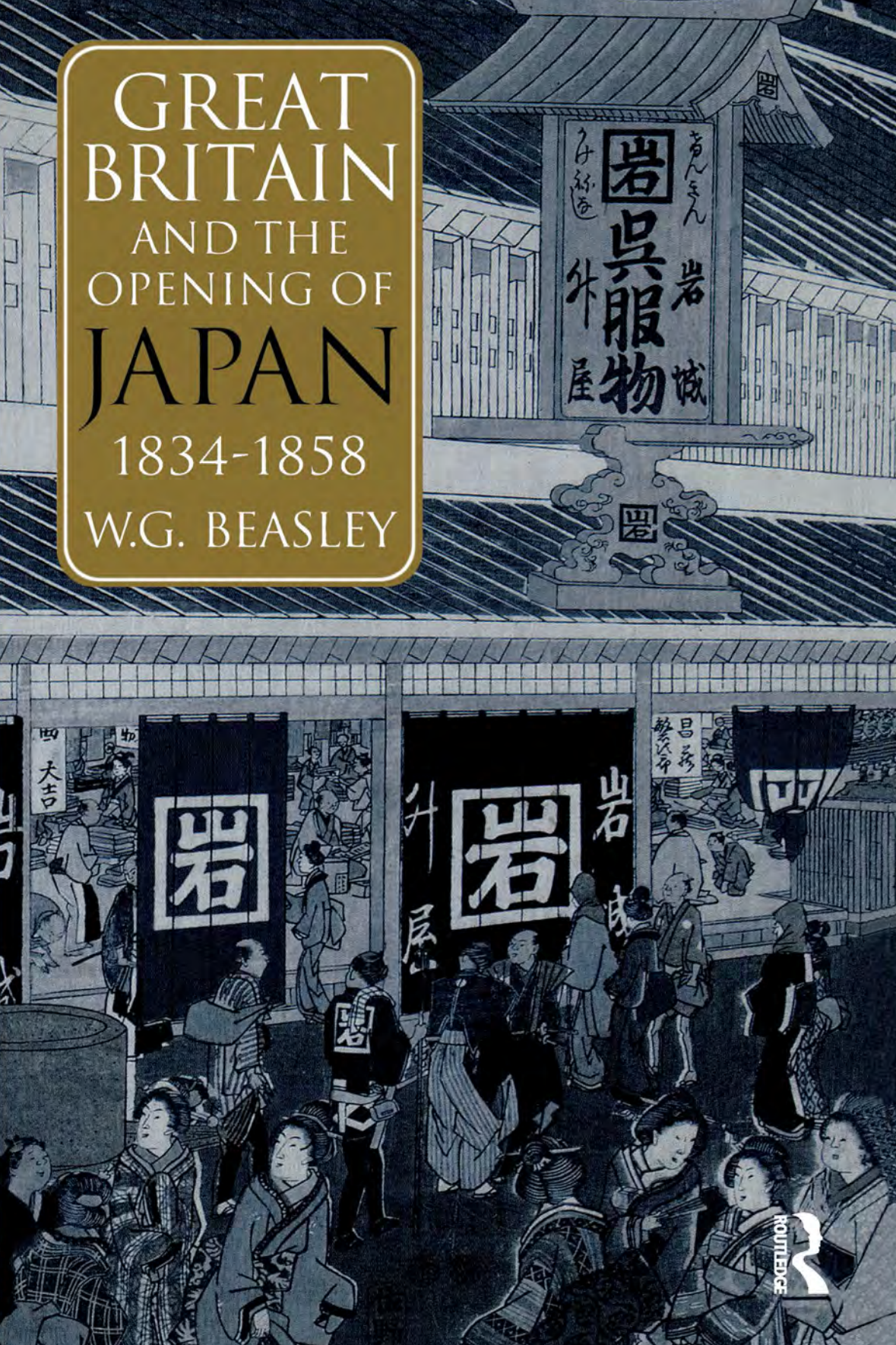


GREAT
BRITAIN
AND THE
OPENING OF
JAPAN

1834-1858

W.G. BEASLEY



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ERRATA

For Townshend Harris *read* Townsend Harris throughout, that is, on the following pages/lines: xi/14, 156/19, 166/16, 166/24, 171/8, 177/27, 179/9, 217/23, 218/31, 220/3, 220/24, 224/col, 2/41, and also in the following notes, 116/n.17, 183/n.43, 184/n.46.

