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Anglo-American Perception of Samurai in the Meiji Restoration

ANGLO-AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF SAMURAI IN THE MEIJI RESTORATION

by
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Honor's History Thesis, 1998-1999 Academic Year

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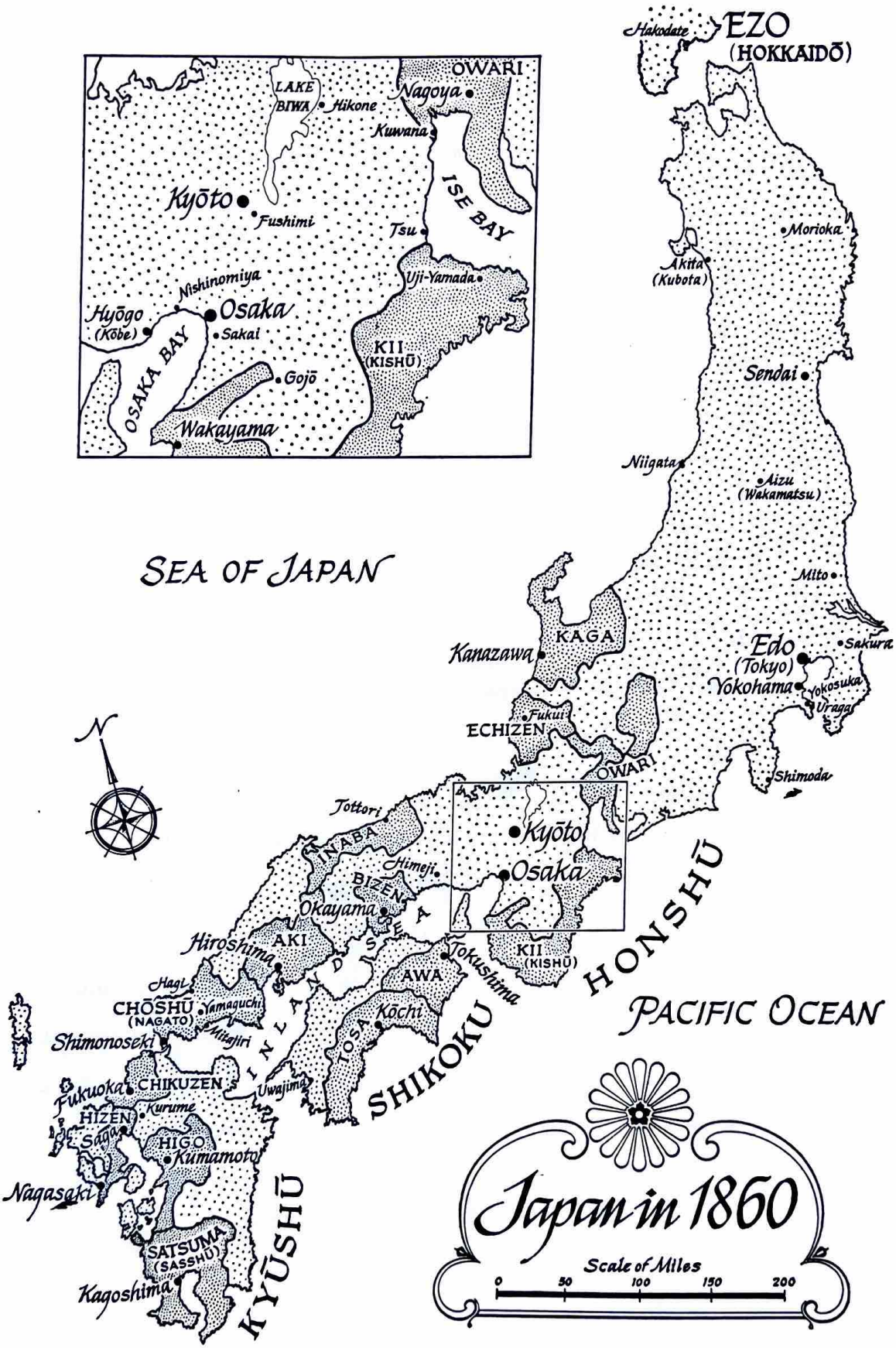
EZO
(HOKKAIDŌ)
Hakodate
Morioka
Akita
(Kubota)
Sendai
Niigata
Aizu
(Wakamatsu)
Mito
Edo
(Tokyo)
Sakura
Yokohama
Yokosuka
Uraga
Shimoda
Kanazawa
KAGA
ECHIZEN
Fukui
OWARI
Nagoya
Kuwana
ISE BAY
Tsu
LAKE
BIWA
Hikone
Kyōto
Fushimi
Uji-Yamada
Nishinomiya
Hyōgo
(Kōbe)
Osaka
Sakai
OSAKA BAY
KII
(KISHŪ)
Gojō
Wakayama
SEA OF JAPAN
Tottori
INABA
Himeji
BIZEN
Okayama
Hiroshima
AKI
Tokushima
AWA
KII
(KISHŪ)
HONSHŪ
PACIFIC OCEAN
Hagi
CHŌSHŪ
(NAGATO)
Yamaguchi
Mitajiri
Shimonoseki
INLAND SEA
TOSA
Kōchi
SHIKOKU
Fukuoka
CHIKUZEN
Uwajima
HIZEN
Kurume
Saga
HIGO
Kumamoto
Nagasaki
SATSUMA
(SASSHŪ)
Kagoshima
KYŪSHŪ
Japan in 1860
Scale of Miles
0
50
100
150
200

Abstract

Japanese culture rapidly assimilated Western technology once an American embassy forced officials to open the country for trade on Western terms. Due to the unique treatment of Japan by Anglo-American Imperial powers and Japan's quick rise from a feudal state to an Imperial Asian power, how Anglo-Americans viewed the Japanese was significant to their respective foreign policies. In spite of the dramatic response that was instigated by Western contact, relatively few analysis have dealt with how Anglo-Americans viewed the samurai, the ruling class of Japan in both the feudal and modern states, and what they thought of the abolition of samurai status by the samurai themselves. There are two aspects to Anglo-American perception of the samurai. First, they viewed the samurai as akin to European knights; describing them as hostile, pompous, ineffective, and semi-civilized. Secondly, in accordance with late nineteenth century concepts of state evolution, the samurai class had to be abolished in order for Japan to progress. Moreover, Anglo-Americans were actively involved in the abolition process.

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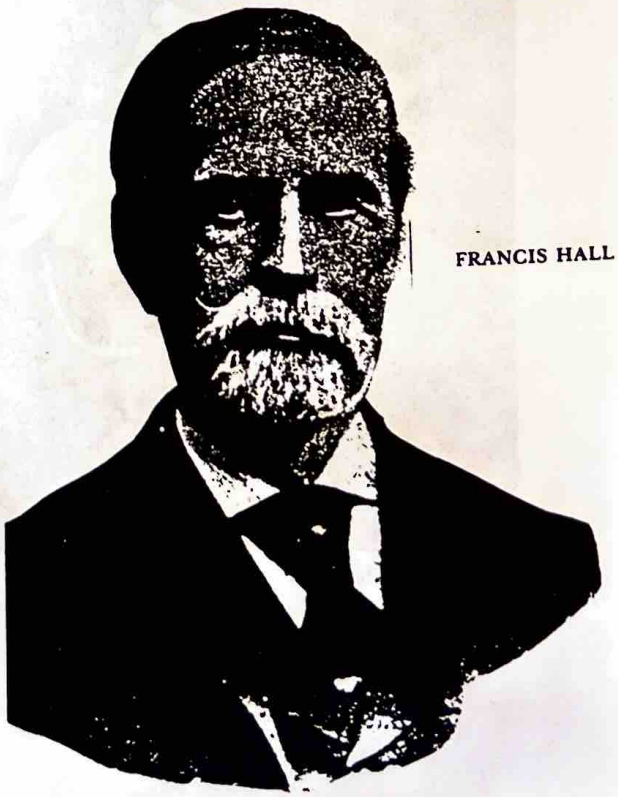
Clara at twenty in Philadelphia, 1881.

Clara and her brother Willis before the Whitneys left Newark for Tokyo in 1875.

