executed by the bakufu in June 1862,³⁶ the situation didn’t improve. The second attack on the British legation followed on June 27, 1862. In that time the British affairs were temporarily managed by Colonel Edward John Neale, because Alcock took his leave to England in March 1862.³⁷ As an ex-army officer Neale tried to secure the safety of the legation by stationing 80 troops and sailors there. Bakufu also participated on its defense against possible attack by garrisoning 535 samurai nearby.³⁸ About half an hour past midnight the sentry at the legation, seaman Charles Sweet, heard a strange sound. He asked for password and was given a correct one. But his suspicion was not calmed down, so he went to see what the sounds meant. In next seconds he was viciously attacked by sword and mortally wounded. After the ensuing confusion calmed down a little, someone noticed, that another man was missing. This was Corporal Richard Crimp, who was on the rounds controlling the sentries when the attack came. After an anxious search he was found dead at the doors of Neale’s bedroom with 16 slash and stab wounds. Although the British were almost immediately assisted by Japanese guards, the attacker managed to escape — in this he was probably helped by the fact, that some of the guarding samurai were drunk, which filled Neale with disgust.³⁹

On the next day one of the guards — Itō *Gunbei* from *Matsumoto* domain — was found dead. The Embassy’s doctor examined the body and confirmed previous information, that the man committed ritual suicide — seppuku. It was said, that the attacker was earlier offended by one of the employees of the Embassy and therefore decided to avenge this shame by the attack. It was however found out later, that

33 Ibid. The attitude of the common population towards the foreigners was according to the first reports of the westerners in Japan quite friendly. McOMIE, p. 256; Ernest Mason Satow (than interpreter at the British Embassy) commented in his memories, that even in Europe Japan had in that time reputation as a dangerous country, where one could be killed easily and added, that the British diplomats in Edo, used to carry a gun until 1869. E. M. SATOW, *A Diplomat in Japan: The Inner History of the Critical Years in the Evolution of Japan When the Ports Were Opened and the Monarchy Restored*, London 2006, p. 35.

34 Alcock to Russell, 8. 7. 1861, TNA, FO 46/12; Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 6. 7. 1861, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Japon 4.

35 Alcock to Russell, 10. 7. 1861, TNA, FO 46/12.

36 DENNEY, p. 47.

37 ALCOCK, Vol. 2, p. 341.

38 Neale to Russell, 3. 7. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.

39 Ibidem. In his letter from July 1, Neale called behavior of the Japanese guards as “criminal negligence and great cowardice”. Neale to Russell, 1. 7. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.



he was actually trying to avenge the Mito samurai, who were executed for the previous attack on the legation.⁴⁰ The reaction of the British minister was prompt. On June 27, he filled a protest to the Japanese government, in which he held it responsible, because it wasn't able to protect the foreign residents in Edo. He therefore informed the bakufu foreign office, that he intended to replace the Japanese guards by British soldiers who would be able to secure the safety of British residents.⁴¹ He had full support of his colleagues from the embassies of other western powers in Edo to take this step. Especially the French minister Bellecourt supported him vehemently since the first day of the incident.⁴² Neale also informed Foreign Office, that in order to secure the interests of Great Britain in Japan, naval assistance was needed.⁴³

In July Neale decided that the situation in Edo was untenable and decided to move to Yokohama temporarily,⁴⁴ from where he dealt with the Japanese government and tried to rally the support of other western powers in Japan, with whom he met on July 13. They were all prepared to use this situation to force bakufu to more concessions, while Neale waited for instructions from London.⁴⁵ In September after he received Neale's reports about the incident, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Russell instructed Neale to demand 10,000 £ as an indemnity for the families of the killed men. He also supported Neale in his call for naval support, which would force bakufu and the daimyo to prevent any further attacks on the foreigners.⁴⁶ However when Neale received these instructions, he was already occupied by a new and even more serious case of xenophobic attack against British residents in Japan.

Despite of the number of attacks against foreigners, the residents of Yokohama felt quite safe in that time and sometimes ventured outside the city borders. On September 14, 1862 four members of the western community went on a trip to Kawasaki. Their plan was to cross by boat from Yokohama to Kanagawa, where the horses would be waiting for them and then to visit Daishi temple in nearby Kawasaki, which was famous for being the center of Buddhist Chizan sect and was constructed in 1128. It was a fine and warm day of ending Japanese summer — ideal for a ride outside the town.⁴⁷ The party consisted of Charles Lennox Richardson a Shanghai merchant visiting Japan for a short time and waiting for his ship to bring him back to China,⁴⁸

40 Bakufu to Neale, undated, TNA, FO 46/23; DENNEY, pp. 49–50.

41 Neale to Japanese foreign office, 27. 6. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.

42 Bellecourt to Neale, 27. 6. 1862, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Japon 6; compare with Bellecourt to Neale, 27. 6. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.