p. xiv, n.2, *for* yielded a revenue *read* produced an estimated crop

p. 7, n.14, *for* Pondon *read* London

p. 38/29, *for* Shimazu Saihin *read* Shimazu Nariakira

p. 40/13, *for* the senior of the *read* one of the senior

p. 59/17, *for* irresistibile *read* irresistible

p. 108/20, *for* revenues *read* crop values

p. 108, n.55, *for* fief revenues *read* fief values

p. 121, n.30, *for* Galhoku *read* Gaikoku

p. 150/3, *for* enentitle *read* entitle

p. 177/16, *for* ōmetuke *read* ōmetsuke

PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

This monograph was written in the aftermath of a war in which Britain was one of the victors and Japan one of the vanquished. In those circumstances its subject-matter was conceived to be an early chapter in a story which ended with that war, leading through alliance to conflict in the relations between Britain and Japan, while making it steadily more apparent over time that the lead taken by America in the world's dealings with Japan was not just the product of mid nineteenth-century opportunity.

The perspective today is very different. The Pacific War of 1941–45 marked the irreversible decline of British power in East Asia, shortly (1997) to be completed by the surrender of Hong Kong. For Japan it initiated a new phase in both domestic and international policies. Between 1850 and 1900 Japanese governments had pursued the goal of 'national wealth and strength' in Western guise, treating trade and industry for the most part as a contribution to the country's military potential. After 1945, however, the emphasis shifted. Wealth itself became a prime objective, both as a means of repairing a society shattered by defeat and as a route to international reputation. Historians responded to that change. They concerned themselves more with the origins and nature of the 'economic miracle', hardly at all with nineteenth-century diplomacy.

In such a context an account of the British contribution to the opening of 'closed' Japan does not seem to have a great deal to contribute. After all, a narrative ending in 1858 touches only at the margins of those forces which were to shape Japanese development for the rest of the century and beyond. The ten years after 1858 were more important. Similarly, for the study of British imperialism, which the book also addressed, Japan proved to be too inconsiderable an issue in the making of policy for an examination of the decisions taken

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concerning it to throw much light on key general questions, such as the comparative significance of economic ambitions and strategic interests. For these purposes China is much the better object of attention.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that no useful purpose is served by turning back to the events which are here described. The treaties of the 1850s, in the making of which Britain played a considerable part, both directly as an actor and indirectly as a looming threat off-stage, had a lasting effect on Japanese attitudes towards the outside world, helping to make Britain a model of 'wealth and strength' in Japanese eyes for much of the modern period. From a different viewpoint, Britain's own contrasting experience in China and Japan, dating from these years, laid the foundations for a continuing ambivalence in British policy with respect to those two countries. One can still usefully distinguish between Old China Hands and Old Japan Hands among British diplomats. It is useful, too, to be reminded of changing patterns: of how greatly personal and local initiatives determined Western actions in that distant part of the world before the days of the telegraph and telephone; of how recently Japanese political structures were predominantly feudal; of what was then a close, but is now a fast-disappearing relationship between naval power and trade.

In the text of this book, as originally published, there were a number of errors. Some of these were typographical, but two in particular were mistakes on the author's part: the consistent misspelling of the given name of the American consul, Townsend (not Townshend) Harris; and the assumption (on three occasions) that the official valuation of Japanese feudal territories was a statement of revenue (whereas it was in fact the tax collector's estimate of total crop). These errors have been corrected in the list of errata included in the present edition.