Courtesy U.S. Naval Academy Museum

Rear Admiral George Henry Preble, U.S.N., in 1882

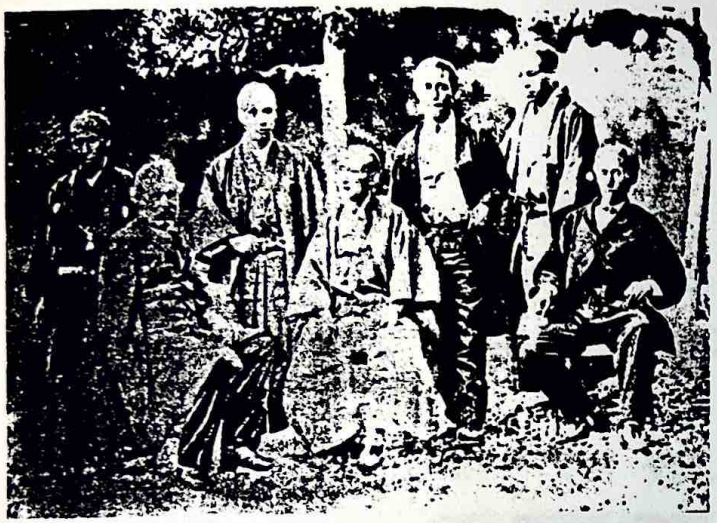


FRANCIS HALL

Commodore Matthew C. Perry after his return from Japan. Photograph by Brady
(Courtesy Library of Congress)

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SAMURAI

Katsu, third from right, as a naval magistrate and other high-ranking officials in the service of the shogunate during its last days. The foreigner is the American envoy Valkenburgh.



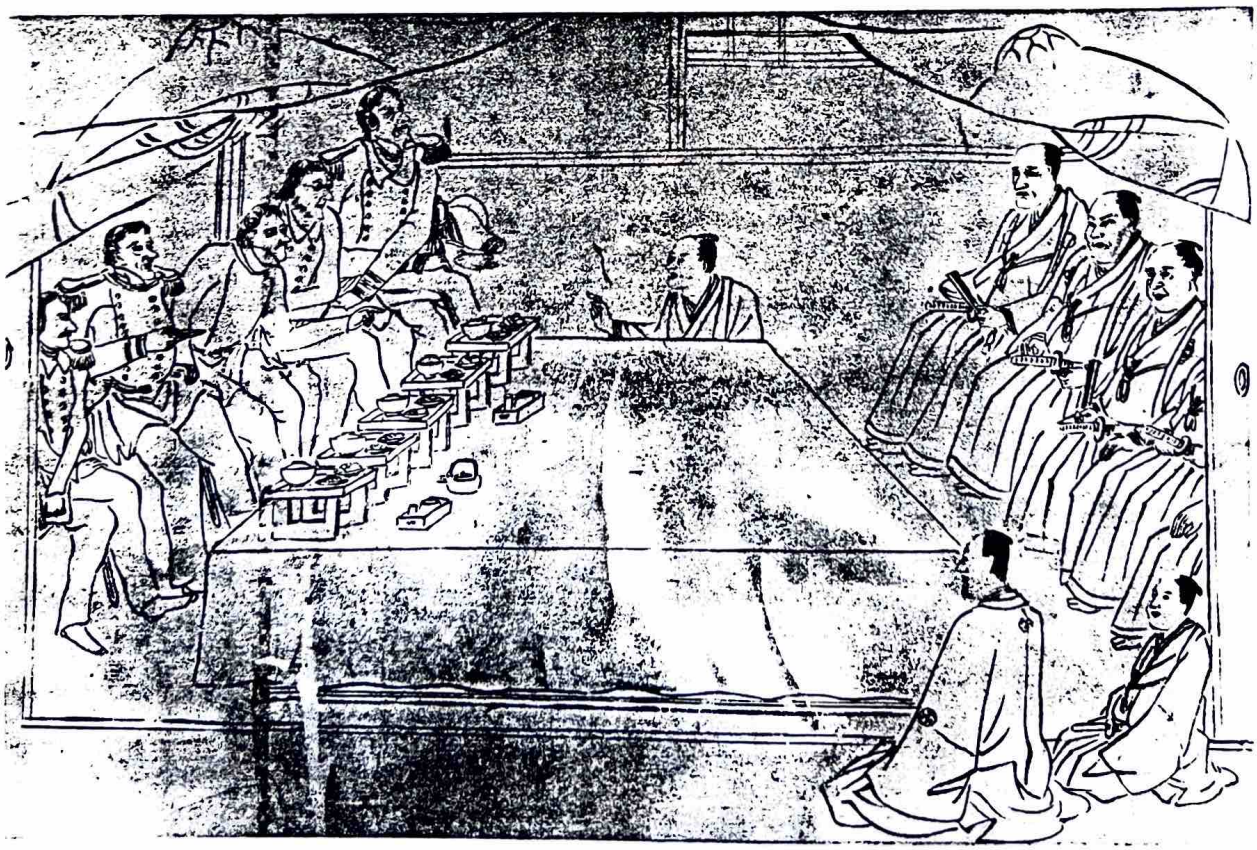
O Itsu dressed for an audience with emperor, c. 1909.

G. H. Verbeck and son with samurai students in Nagasaki in the early 1860s.

COMPARATIVE PERCEPTION OF 1853-1854 TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

AMERICAN VS. JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SKETCHS

Meeting Hall business session, 8 March 1854. Portman sketch from journal of William Speiden, Jr. (Courtesy Naval Historical Foundation)



Meeting hall collation, 8 March 1854. Sketch by Japanese artist. Setting order of Americans is (nearest) O. H. Perry, Commander Adams, A. L. C. Portman, S. Wells Williams, and Commodore Perry. (Courtesy Shiryo Hensanjo)

ANGLO-AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF SAMURAI IN THE MEIJI RESTORATION

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Anglo-American Perception of Samurai in the Meiji Restoration

Nineteenth-century Japan was an enigma to Western countries because it appeared to have a firmly established and enforced isolation policy. Here was a country that voluntarily held itself aloof from world affairs even though it was rumored to be rich and cultured. Furthermore, it successfully rebuked all Western diplomatic entreaties that Japan extensively open up to world trade and reciprocal relations. Nevertheless, in 1853, an American embassy forced Japanese officials to agree to limited government regulation of trade and open friendly foreign relations with American government and merchants. This action shook Japan's governmental, social, and cultural institutions and heralded the advent of Westernization. Because of the unique treatment of Japan by Anglo-American Imperial powers, how these powers viewed the Japanese was significant to their respective foreign policies. Yet, in spite of the dramatic changes instigated by enforced Western contact, especially Japan's assimilation of Western technology, relatively few studies have dealt with how Anglo-Americans viewed samurai and the abolition of the samurai status in Meiji Japan. Moreover, American and British perceptions and involvement in this transitory phase, from a feudal to modern state, has been given scant attention.

There were two aspects to Anglo-American perceptions of the samurai, the ruling class of Japan both before and after the transition. First, Anglo-Americans viewed the samurai as akin to European knights; they described them as semi-civilized, hostile, pompous, and ineffective. Secondly, in accordance with mid-nineteenth-century concepts of state evolution, Americans and Britons believed that the samurai class had to be abolished in order for Japan to progress. The Anglo-Americans became, accordingly, actively involved in the abolition process. Ultimately these issues will be discussed in-depth, but, a brief account of the Meiji Restoration here will provide the foundation for an analysis of Anglo-American involvement in the abolition of samurai status.

BACKGROUND

Tokugawa Government and Society

In 1853, Japanese government was conducted through the feudal Tokugawa polity. Theoretically, federal administration was handled through the Tokugawa government which was called the *bakufu*. However, in reality Japan was a land divided into over 260 individual countries that combined into a loose Co-federation under Tokugawa, or *bakufu*, leadership.[1] Each domain had an individual lord, called a *daimyo*, that controlled every aspect of the domain's resources, laws, boundaries, culture, and military. Consequently, each domain's governmental and social

infrastructure varied according to the lord's, or *daimyo's*, will. Despite individual differences, the fundamental social and governmental structures remained intact throughout the East Asian archipelago.

The primary basis of society was justified through a Confucian ideology of classification; samurai, farmer, artisan or craftsman, and merchant were the status groups of the system. To begin, the samurai class was the social elite that was responsible for protection, bureaucratic controls, and governance. The farmer, although often the poorest of the classes, enjoyed the second highest status. Confucian rationale stated that because farmers were the most productive members of the common folk and provided the staples of society, their work should be more highly esteemed than that of any other commoner. Although the artisan and merchant were interconnected, the former was commissioned with a higher status than the latter because of his special skills. Hence, the merchant was left with the lowest recognized status although he could become the wealthiest member of the populace. The income of a particularly successful merchant rivaled or even superseded that of a samurai lord's.

Yet there was one class that was not accounted for within this structure, the nobility. Philosophically, the nobles were of the highest rank because of their close blood relationship to the emperor. (Myth held the emperor as the direct descendant of the sun goddess - who founded Japan.)