43 Neale to Russell, 28. 6. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.

44 Neale to Russell, 10. 7. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23.

45 Neale to Russell, 17. 7. 1862, TNA, FO 46/23; bakufu tried to improve its reputation by strengthening the guards around the embassies and by dismissing samurai from Matsumoto domain from the guard duty. HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 139.

46 Russell to Neale, 22. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/20.

47 Minutes of evidence touching the death of Mr. C. L. Richardson, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24; DENNEY, p. 68.

48 To his personality see DENNEY, pp. 62–66. According to John Denney, "it was significant, that Richardson was a stranger to Japan. Marshall and Clarke, some distance behind, would have known the protocol in these circumstances [when the party met a daimyo train]. But Richardson only knew the Chinese customs and usages. In China, the natives were treated by the Western-



two Yokohama merchants Woothorpe C. Clarke and William Marshall. These three men were accompanying one of the few European women present in that time in Japan Mrs. Margaret Watson Borradaile. They set up at 2:30 p.m. out of Yokohama, reached Kanagawa and moved on a leisurely pace on one of the most important roads in Japan — Tōkaidō — connecting Edo and Kyoto. As usually this traffic artery of Japan was quite crowded by merchants, villagers and omnipresent samurai, whom according to Clark's later testimony, the party tried to avoid.⁴⁹ After travelling about four miles and passing several guard houses deployed along the road, they encountered a huge procession of samurai.

This was a retinue of Shimazu Hisamitsu — father of the daimyo of the Satsuma han Shimazu Tadayoshi, for whom he acted as a regent. This influential man was principal member of the so-called *tozama hans*, which were domains alienated to the Tokugawa prior the battle of Sakigahra in 1600 and thus were excluded from the participation on the central government.⁵⁰ In summer he was sent to Edo as an imperial envoy forcing bakufu to considerable concessions and bending to the imperial will.⁵¹ Now he was returning back to Kyoto. His retinue was consisted of about 1,000 men, of whom 700 were Satsuma samurai.⁵² These men “*were distinguished among samurai throughout Japan for their stoic martial traditions, their absolute refusal to look askance at an affront of their honor, and their resolve to inflict swift retribution for an insult of their daimyo*”.⁵³ Many of these men considered the unequal treaties as national dishonor and aligned themselves with imperial loyalism,⁵⁴ which was deeply connected with the *jōi* cause. Their reaction when meeting foreigners outside the western settlement near their daimyo corresponded with their political views and upbringing.

ers as inferiors. Indeed, the Chinese at that time were in effect a subjugated people, and western — particularly British — military might and main meant that deference was shown by the Chinese to the Westerners and expected from the Chinese by them. Richardson certainly carried these attitudes with him, failing to recognize the fact that Japan was not subjugated by military force as China had been, but was an ostensibly equal partner in their relationship with the west.” DENNEY, p. 71.

⁴⁹ Minutes of evidence touching the death of Mr. C. L. Richardson, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.

⁵⁰ Japanese domains were divided into three roughly equally large groups — *shinpan daimyo* (the members of the inner-circle of the Tokugawa family), *fudai daimyo* (direct vassals of Tokugawa) and *tozama* (the “outside” lords). McCLAIN, pp. 24–26.

⁵¹ In this time bakufu was forced to abandon the system of alternate attendance of the daimyos and their families in Edo, by which means the shogunate ensured the loyalty of the feudal lords. Many of the recent members of Ii Nosuke's clique as Andō Nobumasa had to leave their posts and Hitotsubashi Keiki (later shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu) was appointed as the guardian of the shogun. HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 164. Shimazu Hisamitsu belonged in that time to the daimyo supporting the cause of the Imperial Court. This was however not because he wished a return of direct imperial rule, but for the sake of his effort to strengthen the political power of Satsuma han. M. RAVINA, *The Last Samurai: The Life and Battles of Saigō Takamori*, Hoboken 2004, p. 93.

⁵² HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 184.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 185.

⁵⁴ BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 157.



When Richardson's party saw the huge body of samurai, they halted. Japanese along the road bowed in respect to the passing daimyo. Only his samurai and the group of Westerners on horseback stood. The following accounts of what happened next are quite conflicting.⁵⁵ The questioning of the surviving members of the party was made during immediate hours after the attack, so it is quite understandable, that under the stress and shock, they gave some details differently. What is quite clear is that when the column of samurai passed along them, Richardson and his entourage didn't dismount the horse and supposedly approached the litter of the daimyo when turning the horses. From some accounts it is also evident, that Richardson tried to go on the road even when the procession passed by and he was motioned to stop by Hisamitsu's retinue. This sort of behavior would be possible in China, but not in Japan, where the Westerners were viewed as barbarians and were obliged to show courtesy in presence of high ranking Japanese — especially when they were outside their settlement. All of a sudden one of the samurai gesticulating at them to stop and dismount drew out his sword slashed at Richardson. He then also struck Marshall who was severely wounded. This sudden burst of violence startled the horses (and the riders of course), who started to run through the samurai procession. Many of the Satsuma men drew out their swords and hacked at the Westerners. At this point Clarke was injured into his left shoulder. Mrs. Borradaile was miraculously unharmed, although one of the blows nearly missed her head and her clothes were spilled by Richardson's blood. She reached safety in a state of shock. During the attempt to flight, Richardson was cut once more for at least once. When Marshall turned to him, he saw him dead (or almost dead) in his saddle. In the next moment Richardson collapsed from the horse, his bowls protruding from a huge wound. Marshall concluded, that he was dead and as the samurai were drawing near, he put his horse into a gallop to catch up Clarke and Mrs. Borradaile who already had some margin in their flight. Only with great difficulty, they reached Kanagawa, where they received medical help at American consulate.⁵⁶ As for Richardson, Marshall's assumption was correct. What his associate did not see was the aftermath — his corpse was hacked by the samurai and his throat cut. In this state his was found by English doctor Willis, who rushed to the scene of massacre.⁵⁷