JAPANESE NAMES, TITLES AND DATES

Japanese names. Japanese personal names are given in the usual Japanese order, i.e. family name followed by given name (e.g. Ii Naosuke, where Ii is the family name).

Japanese titles. With few exceptions, the formal titles of Japanese feudal lords have no geographical significance and are therefore given in the Japanese form, e.g. Kamon-no-kami (Ii Naosuke's title) or Bitchū-no-kami (Hotta Masayoshi's title). Where titles are descriptive, i.e. designate the actual fief or province held by a feudal lord, it has been thought better to translate them. For example, Ii Naosuke can also be described as 'lord of Hikone' and Hotta as 'lord of Sakura'.

Japanese dates. The dates found on Japanese documents of this period are usually in the form of references to year-periods (*nengō*), with month and day according to the Japanese lunar calendar. Where such documents are cited in footnotes, the date is wherever possible changed to the exact Gregorian equivalent. In some documents, however, only month and year are given, and these do not correspond exactly with those of Western calendars. Where these are cited, therefore, the year is given first according to the Gregorian calendar, followed by the Japanese (lunar) month and (in brackets) the Gregorian equivalents for the first and last days of that month, e.g. 1856, 8th. month (30 August--28 September).

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THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

FOR over two hundred years, under Tokugawa rule, the ports of Japan were closed to Western ships and commerce, save only for a limited trade conducted by the Dutch at Nagasaki. In 1853, however, Commodore Perry of the United States Navy led his squadron of "Black Ships" into Edo Bay to deliver a letter from the President and request a treaty of commerce and friendship with Japan. In the following year, having given the Japanese time to consider his proposals and meditate upon his display of force, he returned to conclude the first of the nineteenth-century conventions with that country. The work Perry began was completed by Townshend Harris in July 1858, when the Treaty of Kanagawa opened Japan to American trade; and the lead so given was followed by other Western countries anxious to establish treaty relations. After 1854, and again after July 1858, British, French, Russian and Dutch representatives hastened to conclude similar agreements. For Britain, Rear Admiral Sir James Stirling negotiated at Nagasaki in 1854 and Lord Elgin at Edo in 1858. Neither succeeded in making any important change in the treaty-pattern established by the Americans.

The fact of American leadership in the opening of Japan has long been recognised. The negotiations of Perry and Harris, and the events which led up to them, have accordingly been investigated in some detail. Much less attention has been paid to British actions, however, and no general agreement has been reached on the nature and objectives of British policy, especially for the two decades before 1854. This study has been undertaken in an attempt to trace an accurate narrative of British policy towards Japan in the years 1834 to 1858. Most of the events to which it refers

INTRODUCTION

—the voyages of the *Morrison*, *Samarang* and *Mariner*, the negotiations of Stirling and Elgin—have been described before. But taken alone, the evidence of events is often conflicting. Visits of British warships to Japan in 1845 and 1849 seem to argue the existence of an interest and a purpose not in fact borne out by the results of those visits. The negotiations of Stirling and Elgin, in that they followed closely those of Perry and Harris both in time and in achievement, suggest that Britain attempted only to emulate American success : yet it has recently been shown that Stirling's actions were brought about largely by the Crimean War, while those of Elgin depended on events in China. Study of the Foreign Office and Admiralty papers adds the evidence of intentions to the evidence of results. It establishes new relationships between some of the events, an apparent lack of connection between others, which enable us to resolve many of the existing ambiguities and contradictions.

It must be emphasised that this is not primarily a study of British opinion about Japan, but of official plans and official negotiations. It is therefore concerned chiefly with the Foreign Office and its representatives in China, to a lesser degree with the Admiralty and the commanders of the East Indies station. Other factors are treated only in so far as they impinge on this problem of official policy.