In addition, the emperor was theoretically the ultimate authority on Japanese government, culture, and interests. The Tokugawa *bakufu*, then, supposedly existed under the supervision of the emperor. However, this was not the case. The reality was that the emperor was manipulated by Tokugawa officials and acceded to their whims, often without expressing any desire to be kept informed of the governmental affairs undertaken under his authorization. Thus before the American embassy's arrival, government was conducted in the name of the emperor through the soldiers of the state, rather than through the nobles.

As the ruling class, samurai conducted all higher bureaucratic functions during the Tokugawa era. It is important to understand samurai class origins and structure because within these spheres lie the roots of disaffection with Tokugawa rule. Initially, the samurai were solely a warrior class under the administration of the nobility. However, during the twelfth century, the samurai gradually usurped power from the aristocracy. There was a definite class distinction between noble and warrior that was consistently maintained through out the history of Japan, including the Tokugawa era. Because of the status system the Tokugawa era boasted two capitals: the cultural capital, with the seat of the emperor in Kyoto, and the governmental capital, with the head of the *bakufu* in Edo.

The head of the Tokugawa state was the *shogun*. The *shogun* was the most powerful *daimyo* and was the highest

governmental authority in Japan. His administrative system was based upon two types of counselors, senior and junior, who were chosen from *daimyo* who descended from those who were faithful and were trusted by the first Tokugawa *shogun* around 1600. These officials were styled inner lords, whose function was to develop and enact policies, legislation, and rulings over all *daimyo*. Any *daimyo* who descended from the circle of those who had opposed the first Tokugawa *shogun* were classified as outer lords. These *daimyo* were consistently barred from the *shogun's* administration.

In order to ensure the loyalty of all *daimyo*, the first *shogun*, Tokugawa Ieyasu, established the tradition of alternate attendance. This simply meant that at all times half of the *daimyo* were in residence in Edo and the other half were living in their respective domains. Moreover, Tokugawa Ieyasu further consolidated his power through implementing the requirement that the *daimyo's* immediate family and heirs were to be housed in Edo at all times. By the 1850's, these policies had left nearly all samurai lords so significantly indebted that they had only a marginal hope of ever obtaining a balanced budget for their domain.

One feature of Tokugawa government and society stands out: that of hierarchy. The classifications and divisions of both government and society placed every individual in a superior or inferior status, determined by their position in relation to others. It was a triangle based hierarchy whose apex was the emperor. By the same token, the foundation for

the internal strife that would culminate in the Meiji Restoration was laid because of the fact that the emperor, not the *shogun*, was theoretically the ultimate authority in Japan. Another aspect of this hierarchy concerned the internal divisions within the samurai class. The traditional acceptance of this structure was already being eroded, but the challenge had yet to build to the point that it represented a thorough attack on traditional institutions. However, American action would stimulate this challenge and threaten the already fragile institutional balance existing in Japan.

A part of this balance was the legitimacy of the Tokugawa government. The samurai accepted Tokugawa rule because of its perceived strength of authority over foreign powers. When Tokugawa Ieyasu established his government in seventeenth century Japan he had the military and technological power to enforce his desire of restricted international trade. Tokugawa Ieyasu maintained traditional trade relations with Japan's neighboring countries, such as China and Korea, but restricted European trade to the Dutch. All other Western countries were denied access to Japanese trade and relations because of Tokugawa Ieyasu's desire to regulate Western influence within Japanese society. While trade was open to Asian neighbors and the Dutch, both were only authorized to conduct commerce in the port of Nagasaki. Thus, the Tokugawa government had a strict, advisory role in international trade that consolidated and strengthened its

authority over the *daimyos*. Aside from legitimizing Tokugawa government, these facts highlight that even though Anglo-Americans consistently refer to Japan as an isolated country, in fact, it was not. Instead, foreign relations followed traditional trade routes and limited relations with nontraditional and Western trade through the Dutch.

Problems with Tokugawa Governance

Although the Tokugawa government had existed in peace for over 250 years, its policies of limited foreign relations and tradition had led to political stagnation and increasing popular discontent. One crucial signifier of the deteriorating effectiveness of Tokugawa rule was the increasing number and the escalating violence of social uprisings. These included the lower class samurai's agitation for a stronger emphasis on meritocracy, as distinct from hereditary rank as a criteria for advancements in government. In fact, these samurai agitators would eventually comprise a large portion in the movement against the *bakufu*.

A major problem within the governmental structure itself was its ineffectual enforcement of most *bakufu* desires. Because of the great autonomy of the individual *daimyos* within their respective domains, *bakufu* policies were not necessarily implemented. Moreover, the economic strain of the Tokugawa alternate attendance policy, coupled with the traditional burden of *daimyo* responsibility for stipends to

samurai under their jurisdiction, led to increasing disaffection with Tokugawa authority. The end result was a significantly financially overburdened class over which the government had little control and which was ready and willing to necessitate change.

Another attribute wearing away at the *bakufu's* power was the increasing realization within Japan of Western technological superiority. Before the arrival of Commodore Perry's fleet, a minority of *daimyos* did advocate Japan's incorporation of Western military and education. In fact, the *bakufu* had setup schools where authorized Western material could be taught. So there already was a movement underway to assimilate certain aspects of Western culture before Perry's arrival. Upon that arrival, this movement would gather force and help undermine the traditional value system and authority of the Tokugawa government.

By 1853, the atmosphere in Japan was ripe for internal upheaval. Many Japanese were no longer satisfied with their feudal institutions and some were prepared to utilize any national crisis to push forward new and Western influenced social programs.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MEIJI RESTORATION

In the mid-nineteenth century, Japanese society experienced the beginning of the end of the Tokugawa era. In fifteen years, from 1853 to 1868, one government collapsed and a new government was begun. Not only was there a change

of power but there was also a change of ideology. Within the turmoil of what has become known as the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese abandoned their feudal establishments and embarked on a path toward modernization. The catalyst for this restoration movement was an American embassy in July 1853. Commodore Matthew C. Perry was sent by President Filmore to persuade the Japanese to open their ports to American trade on American terms. In short, Filmore's letter and Perry's dramatic entrance into Uraga harbor were little more than veiled threats of Western aggression to pressure the Japanese into complying with the proposed friendship treaty. At this point, the ruling government's incapacitates became blatant, which in turn set off a political, and ultimately, a national crisis.

Major Events Leading to Restoration

The first major event leading to the Meiji Restoration lay in the arrival of the American expedition of 1853. W.G. Beasley has noted that

> [Perry's] gunboat diplomacy... produced in Japan an upsurge of emotion greater than any that had been aroused by domestic issues... Moreover, the humiliation at the hands of the West precipitated struggle and controversy. The struggle arose when men questioned the efficiency of the country's leaders, especially their ability to defend Japan; and it brought to the surface many of the latent divisions in the national polity... The controversy concerned both short-term diplomatic issues and long-term cultural ones, but it had a single, central thread: the extent to which Japan must abandon custom in order to save herself.[2]

Perry's tactics in obtaining a treaty from the Japanese thus began the internal crisis of government and precipitated a movement to overthrow the Tokugawa government.

At first, there was widespread resentment and anger over

the American's bullying tactics and many of the samurai desired war with the West. However, after the British bombing of Kagoshima and Shimonoseki, in 1863 and 1864, the majority of samurai became convinced that war with the West would be disastrous for Japan, possibly ending in colonization. This perception cooled tempers, leading Japanese samurai to back off from a confrontation with the West that it would have inevitably lost. In place of war with the West, rebellious and reform-minded samurai strove to balance Japan's need to modernize with traditional Japanese culture.

Once the *bakufu* was pressured to agree to open Japan, there emerged a minority sect that called for revoking the treaty with America because the emperor had not sanctioned the abandonment of the traditional policy. Increasingly, there developed an alliance between domains against the *bakufu*, the leaders consisting of the domains of Choshu, Satsuma, and Tosa, and the Imperial Court. This alliance was accomplished by 1866, and from this point on there was an ideological and military push to both reinstate the emperor as head of the government and dissolve the Tokugawa *bakufu*. These aims were achieved on January 3, 1868.[3]

Abolition of Samurai Status

The abolition of samurai status was not quickly executed. Instead, it was a gradual displacement and then abolition of the feudal institutions that established and

sanctioned a warrior class. Samurai status was abolished through a series of governmental reforms that spanned approximately 6 years, from 1871-1877. Meiji officials chose to take major steps that would affect samurai lifestyle the most - abolition of the *han* and *daimyo*, wearing of swords, and receiving of stipends - at different times. The first step towards abolition of samurai status came with the edict that officially abolished the *han* and *daimyo*, in an Imperial Decree of August 29th, 1871.[4] The measure was a part of the Meiji government's plan to modernize and centralize federal government by destroying the feudal organization of land and authority. This edict divested the *daimyo* of responsibility for their domain, surrendered the domain up to the state, and broke up the retainer bonds of samurai warriors who served therein. While most *daimyo* immediately lost all governmental authority, there were a few that maintained governance over their domain for a short period thereafter. However, within a year all *daimyo* had lost all control over what had been their traditional home and land. Furthermore, in accordance with this edict, the domain was renamed as a prefecture of the Japanese government and ex-*daimyo* were ordered to reside in Tokyo, previously Edo. Residence in Tokyo was not an original act, recall the alternate attendance system, but the fact that ex-*daimyo* no longer had their traditional home and revenue did represent a dramatic change. The act of 1871 thereby centralized government in both authority and territory. The abolishment of the *han* and *daimyo*

disenfranchised samurai from their administrative rights and territorial allegiances over the land and people within a domain. This was imperative to abolishing a privileged status group.