Although some of the details are confused, the picture what happened is quite clear. One Englishman was killed in the broad daylight without — from the western point of view — provoking an incident, two more were wounded. To fully grasp the situation, the Japanese side of the story must be told. As Shimazu Hisamitsu embraced the cause of loyalism, his anti-foreign sentiments strengthened. In July 1862 he issued a statement in which he declared, that he wouldn't tolerate any possible insults from foreigners during his journey to and from Edo and *"if by chance [foreigners] should commit a rude or unlawful act, we will not be able to let the matter alone"*.⁵⁸ According to later testimonies of Satsuma samurai Richardson tried to go straight through the samurai procession (something that would be normal in China, where

55 For the most detailed account see Minutes of evidence touching the death of Mr. C. L. Richardson, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24; DENNEY, pp. 72–82.

56 Ibidem.

57 SATOW, p. 41.

58 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 187.



the Westerners looked at the local populace as racially inferior) without paying the customary respect by dismounting, although he should be warned by menacing looks of the samurai and advices of his companions. Despite of this and his previous statement Hisamitsu allegedly ordered his men to let the foreigners pass.⁵⁹

For his men this sort of behavior was however an unforgivable insult. When asked by his master that evening why he started the attack, Narahara Kizaemon, who was first to struck Richardson, said: “As a personal guard to the Lord of Satsuma, it is my duty to see to it that such impudence does not become a common occurrence. Had the foreigners actually harmed the procession, I would have taken responsibility by committing seppuku.”⁶⁰ Other of the attacking samurai Kukimura Toshiyasu recalled the atmosphere among Satsuma samurai and the whole incident: “At the time all of us were anxious to cut a foreigner. [...] Suddenly there was a noise from behind. I thought that this was my chance, and immediately put my hand on the hilt of my sword. [He then attacked Richardson.] A bloody piece of something fall on the grass. I suppose it was part of his entrails. I wanted to cut him again, so I chased after him. But since I was on foot, I couldn’t catch up with him. I turned back and saw another foreigner galloping at my direction. [...] I cut him about the right side with the same technique. I chased after him also, but couldn’t catch him either. [...] I tell you, it was so awfully pleasant to cut them. I felt so very relieved.”⁶¹ The last two sentences of this testimony clearly expose the magnitude of hatred against the foreigners among the samurai.⁶² This permanently growing sentiment combined with untactful (or probably rude — at least in the eyes of the samurai) behavior of Richardson’s party and with previous Hisamitsu’s declaration triggered this murderous attack, which almost immediately became a major problem of the relations between Japan and the west.

The Namamugi Incident, as was Richardson’s murder named in Japan, was nevertheless different from most of the previous attacks against the foreigners in Japan. Most of them were up to that date committed by lone samurai (or small groups) composed mainly of ronin who had no official connection to the governing circles. Many such deeds moreover occurred under the cover of darkness. This time however, four Englishmen were attacked in the broad daylight by a retinue of powerful daimyo who in that time served as imperial envoy. That meant, that the whole incident had a strong political undertone. Moreover, the murderers could be identified and punished. This was the first thought of the British minister Neale, who was determined to secure the punishment of the culprits and to demand reparations for this deed.⁶³ His determination

59 DENNEY, pp. 78–79.

60 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Tales*, p. 8.

61 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, pp. 187–188.

62 The magnitude of this sentiment is clearly revealed in a report of the military commissioner of Kyoto (Kyoto Shugoshoku) Matsudaira Katamori who wrote that „*the Emperor himself is firmly resolved on national seclusion and the expulsion of foreigners, with the result that in Kyoto itself and throughout Kansai region, from the great lords to the very ronin, there is now not a man who would argue in favor of opening the country*“. Matsudaira Katamori to Bakufu, 8. 11. 1862, W. G. BEASLEY (Ed.), *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy 1853–1868*, New York/Toronto 1955, p. 225.