The period chosen has a certain unity in that its central theme is the attempt to initiate relations with Japan, in particular to initiate trade. It ends, therefore, in 1858, with the conclusion of a commercial treaty. Like all "periods" in history, however, it is arbitrary and has certain disadvantages. To end at the point where full treaty relations begin makes this very largely a study of plans and intentions, of a policy formulated in the abstract rather than one modified by the impact of everyday problems. To this extent it presents a distorted picture. The conclusions to which it leads do not necessarily hold good for the period after 1858. The opening of trade inevitably brought fresh influences to bear on Foreign Office policy, a consideration of major importance, for

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example, in any discussion of "imperialist" tendencies in the British approach to Japan. Within the chronological limits here imposed, one can properly attempt no more than an analysis of the motives which led Britain to establish relations with Japan, and of the "initial prejudices" from which later British policy was to develop.

Similarly the year 1834, which saw the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade, is a convenient starting-point because it makes it possible to concentrate on the Foreign Office as the controlling agent in the formulation of policy. But it is not intended thereby to suggest that 1834 saw either the beginning or even a revival of British interest in Japan. In fact, British traders founded a factory in Japan as early as 1613. Earlier contacts provided a background against which nineteenth-century policy was worked out, and were occasionally cited in the discussions of the years 1834 to 1858. It has therefore been thought convenient to include here a brief account of the failure of the Hirado factory and the East India Company's subsequent attempts to renew the trade.

It was not until the seventeenth century that Dutch and English traders extended their commerce to the southern ports of Japan. They found a ready welcome there. Late in the sixteenth century, after generations of intermittent civil war, the country had been united under the rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a brilliant soldier whose lowly birth alone prevented him from becoming Shōgun, the office held for centuries by successive dynasties of *de facto* military rulers who governed in the Emperor's name. Hideyoshi died in 1598, and was succeeded by Tokugawa Ieyasu, who soon took the title of Shōgun and settled down to the task of consolidating his own and his family's position. In that task, he realised, the wealth and guns brought by foreign trade could play an important part. He was, therefore, willing to grant generous privileges to European traders.

In 1613, four years after the arrival of the Dutch, John Saris reached Japan to open trade on behalf of the English East India Company. He found a friend at court in the

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person of Will Adams, an Englishman who had first reached Japan in Dutch employ and had subsequently entered the service of Ieyasu. With his help, Saris obtained permission to trade. Against Adams' advice, however, he elected to settle his factory not at Edo,¹ where he would have been sure of Ieyasu's patronage and protection, but at Hirado on the west coast of Kyūshū, where the Dutch were already established and the *daimyō*² had shown himself very friendly. By this decision the factory was handicapped from the outset in its struggle against Dutch competition.

The English factory lasted only ten years. In 1623 it was withdrawn because its trading had consistently failed to show a profit, a fact that requires some explanation. Even before Saris arrived Adams warned the Company that as a result of Dutch imports, cloth had become 'as cheap in Japan as in England'³ and that the market was principally for spices and Chinese goods. Adams' advice was suspect because of his long connection with the Dutch, but in this his English colleagues soon proved him right. Richard Cocks, whom Saris had left in charge of the factory, found it difficult to supply the kind of goods Japanese were willing to buy. His efforts to open trade with Cochin China and Siam met with little success, while the bribes he lavished on Chinese merchants trading in Japan, in an attempt to secure a foothold in the China trade itself, yielded nothing but promises to the end—to the considerable indignation of his superiors at Bantam. In January 1617 he wrote to the Court of Directors :—

' My greatest sorrow is I lye in a place which hitherto hath byn chargable and not benefitall to your Worships . . . And were it not for the hope of trade into China, or for procuring som benefit from Syam, Pattania and (it may be) Cochinchina, it were noe staying in Japan. Yet it is certen here is silver enough, and may be carried out

¹ Ieyasu's capital, renamed Tōkyō in 1868.

² A feudal lord. *Daimyō* was the highest general category in the Japanese feudal system, and was reserved for lords whose fiefs yielded a revenue of 10,000 *koku* (about 50,000 bushels) or more of rice a year.

³ P. Pratt, *History of Japan compiled from the records of the English East India Company* . . . 1822, I, 16-20, Adams to President at Bantam, 12 Jan. 1612/3.