Samurai status was further diminished through the implementation of a conscription based army in accordance with the Conscription Act of 1873.[5] This act partially nullified traditional justification for the samurai class because, now, any and all male members of society who desired could become a soldier for the state. Previously, soldiers could only come from the samurai class.

Concurrent with these decrees, there occurred an overhaul of the samurai class system through simplification of hierarchy and a reduction of stipends for the samurai. Recalling the fact that the feudal class structure was based upon a Confucian ideal of four classes, the government sought to simplify and modernize Japan's social structure into three classes: nobles, warriors, and commoners.[6] Moreover, within the samurai class itself there was a consolidation of ranks.

> This increased the bureaucratization of the samurai, widening the gap between officeholders and the rest, and drove many families to seek additional income from agriculture or commerce. It therefore went some way toward dismantling the privileges of the samurai as a class, though the power structure was almost unchanged.[7]

Congruent with reduced social structure was government avocation in the decrease of annual stipends for the samurai. Status simplification allowed the government to reduce the amount of money provided for samurai, thus, gradually relieving itself of the financial burden of the feudal

system. In 1876, the government ceased paying stipends to members of the samurai class altogether,[8] compensating the samurai's loss through the disbursement of bonds to them. In addition, the samurai were also granted permission to pursue whatever field or trade they wished. Heretofore, the merchant career path had been illegal for the samurai to pursue because of its degrading status in Confucian ideology. This measure was developed in response to the desire to have samurai become more financially self-sufficient. The revamping of the social and fiscal structure of the samurai class furthered the deterioration of samurai status.

In addition, another edict was made in 1871 that granted the samurai permission, if they so chose, not to wear their swords in public.[9] Prior to this edict it had been illegal for a samurai to venture in public without his sword. The sword stood as a symbol of the samurai's social superiority and its public display was a privilege reserved for warrior class members. Five years later in 1876, Meiji officials abolished this privilege altogether.[10] Thus samurai warriors were deprived of the main visual and symbolic marker of their status.

Together, these governmental acts brought about not only the abolition of feudalism but also the disintegration of samurai status. They abolished all recognition of the superior status and privileges of the samurai. Of course, these measures did not go uncontested. There were a number of rebellions, the largest and the last against the Meiji

government being the Satsuma rebellion of 1877. "In these years, discontent among samurai was mounting because of pension commutation, prohibition of sword wearing, and because of the feeling that their class no longer had a future as an independent class of privileged warriors."[11] However, the government crushed the Satsuma rebellion, effectively defusing mass resistance to the governmental measures against the samurai. By the end of 1877 there was no longer any official recognition of a samurai class.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ON THE RESTORATION

Albert Craig's book Choshu in the Meiji Restoration explores the reasons why the Choshu domain, or *han*, acted and became a leading force in the Meiji Restoration movement when other domains could not. Craig attributed the Tokugawa collapse to the influence of the Choshu domain. Craig focused on the internal structures of the *han* expressed through political, social, and financial organizations and situations. He found that Choshu was different politically in that it had always been anti-Tokugawa; different socially in that its ruling household had strong associations with the emperor and was known for championing his causes; and different financially in that the *han* had a strong economic base. Craig concludes that it became nationally involved because of its wealth and size (it was one of the largest *han*), and because it had always been hostile towards the *bakufu*, because of its close connection to the court. Choshu

samurai also had higher morale since their finances were in better condition than that of their peers. And because of the fact that the government of the *han* encouraged more internal competition than others did, which resulted in an abler administration. Thus, the Choshu *han* was in a strong position to take a leading role in the restoration movement.

Craig further outlines the internal conditions of Japan and shows why Western aggression could precipitate a crisis within the Tokugawa government. He revealed that the Japanese relationship with the West, after Perry's arrival, was fraught with tension and suspicion owing to the West's threat to invade. But samurai were also intrigued by the new and advanced technology from the West and sought to incorporate its use in the military education of the samurai. However, Craig's primary focus remained on how the Choshu domain became intertwined with the crisis of the Tokugawa government.

While Craig's focus illuminated the development and execution of the revolutionary movement in Choshu, he was more cursory in his treatment of both Western motives and Tokugawa response. In his history of the Choshu domain, Craig limited himself to a single dimension of the restoration movement. Still, although Craig does not directly treat the abolition process of samurai as a whole, he did argue that the Meiji Restoration was not so much a rejection of old values but a reworking of them in order to maintain Japanese culture within the modernization process.

Based on this argument, Craig would agree that while the status structure was dismantled, the core values and beliefs of the system were carried over into the modern age.

In contrast, Marius B. Jansen approached the Meiji Restoration movement through the study of an individual, Sakamoto Ryoma, who becomes emblematic of how individuals reacted and were involved in the restoration process. Jansen chose Sakamoto because he felt that his life, in particular, embodied the true spirit of the restoration. Jansen also felt Sakamoto was important because he provided a view that, while influential, was not the center of the restoration movement. In Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration, Jansen examines the role of the *shishi* (young radicals who were hostile to the opening of the country and remained loyal to the emperor) and how they affected governmental change. Jansen evaluates the development of Sakamoto's and the *shishi's* perceptions of the West.

He describes their ideas as developing through three stages. First, there occurred the *shishi's* utter rejection of Western influence, taking form in an immature, uninformed display of contention that expressed disaffection with Tokugawa government shared by certain sectors of the samurai class. Secondly, *shishi* abandoned such ineffectual, disorganized protest with their growing knowledge and realization of Western power achieved through trade and other contact. Finally, the *shishi* turned to the tactic of adopting Western technology and education within the Japanese

cultural context as a means of ensuring Japan's independence, while rejecting any Western aid in their quest to overthrow the *bakufu*. Jansen also juxtaposes these developments against the transformation of *shishi's* national governmental goals. *Shishi* governmental goals progressed from desiring to reform the *bakufu* to a *coup d'état* of the Tokugawa polity, and from a policy of conservationism to a policy of rapid modernization of Japan. The samurai were dissatisfied with Tokugawa leaders and their theoretical espousal of Confucian founded meritocracy that they never put into practice. The development of *shishi* thought thus outlines the radical thought of the samurai class and its influence on government.

Craig and Jansen, together, provide a comprehensive picture of how the Japanese developed in response to Western threats. Craig's argument relies heavily on the internal structures and pressures within Japan, although he acknowledges the importance of Western aggression. Jansen concerns himself more with the effects of Western contact and how these contributed to the downfall of the Tokugawa government. Although they both attest to the significance of Commodore Perry's actions and the resulting crisis in the Japanese government, neither specifically treats Western motives or impressions of the samurai class per se. Their discussions of the West are therefore based on how the West instigated a reaction against the existing Japanese government and on the ensuing development of patriotism within Japanese society. In explaining these events Craig

takes a territorial approach in which he addresses the West only in regard to how it aided the reactionary current within Choshu. Jansen, on the other hand, examines the West not only in terms of the aid it extended to developing reactionary political thought, but also in terms of how it helped mold the modernizing trends of the individual revolutionaries. In their different ways both Craig and Jansen are concerned with how the West affected the internal dynamics of the rebellious communities in Japan. Even so, these two texts laid the groundwork for subsequent studies of Japan's transition to the Meiji period.

In "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution," Smith provides an interpretation of why the elite abolished their own power during the Meiji Restoration. Smith compares and contrasts the ultimate causes and results of revolution within feudal Japan and feudal Europe, focusing on the way the ruling classes interacted with each other and with other classes. Smith's intention was to describe how an aristocratic or elite revolution took place in Japan, rather than a working class or plebeian revolution. Smith associates being tied to the land and class conflict with the existence of an aristocratic culture as in Europe. He also argues that since the samurai were not tied to the land or threatened by the lower classes, they did not establish a high culture. Thus, they filled their power gap through bureaucracy. The system that the samurai created was ideologically based on meritocracy although in practice it was the elite of the

elite that monopolized the offices. But because the samurai's power base relied on bureaucracy, it was one's office, not one's honorary rank or money, that gave one power. Therefore, since bureaucracy became fixed it caused dissatisfaction within the samurai class. Dissatisfaction was especially acute among the lower ranks of the samurai, both from those who held low ranks within government and from those who were excluded from *bakufu* positions, who felt slighted because of the unfulfilled promise of meritocracy. As a result of waning loyalty within the clan structure there were also dissatisfaction with the system by a few of the elite samurai officials.