63 Neale to Russell, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.



to secure justice was motivated not only by the murder itself, but also by the uproar, which it caused in Yokohama. Many of the present traders found out, that Shimazu Hisamitsu was overnight in Hodogaya distant only two miles from Yokohama. They therefore demanded immediate action and punishment of the Satsuma noble. Neale declined and forbid any British subject to go near Tōkaidō. He was determined to solve the incident by diplomatic means, for which he was accused of incompetence and weakness by Yokohama merchants.⁶⁴ Neale nevertheless put military forces available on alarm and sent a demand to bakufu to capture and punish the murderers.⁶⁵ This step was met with misgivings in the eyes of the members of the diplomatic community in Yokohama, because as the French minister stated — bakufu could do anything significant, because the culprits were under the rule of autonomous Prince of Satsuma.⁶⁶

Neale however persisted on diplomatic solution while using the British fleet as a means of coercion against the Japanese. During the days following the murder he therefore met with various representatives of the bakufu who “*offered deep regret of the Taikoon’s Government*”.⁶⁷ Neale was also assured, that the government would make a thorough investigation and would arrest the killers.⁶⁸ In the meantime bakufu ordered Satsuma to identify the murderers in order to get rid of this unexpected and unwelcome foreign crisis. Satsuma authorities answered, that they were prepared to do so, but that due to the fact, that the procession was made of hundreds of men, the killers managed to utilize the ensuing chaos and run away. This statement was of course false, because Hisamitsu questioned the samurai involved the same evening, but it helped Satsuma authorities to hide the murderers away from bakufu. In the end no one was ever punished.⁶⁹ In this sense Bellecourt’s assessment proved correct.⁷⁰

Neale’s hesitation to take any direct and immediate military measures was caused by his need to await the instructions from Foreign Office, without which he was disinclined to take any measures which would cause serious conflict with Japan. Although he was criticized immediately after the attack, many of the participants later conceded, that what he had done was right. For most of them this opinion was expressed by Ernest Mason Satow in his memories: “*The plan of mercantile community [to immediately attack Shimazu Hisamitsu] was bold, attractive and almost romantic. It would probably have been successful, for the moment, in spite of the well-known bravery of the Satsuma samurai. But such an event as the capture of a leading Japanese nobleman by foreign sailors in the dominions of the Tycoon would have been a patent demonstration of his incapacity to defend the nation against the ‘outer barbarian’, and would have precipi-*

64 SATOW, pp. 42–43.

65 Neale to Russell, 16. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24; Neale to bakufu, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24. The most important in the defense of the western settlement was British fleet commanded by Admiral Kuper, who immediately sent sailors to patrol the streets of Yokohama and boats to keep the coast under surveillance. Kuper to Neale, 15. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.

66 Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 16. 9. 1862, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Japon 7.

67 Neale to Russell, 19. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.

68 Ibidem.

69 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 189.

70 Although he was of different opinion Bellecourt gave Neale his support in the solving of the situation. Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 21. 9. 1862, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Japon 7.

tated his downfall long before it could actually took place, and before there was anything in the shape of league among the clans ready to establish new government. In all probability the country would have become a prey to ruinous anarchy, and collisions with foreign powers would have been frequent and serious. Probably the slaughter of the foreign community in Nagasaki would have been the immediate answer to the blow struck at Hodogaya, a joint expedition would have been sent out by England, France and Holland to fight many bloody battles and perhaps dismember the realm of the Mikados. In the meantime, the commerce for whose sake we had come to Japan would have been killed. And how many lives of Europeans and Japanese would have been sacrificed in return for that of Shimadzu Saburo [under this name Hisamitsu was known to the foreigners]?"⁷¹ Neale of course didn't see as far as that, but was disinclined to do anything which could result in open hostilities without direct instructions.

The set of new instructions were formulated by Lord Russell during December 1862 and received by Neale during spring 1863. In his immediate answer to Neale Russell demanded the capital punishment of the chief murderers, the degradation of the Satsuma daimyo and the payment of 100,000 £ by either the Japanese government or Satsuma.⁷² In his more precise instructions he instructed Neale to demand a reparation of 100,000 £ by the shogun's government for not being able to prevent such a deed on a road opened to foreigners in open daylight. Another 25,000 £ should be paid by Satsuma to the relatives of the Englishmen involved in the incident. If Japanese government or the daimyo should refuse to submit and pay the indemnity, Neale was authorized to use naval forces at his disposal to force them to do so.⁷³ Russell's decision to give Neale a free hand to use naval force was made only slowly and was based on the gradual arrival of consequent reports which demonstrated the inability or unwillingness of the bakufu to solve the problem and arrest the murders. At the beginning of December 1862 Russell insisted on the punishment of the daimyo but was still convinced, that this should be done by the bakufu itself.⁷⁴ Neale however reported, that the bakufu was claiming, that only the daimyo of Satsuma had the authority to punish the attackers and was showing its badly concealed incompetence to force him to do so.⁷⁵ Russell therefore decided to a course of action which proved so effective in China and gave him free hand if British requests were refused.⁷⁶