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at pleasure ; but then must we bring them comodeties to ther lyking, as the Chinas, Portingales and Spaniards doe, which is raw silke and silke stuffs, with Syam sapon and skins.’⁴

Dutch rivalry made Cocks’ task doubly difficult. Dutch factors constantly cut their prices to drive English goods from the market. Moreover, the Dutch controlled the seas and did not hesitate to use their power. For some years, Cocks complained, the only English ships to reach Japan were brought in as Dutch prizes, while in Hirado itself the English factory was only protected from attack by the intervention of Japanese officials. And after 1616 the English traders ceased to enjoy the Shōgun’s favour. Ieyasu himself had seen in the activities of Catholic priests and converts a potential threat to the political stability he was so anxious to maintain. His son Hidetada went still further. Foreign trade was undoubtedly a source of strength to a strong ruler, but under a weaker man guns and wealth might find their way into the hands of a disgruntled vassal and so enable him to defy the Tokugawa. If political safety demanded the suppression of Christianity, it also required the rigid control of trade, and viewed in this light, the privilege of trading freely to all the ports of Japan, which Ieyasu had granted to the English company in 1613, seemed fraught with danger. In 1616 Cocks was told that the old privileges were revoked. For a time trade was confined to Hirado, and even the re-opening of Nagasaki in 1619 brought little improvement.

It had become painfully obvious to the East India Company’s council in Java that the Japan factory was losing money and had little hope of future profits. Indeed, Cocks’ own behaviour and accounts were thought to need investigation. He was therefore ordered to close the factory and return to the Indies, and in 1623 he did so, leaving the Dutch, ironically enough, to collect all outstanding debts due to the Company.

In announcing his departure to the *daimyō* of Hirado,

⁴ *Diary of Richard Cocks* (2 vols., Hakluyt Soc., London, 1883), II, 279-88, Cocks to Court of Directors, 1 Jan. 1616/7.

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Cocks had expressed the hope that he might return 'if the next year shall produce any better encouragement'.⁵ There were others equally optimistic in the years that followed. In 1627 the President of the council at Batavia, arguing that the severe winter climate of Japan would ensure a market for English cloth, urged an attempt to re-open trade,⁶ but found that the Company's records belied his estimate. In 1632 the tale was taken up by Thomas Smethwick, a disappointed adventurer in the Joint Stock, who accused the Governor and Committees of gross mismanagement and attempted fraud on the grounds that they had abandoned a promising opening because their private interests in the Levant trade would have been seriously affected by success in China and Japan. He took part in some acrimonious exchanges before the Court of Directors before his charges were finally dismissed by the Attorney General.⁷ The Company's rivals in England sometimes followed Smethwick's example in citing failure in Japan as an argument against the monopoly. Both the Courteen Association and the Assada Merchants, for example, announced their intention of trading with Japan, though neither attempted to put its plans into practice.

Shortly before the Restoration, the East India Company decided to make another attempt to trade in Japan. Plans were made in 1658 but were abandoned because of the outbreak of war with Holland, and discussions between London and Bantam in 1664 and 1668 proved equally abortive. Then, early in 1671, Samuel Baron, a native of Tonquin of mixed European descent, approached the Company with proposals for a voyage to Japan. Some of his proposals were dismissed as 'dishonourable', but in April it was decided to adopt the remainder, and later in the year the *Experiment*, *Zant* and *Return* sailed from London bearing letters from the King and Company.

In the summer of 1672 the *Experiment* and *Return* called

⁵ Cocks, *Diary*, II, 345-6.

⁶ *Calendar of State Papers (East Indies)* 1625-9, pp. 371-80, President Hawley to Court, 18 July 1627.

⁷ *Calendar of State Papers (E. Indies)* 1630-4, pp. 335, 374-7 and 383.

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at Taiwan (Formosa) to found a trading factory. By so doing they lost the last of the southerly monsoon, which made it impossible for the expedition to reach Japan until the following year, a delay that was put to good use by the Dutch at Nagasaki.