Smith argues that waning loyalty within the clan structure promoted an aristocratic revolution in Japan. The loyalty of the lower samurai became a show because they had lost their personal devotion to the lord of the *han*. Their allegiance rested instead on the effectiveness of the leader. Thus, lower ranked samurais' loyalty to the *daimyo* came to be replaced by an abstract devotion to the domain or in some cases to the emperor. The interior system holding Japanese society together was thus eroding and when the outside threat of Westernization appeared the Tokugawa government did not have enough support to withstand the pressure and new ideas. In Smith's analysis, then, the foundations were inadvertently laid by the Japanese elite for revolutionary reform within its government because of the samurai's meritocratic ideals.

In the end, Smith contrasts an aristocratic revolution

with a working class revolution. Smith defined a working class revolution as plebeians who are opposed by the aristocracy because the nobles do not want to establish a democracy, and they do not desire any structural changes even though there was rising dicontent due to rapid modernization. However, in the aristocratic revolution the elite themselves sought a more democratic and modern state, thereby circumventing plebeian agitation. In sum, Smith argues that the samurai destroy their own power because they previously held meritocratic, bureaucratic ideals and they embraced modernized Western culture.

Smith also insists on the hypocrisy of Tokugawa meritocracy. In his essay "'Merit' as Ideology in the Tokugawa Period", Smith elaborates on his previous discussion of aristocratic revolution in its connection with the absence of meritocracy and how that absence helped the lower ranks of samurai to justify their revolt. Confucian theory taught that individuals should be judged on the basis of their abilities, and not on their blood. In addition, men from lower ranks often had acquired better skills than their superiors had because of the hardships that they naturally had to endure. This circumstance contrasted drastically with the practice of the Tokugawa government which consistently awarded offices on the basis of rank. As the government started to crumble, this discrepancy between hereditary rank and supposed meritocracy became more glaring. Since the discrepancy had most to do with the ruling class, the demand

was not a new social or governmental system, but rather for government offices to be filled strictly on the basis of meritocracy. Furthermore, the conflict between theory and reality had been a grievance that well antedated the Tokugawa crisis. For example, Honda Toshiaki (1744-1821) implied that it was Heaven's wish for only talented and capable men to be in leadership positions. Smith's final conclusion is that meritocratic ideal, and the conflict of theory and practice, was one of the principle impetuses of the restoration.

Smith's research complement's Craig and Jansen's as an explanation of why the samurai abolished their class status. Where Craig and Jansen explore the internal and external pressures of the late Tokugawa era, Smith throws more light on why an aristocratic revolution took place in Japan. Still, however influential and enlightening the work of all of these authors are, they neglect to analyze the Western viewpoint. They provide a comprehensive picture of events in Japan and the Japanese reaction to Westernization, but do not treat Western impressions or the depth of Western involvement in the abolition process. Considering all of the credit that is given to Western countries in Japan's dramatic and rapid change from a feudal to a modern state, I believe that it is important to know how the Westerners viewed their own influence. In addition, perceptions guide foreign policy and Western perceptions of the Japanese actually checked Western imperialistic policies. Japan was the only Asian country to become an imperial power. By 1905 Japan had defeated a

European power, in the Russo-Japanese War, and thereby took its place among other Western powers. The West was now required to take notice of a young but determined Asian power. Considering this development, Western involvement in the creation of a state that less than 40 years later would rival them in power is itself significant. Essential to the modernization that took place in Japan with Western help was the abolition of feudalism. A part of the abolition process, and even crucial to it, was the abolition of samurai status.

ANGLO-AMERICAN PERCEPTION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH SAMURAI

Anglo-Americans viewed the samurai class as representative of feudal institutions, which they described as semi-civilized, hostile, pompous, and ineffective. Anglo-Americans believed that the Japanese would have to abolish feudal institutions, including the samurai class, if they were to modernize. Furthermore, Anglo-Americans became actively involved in the government's efforts to achieve these reforms.

I will first explore what American preconceptions were of the Japanese in the influential expedition of 1853, and how their opinions changed upon contact with the Japanese. I will then turn to perceptions held by Anglo-American residents in Japan during the years, 1853-1868, towards the end of establishing a more complete picture of the samurai as the Anglo-Americans viewed them before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. These opinions provide the basis upon which the

Anglo-American government officials residing in early Meiji Japan would encourage the Japanese government to abolish samurai status. A discussion of how the American and British officials raised the issue with the Japanese government will be provided. Both of these interconnected issues, Anglo-American perception of samurai and Anglo-American involvement in the abolition of samurai status, will be subject of a final analysis of what the abolition of the samurai class implied for future developments of Japan.

ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS OF SAMURAI

British and American citizens judged the Japanese samurai in the nineteenth century on the basis of their own ideas of civilization and modernity. Further illumination here is provided by analysis of the opinions of both the American and British ambassadors and the members of the general population of these powers who resided in Japan during its transition to a modern state. The preconceptions and opinions held by the ambassadors guided how the American and British governments would conduct their foreign policy towards the Japanese. Citizens' opinions provided supplemental ideas to the governmental officials and enhance the overall picture of what Anglo-Americans, in general, thought.

British and American ambassadors wrote primarily upon governmental matters. More importantly, their consular reports only dealt with what they thought was significant for

These papers thus illuminate the views of Anglo-American representatives toward samurai involved in Tokugawa government, policing, and rebellion. Anglo-American citizen's diaries and journals compliment the government reports. Unfortunately, contact with samurai officials is often obscured, glanced over, or not mentioned in these more private reflections. Anglo-American citizens also quickly compiled histories of the Meiji Restoration. Because of their retrospective nature, these books reflect how the author remembered people and events. Nonetheless, these texts are another useful source of how the Japanese were judged by their Anglo-American peers in their first encounters and transactions with them.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND THE FORMATION OF A GENERAL OPINION

Considering that the American expedition of 1852-1856 fostered both Westernization within Japan and further imperialism among Western nations, the preconceived notions and first impressions of that expedition's members are significant for establishing the platform on which succeeding opinion would build. Among the crew of the expedition I have examined Commodore Perry and Lieutenant Preble. Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry became the first successful treaty negotiator since the early seventeenth century to establish a new set of trade relations with Japan. Consequently, his attitude and his methods became, for other Western powers, a model of how to obtain successful treaty arrangements with

the Japanese government. During his journey, Perry kept a journal in which he recorded his thoughts and impressions of the expedition. Once published, this journal provided the cornerstone of Western governmental and public opinion of Japan at this time. In addition, Lieutenant George Henry Preble kept a diary that complements Perry's governmental viewpoint. Preble's diary, however, was not published until 1962 and thus had no public impact. Nevertheless, Preble's account exemplified how the common military man of the expedition viewed the Japanese.

There is an important distinction between Perry and Preble, one that figures in each of their accounts. Perry was the recognized ambassador for the United States and mostly dealt with the high ranking diplomats of the Shogun. Most members of the expedition, including Lieutenant Preble, primarily associated with commoners and lower ranked samurai. The experiences noted in Preble's letters largely reflect how they were treated by the samurai.

Despite their different experiences, Perry and Preble both approached Japan believing that they were about to encounter a civilized and rich nation that voluntarily excluded itself from world affairs. During the treaty negotiations these preconceptions gave way to the conclusion that the Japanese had not evolved in the past 300 years, that medieval forces still dominated, and that the samurai were relics who particularly embodied all of the characteristics that Westerners associated with the medieval age.

Preconceptions of the Perry Expedition

From the outset Commodore Perry was determined to gain a treaty arrangement for the American government. His determination was partly based upon his notions and thoughts regarding the Japanese government he was about to encounter. These are indicated in Perry's determination:

> ... to demand as a right and not to solicit as a favor those acts of courtesy which are due from one civilized nation to another; to allow none of those petty annoyances which have been unsparingly visited upon those who had preceded me, and to disregard the acts as well as the threats of the authorities if they in the least conflicted with my own sense of what was due to the dignity of the American flag. The question of landing by force was left to be decided by the development of succeeding events.[12]

Although Perry perceived the Japanese as a civilized people, he also made it clear that he would deploy every tactic, including the use of military might, to invoke from Japanese officials both the proper respect for America and a desire to reach a treaty agreement with the United States. Perry's primary objective was to induce the Japanese government to seriously consider the treaty proposal, and to force the Japanese to either accede to US demands or fight. With the exception of the Dutch, Perry presumed the Japanese to be a civilized people that withheld themselves from Western trade, and thus, only needed to be convinced of the benefits of trade and relations with America. Perry also believed that Japan was technologically behind the United States even though he still considered it a civilized nation. Still, Perry's willingness to use military power to force negotiations reveals his confidence in superiority of the

American navy.