While waiting for Russell's instruction Neale was dragged into endless discussions with the bakufu about the remedy for the incident. These were however quite unsuccessful as were the discussions about extension of the treaty rights of the Great Powers.⁷⁷ This was caused by the complicated situation of the central government, which resorted to a tactics of delays and excuses. In that time bakufu was challenged by mounting criticism of the daimyo and the adherents of the Imperial Court, which was preparing to issue an edict which would direct the government to expel the for-

71 SATOW, p. 44.

72 Russell to Neale, 28. 11. 1862, TNA, FO 46/20; DENNEY, p. 134.

73 Russell to Neale, 24. 12. 1862, TNA, FO 46/20; DENNEY, pp. 134–136.

74 Russell to Neale, 9. 12. 1862, TNA, FO 46/20.

75 Neale to Russell, 30. 9. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.

76 Russell to Neale, 24. 12. 1862, TNA, FO 46/20.

77 Neale to Russell, 21. 10. 1862, TNA, FO 46/24.



eigners.⁷⁸ Bakufu was therefore between Scylla and Charybdis — on the one hand it was pressured by the court and the daimyos to adopt a strongly anti-foreign policy, on the other hand it was well aware of its meager military capabilities vis-à-vis the foreigners. It therefore on the one hand ostensibly prepared defenses against possible attack, on the other it tried to find a solution from the trap it was in.⁷⁹ This was nevertheless a policy which clearly demonstrated the weakness of the shogunate. Especially the inability to produce the murderers showed, that the bakufu was not able to force Satsuma to do so. The British therefore concluded, that the central government was not able to effectively control the country which it boasted to govern. This fact caused a loss of confidence in the bakufu on the part of the British.⁸⁰

This state of affairs lasted until the spring 1863. By this time Neale received instructions from Russell and started to press the Japanese government to pay the indemnity.⁸¹ In this process he cooperated with the representatives of other powers whom he kept informed.⁸² The situation was nevertheless quite tense. The bakufu played for time, while in the Edo castle a discussion was underway about the question of the expulsion of the foreigners. The bakufu was internally divided, some members of its foreign department such as Sawa Kanshichirō argued that under the pressure for an indemnity and for opening additional ports to the westerners, there was no alternative, than to reject these demands and execute the imperial order of March 11, 1863 to expel the “barbarians”.⁸³ The bakufu officials then ordered some parts of Edo (Shiba-Shinagawa) as well as the surrounding of Yokohama to be evacuated.⁸⁴ This step led to some concern among the westerners, because it could signal Japanese willingness to conflict. Satow later recalled how on the 5th May, “*there was a general exodus of all the native servants employed in the foreign settlement*”.⁸⁵ Neale therefore asked for assistance the commander of East Indies and China Station Admiral sir Augustus Leopold Kuper who had his flag on the frigate *Euryalus*. Although the answer was positive, it wasn’t optimistic. Kuper asserted that in the case bakufu and Satsuma rejected British demands, he wouldn’t have enough forces to protect the foreign settlement and “*to carry out coercive measures*” which he was ordered to execute under the order from the British government. He therefore advised the abandonment of Yokohama in case of war.⁸⁶ Similar atmosphere can be read also from the letters of other foreign representatives, who realized that in order to avoid war, they have to support Britain in its pressure against the Japanese.⁸⁷ On the other hand Neale draw some optimism, that bakufu would eventually submit form the fact, that parallel negotiations about the rebuilding of the building of the Brit-

78 See Matsudaira Keiki to bakufu, 4. 12. 1862, BEASLEY, *Select*, pp. 227–234.

79 C. TOTMAN, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1862–1868*, Honolulu 1980, p. 69.

80 SATOW, p. 189.

81 Neale to Bakufu, 6. 4. 1863, TNA, FO 46/33; cf. with Lt.-Co. St. John Neale to the Japanese Ministers for Foreign Affairs, 6. 4. 1863, BEASLEY, *Select*, pp. 236–240.

82 Winchester to foreign representatives, 7. 4. 1862, TNA, FO 46/33.

83 BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 194; TOTMAN, *The Collapse*, p. 70.

84 TOTMAN, *The Collapse*, p. 70.

85 SATOW, p. 68.

86 Kuper to Neale, 14. 4. 1862, TNA, FO 46/33.

87 Bellecourt to Drouyn de Lhuys, 20. 4. 1863, AMAE, *Correspondance politique, Japon* 8.



ish legation in Edo, which was burned down by xenophobic samurai in February 1863, went well.⁸⁸ In April Neale was informed, that the bakufu and the daimyos will rebuild the legation for 40,000 Mexican dollars on their own expenses.⁸⁹