After the withdrawal of the English factory in 1623, the Tokugawa had become increasingly hostile to European traders, especially those of Portugal and Spain. An overwhelming suspicion of the political implications of Christianity led Hidetada and his successor Iemitsu into savage and widespread persecution of Catholic priests and converts, and part of this suspicion transferred itself to the merchants who sometimes smuggled missionaries into the country. Moreover, the search for political security so dominated Tokugawa policy as to outweigh even the advantages to be gained from foreign trade. Better no trade at all than foreign help to a disgruntled vassal. In 1624, therefore, when Spanish intrigue with some of the northern *daimyō* was reported, the ports of Japan were closed to Spanish ships. In 1638, because they were suspected of complicity in a revolt which had broken out at Shimabara in Kyūshū, the Portuguese were ordered to leave the country and never to return. Death was to be the penalty for disobedience. Soon after, to show that this was no idle threat, the Shōgun executed the members of a Portuguese embassy sent from Macao to seek re-admittance to the trade.

By 1641 the Tokugawa "seclusion policy" was in full operation. Japanese were forbidden to travel or trade abroad, and although Dutch and Chinese were still allowed to visit Nagasaki, they were subject to the strictest supervision. The Dutch, in fact, were transferred to the tiny artificial island of Deshima in Nagasaki harbour, where they lived in isolation, almost prisoners.

The seclusion policy rapidly became a tradition, and by the time Simon Delboe entered Nagasaki in the *Return* in June 1673, the Japanese needed little persuasion to refuse all requests for trade. The Dutch, who had received early warning of the English plans, were careful to point out that by Charles II's Portuguese marriage England had entered

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into alliance with Japan's traditional enemy. This provided an admirable reason for refusing to honour the privileges Ieyasu had granted in 1613, a copy of which Delboe brought with him. After weeks of waiting at Nagasaki, Delboe was informed that he could not be admitted to trade, and Japanese officials held out little hope that success would attend any future English efforts. Once given, they said, the Shōgun's decision was irrevocable.⁸

The direct attempt to open trade had failed, but the Company did not at once relax its efforts. The Court of Directors attributed the failure largely to Dutch intrigue, and hoped that success might still come from some indirect approach to Japan. In 1674 the Bantam agents were ordered to seek the intercession of the rulers of Bantam or Taiwan to explain away the difficulties that had arisen. Meanwhile, they were to make every effort to push the sale of English goods among native merchants having access to the Japan market, 'that soe if possible by our trading to Tywan it may be in effect as if we did trade to China, Japan and the Manilhaes'.⁹ Similar attempts were made through Amoy and Siam. In 1681 the Company tried to transmit letters to Japan through the good offices of a number of eastern rulers, but found that the Chinese merchants, who alone could act as messengers, dared not convey a letter for a private individual, much less one addressed to the officials. The same fears prevented them from co-operating in a plan to found a Chinese colony at Madras and use it to carry on trade with Japan. In 1684 the Siam factory, in its turn, was instructed to arrange a voyage if it could see any prospect of success, but the ship which was to have been sent from England for this purpose lost the season and was diverted to Bengal. For some years no new plans were made.

The events of 1688 gave England a Dutch king and a Protestant queen. To the sanguine it appeared that this

⁸ A short account of this mission appears in *Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company 1671-3* (intro., pp. viii-ix), the relevant papers being in that volume and Pratt, *op. cit.*, vol. II. See also C. R. Boxer, 'Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in Japan', *Trans. Asiatic Soc. Japan*, 2nd Ser., VII (1930).

⁹ *Cal. Court Min.* 1674-6, p. xix, citing Court to Bantam, 23 Oct. 1674.