Perry's expedition had also set sail with the impression that Japan was a rich country. But this impression was soon dispelled. "Everyone, the Commodore included remarked on the meager display and the lack of rich brocades and magnificent things always associated with our ideas of Japan."[13] Perry's expedition had thought that Japan would exchange an abundance of exotic wares that were comparable to the American gifts representative of new Western technology. However the expedition was gravely disappointed, in part, because it had thought the country was filled with gold. "All is not gold that glitters has a real exemplification. The Golden pillars and walls of palaces and temples, which have excited the admiration and wonder of travellers, are but wood and plaster - gilded."[14] Here, Preble refers to one of the rumors that attracted Westerners to Japan. Japan was represented by travelers tales as an amazingly rich country, when in fact, by Western standards, it was not. The mistaken identity of the material used for important buildings only served to highlight this point for the members of the expedition. The traveler's tales had heightened the expectations of the wealth that the Americans would find in Japan. Lieutenant Preble noted on February 28, 1854:

> The Japanese are busy putting up a long shed-like 'Palace' for the reception of the Commodore, which after the negociations [sic] are over looks as if it would answer admirable for a coal shed... some of my messmates who took the travellers romances for gospel are egregiously disappointed.15

The failure of the Japanese to produce a significant display of wealth dissolved the aspirations of the crew to confirm

travelers tales. Moreover, it dispelled the belief that Japan was rich with many exotic and impressive items to trade.

First Impressions and Opinions of the Perry Expedition

The crew of the Japan Expedition recognized the fact that Japan was not as wealthy as originally had been thought. The members also came to realize that the country was not as 'civilized' as it had presumed. In fact, the American idea came to be that Japan had stagnated in a state of feudalism. The following passage highlights the expedition's disappointed expectations and ensuing criticisms:

> Our Purser remarked today that the military and warlike strength and spirit of the Japanese had long been to Europe like the ghost in a village church yard, a bug bear and a terror, which it only required some bolder fellow than the rest to walk up to (us Yankees) and discover the ghost as nothing but moon shine on the gravestones or a poor old white horse. Our nation has unclothed the ghost and all the rest of the world will cry bah, and take advantage of the discovery.[16]

Thus Preble abandoned the respect and awe that he had felt for the Japanese prior to his arrival in Japan. While Preble was later to categorize the Japanese as semi-civilized, Perry refrained from using this term.

In fact, Perry summarized the Japanese as devious, intelligent, and reticent men who conducted affairs with specific attention to hospitality. The language he employs to cite these characteristics implies both his frustration and his persistence in his efforts to obtain a treaty establishing friendly relations and trade agreements. "No people in the world exceed the Japanese in politeness and

courtesy as well to strangers as to each other, and they are as systematic in that as in all other matters, suiting the forms of their salutations to the rank and position of the person saluted."[17] Here, Perry tempered his praise of the culture with annoyance with overly ritualized events. Moreover, he proved to be the equal of the Japanese in their own game of stubbornness and forms. "Japanese diplomatists are certainly very pertinacious in holding out. They fall back from their advanced positions step by step, preserving their equanimity, nor do they take offence at any hasty expression of their opponents."[18] In some sense, then, Perry admired these people even though he did not fully understand their customs or necessarily appreciate what he did know. The main significance in Perry's observations with respect to future Anglo-American interaction was the maintenance of some degree of respect for the Japanese. While they were industrially and technologically behind, Perry did not undervalue the power and ambition embedded in their curiosity.

Preble remained more critical of the Japanese. One of the lasting impressions that Preble provided of the Japanese samurai lay in his amused description of their mode of dress. Not only did he liken them to living artifacts of the European Middle Ages, but he also compared them to clowns and walking flags or chess boards.[19] Such comments, suggest that Preble must have found it difficult to take these men seriously, dressed as they were in such pompous attire.

Another point he belabored was the Japanese's shocking immorality. He was consistently amazed at the Japanese disregard of the naked body in the bath houses, as well as the obscene situations depicted in their paintings.[20] From his puritan, Christian perspective, Preble considered these cultural features as offensive and barbaric. He also thought many of the samurai were foolishly harsh and over-reactive. In one instance, the expedition encountered Japanese who wished to join their crew and feared death upon return.[21] The men were rejected by the Americans to face what they feared would be their execution by the government.[22] At another time a guard boarded the ship and was on the verge of disemboweling himself if the expedition moved their ships any farther up Edo bay.[23] These events solidified Preble's belief in the inferiority and barbarism of a people that he had once thought were equal to Westerners in culture.

> It is worthy of note that about the time of the colonization of New England, and the settlement of our limited states with its notion of religious freedom, Japan closed her doors to the commerce of the worlds from the very opposite idea. Now after a lapse of three centuries, the infant settlement has become a great nation, and this then rich and flourishing Empire reduced to feebleness, by its contracted ideas, is forced to treat with the infant and conform to its more expanded views.[24]

In Preble's opinion, Japan had culturally stagnated because of its self-imposed isolation. As a result, he greatly doubted the benefits that Americans could derive from a relationship with so inferior a culture.

Preble compared Japan to feudal Europe. "The government is without a doubt despotic, but not more so, than were the European Governments in the days of feudalism and chivalry."[25]

This comparison, between European and Japanese feudalism, would lead the characterization of Japanese society as semi-civilized by Anglo-Americans. The view of Japan as a semi-civilized state fostered in Anglo-American opinion that the Japanese would eventually take the necessary steps to modernize.

The first impressions of the Perry expedition laid the foundation for successive opinions because of their role in discrediting older rumors and preconceptions and replacing them with the first 'true' opinions. The most significant and lasting of these was the idea that the samurai had a semi-civilized and pompous character that made them akin to European knights.

Opinions of Anglo-American Residents During Tokugawa Rule

Following Perry's expedition was the American ambassador Townsend Harris. By 1858, Harris had successfully concluded treaties that opened select Japanese ports to foreign residence for merchants, travelers, and missionaries. In the beginning, there were relatively few people who desired such a risky business venture in a country rumored to be hostile to foreigners. Moreover, the Tokugawa government placed restrictions on the number of Anglo-American citizen's allowed into Japan.

The Anglo-Americans residing in Tokugawa Japan found themselves in an atmosphere filled with tension and conflict as the country tottered on the verge of civil war. It is no

wonder that the residents saw hostility directed towards the native Japanese from the samurai. Of particular note, however, was the samurai violence committed against the Westerners. Recall the role of the *shishi*, an extremist group of samurai that rejected the opening of Japan and wished to oust the Westerners from Japan through force. Members of this group attacked foreigners and sometimes even murdered them. This was the fate of Heusken, the Dutch translator working for the American Foreign Minister Townsend Harris.[26] The foreign population had been warned about possible violence against them, but this murder shocked the Anglo-Americans and brought home the danger they faced from the samurai. Moreover, the samurais' privilege of wearing their swords in public and their quick use of it more than convinced the Anglo-Americans that samurai were, in general, a hostile group. Francis Hall, an American merchant who lived in Japan from 1859-1866, made this comment in a diary entry on November 11, 1860: "[T]he samurai class who led an indolent, vicious life frequent the Sinagawa inns to an extent that renders them unsafe for foreigners."[27] Hall makes no distinction here between those samurai who welcomed the opening of Japan and those who were against it. Hall regarded samurai lifestyle as one filled with violence and excessive leisure.

Townsend Harris also described the samurai in Edo on August 1, 1860 in the following manner:

> The aggregate [sic] number of these retainers and followers, all of whom are armed, is very great... The character of this class is an

> important consideration; they lead a life of idleness, and many of them are exceedingly dissolute; towards thou whom they regard as being their inferiors, they are arrogant and aggressive; they haunt the streets in great numbers - frequently in a state of intoxication and, being always armed, are not only prompt in taking offence [sic], but ready to seek it. The feelings of these men towards foreigners are a mere reflex of the opinions of their masters; and as a majority of the latter are opposed to the presence of foreigners here, it may be fairly assumed that an equal proportion of their followers are hostile to us.[28]

Harris's reflections provided the American government with the impression that the state of affairs in Japan was one in which the lives of their citizens were quite possibly in danger. This impression was quite well-founded. Although, in the end, relatively few Anglo-Americans in Japan experienced violence, they were in a state of constant apprehension that samurai violence against them could indeed happen. If before November 1860 Anglo-Americans had disregarded the violent tendencies of samurai, the murder of Heusken quickly tempered any feelings of self-assurance. In fact, as shall later be examined, it was exactly this rising apprehension of violence that prompted the American consul to request the abolition of sword wearing.