This fact demonstrated, that although bakufu was preparing for possible conflict ostentatively, there were differences among its officials about the question of the indemnity. One of the Tokugawa *hatamoto* (upper vassals) and previous member of its foreign department responsible for dealing with the Westerners Mizuno Tadanori advised one of the *rōjū* Inoue Masanao to conform to the British demands. His arguments were based on the fact, that the murder of foreigner and subsequent escape of the murderers in front of the eyes of a daimyo was “*contrary to the spirit of friendly treaty relations, and we cannot therefore call it unreasonable of the foreigners to demand an indemnity*”. He also reminded, that on the previous occasions of the attacks against Westerners, the culprits were unknown, but the Namamugi incident was different and if bakufu rejected British demands, “*they will be able to seize upon this as a pretext to open hostilities*”. He then asserted, that in such case “*the Bakufu would in the end find itself unable to preserve national prestige*”. Therefore, he advised to pay the indemnity, in order to free hands for solving more urgent internal problems. The good will in this case could also be used in further negotiations with the foreigners about the question of the opening of the ports.⁹⁰

Although Mizuno’s opinion was not isolated, there remained a question of the Imperial command ordering the expulsion. If the shogunate wanted to avoid possible war, it had to gain time. On May 1, bakufu therefore asked for another 15 days of delay for the answer on the British demand of indemnity. Its excuse was, that the question must be discussed by the shogun’s guardian and the *rōjū* at first.⁹¹ It was exactly at this moment, that the crisis reached its height, as Satow recalled. Neale therefore conferred with other foreign representatives and with Admiral Kuper. Yet again he was offered a full support from his colleagues,⁹² who realized, that any concession would be an invitation for repetition of similar deeds, which was demonstrated by new anti-foreign attacks this time in the form of shelling of the Western ships in the Straits of Shimonoseki by the batteries constructed by the Chōshū domain.⁹³ Neale therefore showed his indignation to bakufu, but on the other hand he was prepared to wait, because he was well aware of the problems of the government, which if it accepted the demands would face great discontent on the part of the daimyos and the Court.⁹⁴

While the situation remained tense and there were rumors of possible surprise attack against the foreign settlement,⁹⁵ the discussions with the bakufu continued.

88 DENNEY, p. 51–52; Neale to Russel, 12. 2. 1863, TNA, FO 46/32; Neale to Russel, 14. 2. 1863, TNA, FO 46/32.

89 Neale to Russel, 14. 4. 1863, TNA, FO 46/33.

90 Mizuno Tadanori to Inoue Masanao, 20. 4. 1863, BEASLEY, *Select*, pp. 240–242.

91 Bakufu to Neale, 1. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/34.

92 Bellecourt to Drouyn de Lhuys, 5. 5. 1863, AMAE, *Correspondance politique*, Japon 8.

93 HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, pp. 236–238.

94 Neale to Russell, 11. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/34.

95 Neale to Russell, 19. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/34. Due to these rumors Admiral Kuper sent two ships to Nagasaki and Hakodate to protect British residence in case of war. Neale to Russell, 13. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/34.



Japanese government, started to realize that in order to avoid conflict, it would have to concede to British governments. Its main effort was to save face in order to quell the internal criticism of its conduct of foreign affairs. It was therefore offering Neale to pay the indemnity in the form of payment for a fictional warship ordered in Britain and sunk in a storm. Neale rejected.⁹⁶ Unknown to the British minister there was a discussion underway in the inner political circles in Japan how to deal with the Imperial expulsion order. On his way from Kyoto the shogun's guardian Hitotsubashi Keiki send a letter to *rōjū* in which he advocated the policy of expulsion, on the grounds, that the treaties with foreigners were signed by the bakufu, but didn't correspond with the wish of the nation and the Emperor, who issued strict orders for withdrawal of the Westerners from Japan. He therefore urged the main vassals of the bakufu "to make the most desperate efforts in establishing means of defense".⁹⁷ In the eyes of the foreign department of the bakufu, the case of the Namamugi indemnity could be used as a sign of good will, which would later serve as a stepping stone for the negotiations of the withdrawal of the foreigners.⁹⁸ In the first half of June 1863 bakufu was starting to be willing to promise to pay the indemnity.

As a last resort to save their face, the bakufu officials tried to make use of possible differences among the Great Powers when they approached Bellecourt with an appeal for assistance in forcing the British to make some concessions. The French minister nevertheless rejected such suggestions.⁹⁹ Neale was meanwhile losing his patience after another effort to postpone final decision in the question of indemnity until the arrival of shogun Iemochi from Kyoto (the date which couldn't be ascertained).¹⁰⁰ To his anxiety he was in that time informed by local governor at Yokohama, that the city of Edo and its surrounding was full of ronin, who attack local populace and have strong anti-foreign feeling. The governor therefore expressed his concern, that more attacks against foreigners may follow. Neale retorted, that the safety of the foreigners was a responsibility of the Japanese government, and in case of further incidents, it would be held responsible.¹⁰¹ It was at this moment, that he realized, that bakufu must be forced into submission, or the situation will escalate beyond control. On June 12, he informed Edo, that he had "exhausted all patience, ten days was the limit of the term which I would now further await a settlement of the question in hands".¹⁰² Neale's declaration was quite clear — if bakufu didn't yield, Britain would reserve the right of independent action. This triggered a frantic debate of the *rōjū*, during which it received news, that two British ships entered the Edo Bay and started to survey the sea floor as a demonstrative preparation for the bombardment of the huge

⁹⁶ DENNEY, p. 144.