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would remove both Dutch and Japanese opposition, and that the trade should therefore be attempted once again. The Company, however, had at last been discouraged by the constant failure of its efforts. It was content simply to remind the Madras Presidency of the changed circumstances, while explicitly withholding permission to fit out an expedition at the Company's expense. Instead, the trade was thrown open to the 'country' merchants, the licensed traders in India.¹⁰

There is no evidence that any of the 'country' merchants were sufficiently interested to plan a voyage to Japan. After 1700 the Company itself devoted most of its attention to India, where French competition ensured that it had little thought for the lands further east. The Japan trade was noticed briefly and with little enthusiasm in 1701 when a temporary foothold was secured in the Chusan Islands, but thereafter, for more than seventy years, Japan was hardly mentioned in English books and records.¹¹

¹⁰ For the attempts at indirect trade after 1673 see *Cal. Court Min.* 1677-9. pp. xvii-xviii, and Pratt, *op. cit.*, II, 195-205.

¹¹ For the eighteenth century see J. F. Kuiper, *Japan en de buitenwereld in de achttiende eeuw* ('s-Gravenhage, 1921), especially pp. 198-200.

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CHAPTER I

COMPANY AND CROWN

DURING the greater part of the eighteenth century British merchants made no attempt to renew their former connection with Japan. The closing decades of the century, however, saw a revival of interest in the north Pacific and the China seas stemming from a variety of political and economic causes. British successes in the Seven Years War freed the East India Company for a time from its enforced pre-occupation with the affairs of India. The loss of the American colonies accentuated the growing emphasis on commercial rather than colonial development, while the failure to find new markets in Terra Australis, and the phenomenal increase in trade with China,¹ concentrated attention on the possibility of commercial expansion in areas where a start had already been made. That, in its turn, almost inevitably brought to mind the "closed" markets of Siam, Cochin China and Japan. Four times between 1791 and 1819, British ships reached Japan in search of trade.

The story of the Hirado factory and the voyage of the *Return* continued to play a part in moulding British attitudes towards the Japan trade. Detailed accounts of both were made readily accessible to English readers. In 1793, for example, the East India Company published a report on the Japan trade which outlined much of its early history.² A diary of the *Return's* voyage appeared in John Pinkerton's

¹ The Company's exports of tea from Canton more than quadrupled between 1775 and 1785. See Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China*, II, II, 50, III, 119.

² East India Co., *Third Report of the Select Committee Appointed to take into Consideration the Export Trade from Great Britain to the East Indies*, London, 1793.

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Collection of Voyages and Travels (London, 1808), and in 1822 Peter Pratt published his *History of Japan*, which included long excerpts from the Company's seventeenth-century archives. The privileges granted to the Company by Tokugawa Ieyasu were even referred to in the correspondence columns of *The Times* during 1846 and 1847. Not everybody, of course, drew the same conclusions from the facts available. The Company argued that the market was difficult of access and that history showed it to be unprofitable. Others rejected all such evidence and chose to assume the value of the trade. They urged, rather, that since the withdrawal of the Hirado factory had been a peaceful and voluntary act, the privileges of 1613 still entitled Britain to trade and would, indeed, operate to overcome Japanese objections. Both points of view were still in evidence in 1834, when the Foreign Office assumed responsibility for the direction of British policy in the China seas. The conviction with which they were urged, however, and by the same token the degree to which they were likely to influence the Foreign Office, was largely conditioned by the plans and voyages of the period 1790 to 1830.

One characteristic of this period was the active interest shown by private merchants. Their first venture arose out of the newly-established fur trade across the Pacific between Nootka and Canton. In May 1790 James Colnett, in command of the ship *Argonaut*, reached Canton with a cargo of pelts, only to find that the Chinese officials would not allow him to sell them there. Daniel Beal, his company's agent at Macao, suggested that a market might be found for them in Korea and Japan, and in July 1791 gave him instructions to make a voyage to those countries. His plans envisaged something more than a single voyage. If the Japanese did not immediately turn him away, Beal wrote, Colnett must be particularly careful to inform them that his ship and crew were English and that he came 'for the purpose of obtaining permission to trade Annually to the Port of Nangasaque or any other belonging to Japan.'³

³ Beal to Colnett, 25 July 1791, in *The Journal of Captain James Colnett aboard the Argonaut* (Champlain Society, Toronto, 1940), pp. 234-9.