The murder of Heusken prompted an in-depth explanation of Japanese matters to the British government by the British ambassador Rutherford Alcock. Alcock offered this opinion of samurai violence:

> The British Envoy [Alcock] stated that such was his views of the policy of those who now governed Japan, and the actual position of foreigners in respect to them. He was profoundly convinced that measures were being taken which had for their object the removal of foreigners out of the Empire, either by intimidation or by murder. That how far those who more ostensibly held the reins of government were parties to this atrocious system, or only reluctant witnesses, conclusive facts were wanting to show; but that they were cognisant [sic] of some one or more of their body who had means at command, even if they did not know who the individuals were, actually engaged in carrying out this vendetta against foreigners, it was impossible for him to doubt.[29]

Alcock, then, was resolute in his stance that the hostility

against the Anglo-Americans was the result of the samurai hostility, perhaps even instigated by the members of the government they were presently working with. In any case, regardless of whether the government secretly sanctioned the violence or not, the heart of the matter was that the samurai were armed, dangerous, and hostile to foreigners.

In 1864, Sir Earnest Satow, teacher and Secretary of the British Legation from 1861-1869, wrote of how he dealt with the threat of violence from samurai:

> We met, however, with a little show insolence from a couple of two-sworded men, who motioned us back to our boats, but I discoursed to them in their own tongue, and they were speedily reduced to silence: the exhibition of a revolver had something to do with the production of this effect.[30]

Satow, then, had no tolerance for samurai hostilities and met violence with violence as a means of protecting himself. The simple fact that he was also armed testifies to Satow's impression that there was a possibility of harm to himself. Moreover, Satow was not the only one to take to arming himself. Francis Hall had adopted the same policy back in 1859.[31] Thus, Anglo-Americans felt threatened by the samurai and viewed them with the knowledge that these men were capable of and would kill foreigners.

In the final analysis, these remarks and situations indicate that the Anglo-Americans thought the violence the samurai utilized, especially against foreigners, was unnecessary and provocative. Samurai hostility served to foster Anglo-American opinion that the samurai class should at least be disarmed in public if not totally dismantled.

Anglo-Americans were also convinced of the samurai's ineffectiveness as rulers. Both Alcock and Harris, British and American Foreign Ministers to Japan respectively, were the most critical of the inefficiency of the Tokugawa samurai in government. Alcock wrote:

> That [the hostility against foreigners] was more or less clearly known to the governing members and others, who saw with anxiety and regret such violent and hazardous proceedings, but felt powerless, either from timidity or the conscious futility of measuring their strength against antagonists who were too strong to cope with, and be successful.[32]

Alcock was under the impression that the Tokugawa government could not exert its influence over its constituents; that the party which opposed the opening of Japan, including *shishi* members, had more power than the ruling government. Therefore the Tokugawa government was weak, and consequently, ineffective. For if the government could not control its ruling class and its warriors, i.e. the samurai, then how could it have the power to conduct relations with other governments? In fact, this point was raised by Townsend Harris in 1858.

> I hardly knew what reply to make [to the assertion that the Japanese were on a verge of a civil war], that it was as I believe unprecedented for a government to carry on negociations [sic] when they had not the power to sign them when completed; that it would give Foreign Powers a most unfavorable opinion of the Tycoon's Government.[33]

Hostility coupled with a weak government necessitated the conclusion that the Tokugawa government was ineffective. For the first Anglo-American ambassadors negotiating with Tokugawa officials was at once frustrating and wasteful because the Tokugawa officials power was severely limited within Japan. By 1862, another American Foreign Minister Resident, Robert Prayer, concluded that: "many powerful

Daimios [sic] continue opposed to foreign trade is not questioned. The party in favor of the old Customs and laws may indeed be more powerful than the party of progress. With time the latter will triumph."[34] Prayer discussed the fall of the Tokugawa polity as an inevitable event arising from the inability to exert control over the rebelling samurai clans. Prayer correctly evaluated the Tokugawa Government as a government which would not exist for much longer. This perception, at times, must have made some transactions seem pointless to Prayer. Finally, Francis Hall made an observation which captured the mood of the Anglo-Americans concerning samurai governance: "Thus far in Japanese treaty history the merchants in their collective capacity have shown more sagacity and practical intelligence than the rulers sent to rule over them."[35] Hall's opinion highlights the samurai's weakness or inability to effectively conduct governance. In the end, then, these men agreed that the Tokugawa samurai officials were ineffective in government as displayed by their insignificant amount of power and lack of control over their own class.

Smith discussed Tokugawa ineffectiveness in the following way: "The power of the lord as administrative head increasingly became merely symbolic... the lord's position was hereditary and as time passed fewer and fewer of his breed were men of force and intelligence."[36] Smith contends that Tokugawa officials were indeed ineffective. They were men who were secure in their position and gradually

distributed their power to lower echelons and lost the drive necessary to competently rule over their jurisdictions. Moreover, Smith agrees that samurai lifestyle promoted a weak leader. "Brought up by women deep in the interior of palaces where no sound of the outside world penetrated, surrounded from childhood by luxury, and indulged in every whim, they were physically weak and innocent of both learning and practical experience."[37] The point here was the ruling elite of samurai were, sometimes, not even trained for their posts; resulting in a lord or official who was completely ignorant and ill qualified to run a domain or a country. Although the samurai elite were given power they were also raised with the luxuries and trappings of wealth and power to the point that it rendered them ineffective.

Contemporary Anglo-Americans considered samurai lifestyle soft and decadent - pompous and extravagant. Harris remarked: "[The Japanese] have never felt the absence of luxury on the one hand or the presence of want on the other; probably no part of the world can show a People so well fed, clad, and lodged, and so little overworked as is to be seen in Japan."[38] To Harris, these people lived a good life without much physical exertion. To Anglo-American eyes, generally, not only did the samurai not work, but they were also unproductive with their leisure time. Clara Whitney, an American daughter living in Japan after the restoration from 1875-1900, provides insight into the life of the samurai:

> The young lady, aged eleven, is washed, dressed, and amused like a baby. She is powdered and painted profusely... The ladies of a

> daimyo's house never do anything, never read or cultivate their minds. Oh, I am so thankful that I was not born a daiymo's lady! It is better to be a humble cottage girl in dear, free, happy America than to be a pampered, know-nothing noble's daughter in Japan.[39]

The amount of attention that the *daimyo's* daughter received simultaneously sparked jealousy and contempt by a girl who was only a few years older. Clara was grateful for her education as an American girl, one who was allowed to exercise her mind on different subjects. To her, a life where one had virtually no independence at all was inconceivable, and she likened it to an existence of boredom. Clara, at 15, testified to the opinion that the ruling class of samurai was pompous.

Neither did the elite samurai's extravagance escape the notice of Francis Hall. On March 2, 1860 Hall witnessed the Prince of Owari's train pass through Yokohama on his way to fulfill his obligation under the alternate attendance system. "I was desirous to see what I might of the cortege of a man whose travelling train is said to frequently contain five thousand persons."[40] This train consisted of those samurai and servants considered necessary to care for the prince. Hall was impressed by the numbers and length of the train, but, he still maintained his American perception of equality.

CONNECTION TO ANGLO-AMERICAN OPINION OF ABOLITION

The samurai class of the Tokugawa polity was seen as semi-civilized, feudal knights who exhibited hostility, ineffective government, and extravagance. Although Perry's

expedition came with high hopes of expensive and exotic wares and a highly cultivated society, they were instead confronted with a tangible flashback of medieval Europe. While in and of itself, feudalism was not seen as evil or barbaric, Anglo-Americans believed that it was a stage that the Japanese needed to evolve out of. Compared with Western developments, in which the modern world arose from feudal institutions, likewise, the Japanese seemed to be developing the same way. However, since the Japanese had maintained their feudal institutions, they remained only semi-civilized. As an extension of the feudal world, samurai were also intrinsically semi-civilized.

The Anglo-Americans seemed to expect the Japanese to welcome or at least accept the opening as essential and desirable. The hostile backlash by what seemed the majority of the samurai enforced the Anglo-American notion that the samurai class should be abolished. Moreover, that both the government appeared ineffective and its members seen as living pompous and extravagant lifestyles provided the Anglo-Americans with more than enough incentive to desire its declassification.