⁹⁷ Hitotsubashi Keiki to *Rōjū*, 12. 6. 1863, BEASLEY, *Select*, pp. 246–248.

⁹⁸ TOTMAN, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, p. 71–72; such idea was nevertheless impracticable, because for Neale the idea of leaving Japan was out of question. Neale to Russell, 12. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

⁹⁹ Bellecourt to Drouyn de Lhuys, 13. 6. 1863, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Japon 9.

¹⁰⁰ Bakufu to Neale, 16. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/34.

¹⁰¹ Neale to Russell, 31. 5. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35; bakufu then stationed 2,000 samurai guards around Yokohama. Neale to Russell, 14. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

¹⁰² Neale to Russell, 12. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.



shogun's capital.¹⁰³ This was a clear sign, that Britain was now prepared to fulfill its threats and use force. If that happened bakufu would face a war with the foreigners in the situation when it had to challenge serious domestic troubles, and which it was sure it couldn't win. It was time to reach settlement with the British in order to buy time, for dealing with the effects of the expulsion edict.

Two Commissioners of Foreign Affairs Shibata Sadataro and Kikuchi Iyo visited Neale on June 14 and informed him about the willingness of the bakufu to pay the indemnity of 100,000 £.¹⁰⁴ They also offered the apologies of their government for the incident and expressed their desire to help Britain in dealing with Satsuma, which was to pay another 25,000 £ and arrest and hand over the murderers of Richardson.¹⁰⁵ Neale could be satisfied — his strong policy of last days brought its fruit. He was however not entirely satisfied and pressed the Japanese to entirely comply to his wishes. The first problem was the question of official apology. Neale was not contented entirely and had to press bakufu to issue a new one, in which it conceded its responsibility for the event on July 13, 1863.¹⁰⁶ The second question was the payment of the indemnity. Neale was suspicious of the sudden turn of events, and suspected, that bakufu could use some sort of excuses to postpone its fulfillment.¹⁰⁷ In this he was right. Some of the rōjū were opposed to concessions out of concern about its impact on the internal situation — it could be seen as violation of the expulsion edict. The guardian of the young shogun Keiki therefore sent several letters expressing his desire to cancel the handing of the indemnity.¹⁰⁸ The motives for his opposition are quite unknown, but it can be ascertained, that his statements were issued in order to appease the Court and to lessen the impact of bakufu's retreat in the eyes of the public. Some historians therefore conclude, that under the inner political situation Keiki resorted to an adoption of “*verbal jōi*” policy which would buy time for bakufu to cope with the crisis.¹⁰⁹

Although as it is now known Neale's concern about the indemnity wasn't baseless, most bakufu officials realized, that they evaded a serious crisis and that, they have to stick to the agreement. Ogasawara Nagamichi — a member of rōjū — therefore issued the order to pay the reparations despite of protests of his colleagues. He later explained his decision as follows: “[...] in view of Lord Hitotsubashi's orders, I did everything possible to find means of withholding the payment. However, after weighting all the circumstances, I came to the conclusion, that it would be even less in the national interest to cause our country to be branded faithless and unjust. I therefore had no alternative but to order payment of the indemnity”.¹¹⁰ On June 23, under cover of darkness carts laden with 220

103 TOTMAN, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, p. 72.

104 Neale to Russell, 14. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

105 Neale to Russell, 20. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

106 Neale to Russell, 13. 7. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

107 Neale to Russell, 20. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

108 Hitotsubashi Kekiki to Kampaku, 9. 7. 1863, BEASLEY, *Select*, pp. 250–251.

109 TOTMAN, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, p. 72.

110 Ogasawara Nagamichi to bakufu, 27. 7. 1863, BEASLEY, *Select*, p. 256; as for the position of Keiki, it is thought that Ogasawara's decision was made with Keiki's complicity, although he publicly spoke against it. BEASLEY, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 199.



boxes arrived at the British legation. In each of the boxes there were 2,000 Mexican dollars.¹¹¹ Neale with some sort of satisfaction commented, that it “*will occupy four days to count [the money]*”.¹¹² The timely delivery of the indemnity meant a complete success of his policy. He was nevertheless well aware, that “*but for the presence at this anchorage of so powerful a squadron (and the same opinion is doubtless entertained by my colleagues) we should at the hour at which I write have taken our leave of the country pending the ulterior decisions of the Treaty Powers*”.¹¹³ In other words Neale clearly confessed how near the Great Powers were to an open conflict with Japan. If the bakufu didn't conceded at the last minute, it would in effect embraced the Imperial Court's order of expulsion and this would inevitably lead to war with the Treaty Powers.