COMPANY AND CROWN

During August 1791 Colnett cruised up the west coast of Kyūshū and at several points tried to establish communication with the Japanese. On each occasion, *Argonaut* or the boats she sent away towards shore were met by Japanese craft which signalled them to depart. Her Chinese interpreter proved useless. At last, Colnett wrote in his journal that he had made six such overtures 'without any prospect of communication or Trade with the natives, but by force of Arms, which in my present situation . . . I did not think proper to attempt.'⁴ The failure led him to certain general conclusions. He could see small prospects of success for any private venture to open trade with Japan. The attempt, if made, he thought, should be in a vessel sufficiently well-manned and well-armed to command respect, but it was even so 'too doubtful and hazardous an Undertaking for two or three Merchants to Enter into, nor should it be thought on without an exclusive privilege to the trade granted by Charter.'⁵

Although Colnett's only published reference to this voyage⁶ was much less calculated to discourage further efforts than the opinions expressed in his journal, the experiences of two other expeditions tended to confirm the difficulties in the way of trading with Japan. In 1803 Captain Stewart, an American who had visited Japan in the service of the Dutch, persuaded some merchants in India to fit out two ships for Nagasaki. When the attempt was made, however, Stewart's British colleague, Captain Torey, was dismissed without ceremony and Stewart himself was eventually turned away without permission to trade.⁷ Fifteen years later, Captain Peter Gordon of the brig *The Brothers* stood into Edo Bay in search of trade. He had chosen his destination with care, hoping that at the capital he might find more willingness to relax the seclusion laws than among hide-bound provincial officials at Nagasaki, but in the event he

⁴ Colnett, *Journal*, pp. 250-1.

⁵ Colnett, *Journal*, pp. 278-81.

⁶ J. Colnett, *A Voyage to the South Atlantic and round Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean* (London 1798), in the introduction to which (pp. iii-iv) he implied that the venture was only abandoned because of the damage *Argonaut* suffered in a typhoon.

Murdoch, *History of Japan*, III, 510-1.

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achieved no more than Colnett or Torey. His views on the subject were quoted by the *Quarterly Review* in the following year. Like the Java factors in 1627, he believed that if access were once obtained, the severity of the Japanese winter would ensure a demand for British woollens and that Japanese ore would supply an ample return. But the *Quarterly* completely disagreed. It regretted Britain's failure to establish relations with Japan, but this was 'not so much because we lost the opportunity of extending our commerce (for we believe the wants of this people are few and their superfluous produce neither great nor valuable), as that we let slip the occasion of convincing this proud and jealous government that the few Dutchmen, on whom they were long accustomed to trample, are not the best specimen of Christian Europe.'⁸ There was little in this to encourage further ventures. Even the Whig *Edinburgh Review* viewed the trade with indifference.⁹

If private merchants had tried and failed, the East India Company was little disposed to try at all. In 1792, at the government's request, it had produced a report on the Japan trade¹⁰ which made it abundantly clear that in the Company's view the trade could never become 'an Object of Attention for the Manufactures and Produce of Great Britain'. In a singularly unconvincing argument, the report pointed out that even at the time of the Hirado factory Japan had never provided a market for British goods, while the returns from the trade, if any, must largely be in copper, a commodity that would compete in India with the output of British mines. Thus, any profits made by the Company would be at the expense of the mining interests at home. Moreover, the Hirado factory had never made any profits. To the Company, such considerations were unanswerable.

It is not surprising, then, to find that no fresh plans were made at East India House. The fact that British ships

⁸ *Quarterly Review*, XXII (July 1819), p. 119 and note. For a further account of Gordon see *Chinese Repository*, VII (March 1839), pp. 588-94.

⁹ *Edinburgh Review*, XXIX (Nov. 1817), pp. 39-52.

¹⁰ East India Co., *Third Report of the Select Committee Appointed to take into Consideration the Export Trade from Great Britain to the East Indies*, London 1793.