The avoidance of war with Japan was one of the greatest successes (though overlooked) of Neale's diplomatic career. If assessed retrospectively Neale wasn't carried off by emotions in the days following Richardson's murder, as were many members of the foreign community and decided for a diplomatic solution in which he anticipated the demand of reparations by his government. He preserved some degree of patience during spring 1863, while he was intensifying his pressure on the bakufu. However, it was only after his clear notion, that he was resolved to use force, that Japanese government yielded. His policy can be therefore considered as a continuation of previous gunboat policy, which compelled Japan to open its ports and sign the unequal treaties. In this way Neale's diplomatic abilities must not be overestimated, because it was the presence of Kuper's fleet which compelled the Japanese to surrender. Without it Neale would be defenseless against Japanese policy of obstruction and the bakufu would be maybe tempted to put the policy of expulsion promoted by the Court into effect. This would have without doubt serious repercussions. As it was, it was the position of strength which enabled Neale to solve the crisis with the bakufu and to safeguard British interests. In other worlds it was another success of the gunboat diplomacy so typical of the 19th century.

The settlement with the bakufu had several serious implications. In next month bakufu tried to improve its shattered position by quelling the opposition around Kyoto.¹¹⁴ This was partially in the accord with Neale's appeal to bakufu, in which he called on it to make order in its own house in order to be able to fulfill its international obligations.¹¹⁵ On the other hand the weak conduct of the bakufu and the inability to punish Satsuma, showed the restrictions of the bakufu's political power and capabilities. This later led the British to lose confidence in shogun's government. One of the first steps to this realization was the fact, that the inability of bakufu to force Satsuma to senses compelled the government to offer the British to deal with it themselves.¹¹⁶ During summer 1863 Neale and Admiral Kuper prepared an expedition against Satsuma resulting in the Satsuma expedition of August 1863 and shelling

111 DENNEY, p. 159. Mexican silver dollar was a most commonly used currency in the Far East. 440,000 Mexican dollars were an equivalent of 100,000 £. Neale to Russell, 12. 7. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

112 Neale to Russell, 24. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.

113 Ibidem.

114 KEENE, pp. 79–81.

115 Neale to bakufu, 24. 6. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35; SATOW, pp. 76–77.

116 Neale to Russell, 13. 7. 1863, TNA, FO 46/35.



of Kagoshima, which obliged the defiant domain to pay indemnity of 25,000 £.¹¹⁷ The question was thus solved. Although it was in a short time overshadowed by the events at Shimonoseki, Richardson affaire remained one of the key diplomatic crisis between bakufu and Great Britain. Although the shogun's government tried to assume a position of strength, it was eventually utterly defeated. From the view of Japanese internal policy, it lost confidence of most of the domains supporting jōi and lost the trust of the Imperial Court and thus displayed its inability to execute the expulsion edict. On the international scene bakufu demonstrated, that it can hardly control domestic situation and enabled the foreigners to meddle in Japanese internal affairs (by direct dealing with Satsuma) for the first time. And lastly there shouldn't be forgotten serious economic impacts of the affaire on part of the bakufu, because the 100,000 £ of indemnity represented about a quarter of its yearly income.¹¹⁸ Although the whole affair was not caused by it, bakufu came from it with most losses. In this sense the Richardson affaire was one of the important milestones of the process of the collapse of the old military feudal regime and its replacement by direct rule of the Japanese Emperor during the Meiji Restoration.

**RICHARDSON AFFAIRE: GREAT BRITAIN
AND THE TOKUGAWA BAKUFU 1862-1863
ABSTRACT**

After Japan was forced to open its ports to the western powers, by the threat of western navies, it was further compelled to sign unequal treaties with the Great Powers. This triggered a *sonnō jōi* movement led by young samurai, who criticized the ruling Tokugawa regime for its concessions to the foreigners. They therefore sought to expel the Westerners and close the country to their trade. Their second task was to bring the downfall of the shogunate and the restoration of the Imperial rule. In order to achieve this, many radical samurai mounted murderous attacks against the foreigners. One of the most serious of these incidents occurred in September 1862, when British merchant Charles Lennox Richardson was murdered by samurai from the Satsuma domain. Apart from the previous attacks this time the culprits could be identified. British minister to Japan Colonel Neale therefore demanded the punishment of the assailants and an indemnity from the bakufu for its inability to secure lives and safety of British nationals. The Tokugawa government tried to resist and resorted to delaying tactics because of its fear of internal impact, if it yielded. It was only after the British representatives demonstrated, that they are willing to use the naval forces at their disposal, that bakufu submitted.

KEYWORDS

Japan; Great Britain; France; United States; Diplomacy; International Relations; Trade

Roman Kodet | Department of Historical Studies, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Sedláčková 31, 306 14, Plzeň, Czech Republic, kodet@khv.zcu.cz

117 To this question see DENNEY, pp. 166–213. Satsuma had to borrow the money needed for reparations from the bakufu, but never repaid it. HILLSBOROUGH, *Samurai Revolution*, p. 250.

118 TOTMAN, *The Collapse*, p. 69.