ANGLO-AMERICAN OPINION OF ABOLITION

Anglo-Americans had developed a world view in which they compared another nation's economic, political, and social structure to their own. European and American people classified other nations through their ethnocentric concept

of modernity; the more like Western, European culture, the more that nation was considered civilized. Specifically, Anglo-Americans based their judgment upon the structures of government and status of technology within the country. A British or American citizen felt that for a nation to be civilized, it had to have the following characteristics: First, the people had to embrace Christianity. Second, there had to be a central government that had some form of democracy as its basis. Third, the nation had to have modern military technology. Fourth, the nation had to be open for international trade. Finally, the nation had to be industrializing. These biases are prevalent in the descriptions of the development of the Japanese contained in Anglo-American governmental documents.

As I have argued above, the British and Americans saw the Japanese as semi-civilized. To the Anglo-American, this meant not only that the samurai were outdated and akin to European knights, but also that the feudal polity of Japan would naturally develop into a state similar to that of England or America. As with feudal Europe, the warriors had to be incorporated into common society in order for modern democracy to evolve in Japan. Although this outcome did not necessarily demand the abolition of the class system, England after all retained a nobility, it did require at least a revamping of hierarchical structures and functions. By creating a form of centralized, democratic government, the Japanese would be on the appropriate path to being viewed as civilized by Anglo-Americans. Once a country was acknowledged to be civilized it would be treated like another

Western nation. On the other hand, if the country continued to be seen as barbaric, then there was always the possibility that the Western powers would simply subjugate the people, in accordance with nineteenth century imperialistic policy. Jansen, however, disagreed and asserted that "Japan's threat came after those of India and parts of China, and foreign conquest was never as real a danger as Japanese leaders thought."[41] According to Jansen, the West did not have imperialistic goals for Japan even though the Japanese believed that they did. English control over India and China provided the Japanese with the incentive to strive for avoidance of a similar fate. To that end, Japanese leaders, in both the Tokugawa and Meiji governments, believed that in order to maintain their autonomy, they had to at least project to Western powers the impression that they were committed to civilizing and modernizing their society by Western standards. In fact, Jansen stated that the Japanese reformers "utilize[d] Western techniques to withstand the West."[42] The Japanese were, therefore, actively seeking ways to incorporate Western technology and education into their country's governmental and military infrastructures so that Japan would maintain the right of national self-determination as well as receive respectful treatment from the Western powers. Anglo-Americans welcomed and encouraged this tactic.

The Meiji Restoration's major components were the abolition of feudalism, centralization, industrialization, and social reform. The abolition of the samurai class by the samurai themselves was enacted as a part of the method through which the

Meiji government used to achieve their extensive program of modernization. The abolition of the samurai class signaled to the West that Japan was ready and willing to become a part of, and contend with, the European and American powers. In addition, Anglo-Americans actively participated in bringing the abolition about.

AMERICAN OPINION AND CONTRIBUTION

Charles DeLong was an influential opinion maker for American Congressmen because he was the leading diplomatic representative in Japan during the abolition process. His correspondence with the American Congress had a key role in shaping American foreign policy towards Japan. It was through DeLong's advice, reports, and interpretation of events that Congress and the President were kept aware of the situation and polices within Japan. Furthermore, because of the delay in communications, DeLong was given the authorization to begin policies towards the Japanese government that he felt necessary. Thus, DeLong's opinion was crucial to shaping both American political opinion and foreign policy. Moreover, DeLong became significant for his contribution to the abolition process.

The Americans viewed the abolition of samurai status as a step towards civilization and humanity. Despite this acknowledgment of progress, the foreign minister resident, Charles E. DeLong, when confronted with the first steps of abolition, hypothesized that the abolition process was enacted not for the purpose of integrating Japan into the Western

international community, but rather for the purpose of Japan returning to traditional 'isolationist' policies. Therefore, although the Japanese government was modernizing, it was doing so with a retrogressive objective. Before investigating DeLong's rationale and opinion of the abolition process, we should examine his view of the samurai class and its government.

In 1871, Charles E. DeLong described the Japanese as "ambitious and childlike"[43] in their pursuit of modernization. DeLong was of the opinion that although the Japanese were quickly acquiring the technology of the West, they had not implemented the Western ideals of Christianity and democracy that had accompanied technological and industrial advancement. The Japanese had the practice of Christianity prohibited within Japan until 1873. On January 19, 1871 DeLong wrote: "[T]he ignorant guards at th[e treaty ports'] gates will continue as they do now to paralize [sic] trade, more deeply enslave their own people, prevent the spread of Christianity and make men martyrs for their faith."[44] Here DeLong perceived the general samurai as ignorant of modern ethics and as people who actively sought to hamper the natural growth of commercialization, democracy, and Christian faith. Furthermore, DeLong wrote of the 1868 *coup d'état* in the following way:

> With the fall of the Tycoon the advance guard of liberalism intelligence and reformist [sic] in Japan went down and a party whose rallying cry in organizing its armies against the Tycoon was the expulsion of the foreigner from Japan succeeded it and is now enthroned in power.45

To DeLong, the Tokugawa government had been the defenders of progressive and reform minded government officials; the samurai

of the *bakufu* had understood the need of foreign relations and trade. On the other hand, DeLong had a negative impression of the new Meiji officials believing them to be a reactionary force against the *bakufu's* modernizing approach. DeLong perceived the Meiji officials as anti-foreign in origin, and thus, in their policies. What DeLong had failed to realize was that the Meiji officials, even if they had been *shishi* members, had modified their original hostility to the West to a stance which encouraged contact and assimilation of Western technology and some Western governmental policies. What DeLong perceived as anti-foreign legislation, was an attempt by the Meiji government to consolidate and reorganize internal Japanese government to reflect a Western model of a strong, central government. As a side note, it is interesting that DeLong perceived the Tokugawa government with such favor, considering he never worked with it. When compared to Harris's or Prayer's comments, (who thought that the Tokugawa officials were ineffective leaders who did not have much control over their countrymen), even if the Tokugawa officials were progressive they had no power with which to institute their ideas. DeLong continued in the same report to Congress stating:

> [I]n suing [sic] the hatred for the foreigner that durst not draw the sword to invite the shock of battle vent its bitterness in hostile legislation, restricting and crippling trade, and in proscribing and punishing with most sinful punishments the Japanese convert to Christianity for daring to become convinced of the truths of divine revelation.46

Here DeLong perceived the Meiji government as anti-foreigner, who instead of warring with the Western powers sought to subtly circumvent Western trade and Western ethics. Moreover, the new government actively took steps to hinder the development of

international trade and Christian conversion. DeLong was therefore under the impression that the new Meiji government was hostile to foreigners and was retrogressive in its policies.

Craig offered the explanation that the

> Restoration stemmed more from the strength of the values and institutions of the old society than from their weaknesses. It suggests that the power of the Meiji state to respond successfully to the challenge of the West was to a considerable extent based just on the "feudal" elements in the Tokugawa system.47

DeLong, then, expressed the view that the Meiji government was backward looking, and Craig argued that this was partially accurate because the Japanese people could not detach themselves from their heritage and the strength of their own traditional beliefs concerning government and values. However, Craig also emphasizes in his book, Choshu in the Meiji Restoration, that the Meiji government was generally forward looking and that the restoration movement was in fact a continuation of centrifugal forces already established within the Tokugawa government.[48] He maintains that the members of the Tokugawa government were searching for a way to incorporate Western technology and discoveries without compromising Japanese culture. In fact, the Japanese were highly aware of the inefficiencies in their government and society well before Perry's arrival and were striving to correct them without disrupting the status quo or completely abolishing traditional elements of society. Craig argues that the end result of the Meiji Restoration did not compromise traditional beliefs but rather transformed them. Thus, Japanese culture and belief systems were still present, although expressed somewhat in new ideologies and methods.

Craig's observations, then, support that DeLong misunderstood both Japanese government and the forces at work within it. Although DeLong correctly interpreted some of the actions of the Japanese, he was not aware of the full scope of events.

Hindsight allows for connections and developments to be more easily drawn together, whereas contemporary observations such as DeLong's may or may not perceive the whole. For example, the Meiji officials did not desire to reinstitute the Tokugawa's exclusive, traditional trade policies. Furthermore, even if the Meiji government had tried to regress, Americans would have perceived Japan as returning to isolationism when in fact it was not a policy of isolation but a policy of severely restricted and monitored trade. Thus, the perception of Americans would have been inaccurate. DeLong's impression of events did not take into account long-term developments nor was he aware of what the outcome of these developments would be. Nevertheless, his perception was what governed prevailing Western political opinion. In the early 1870's, that opinion was that the Meiji government was both superficially progressive in technology and infrastructure and ultimately retrogressive in its objectives of isolation and social values.

On March 1, 1871, DeLong wrote a report that dealt specifically with the Japanese acts of abolishing the status of *daimyo* and transferring ownership of the *han* to the central government. DeLong believed that the Japanese were attempting to consolidate their empire in order to hinder foreign relations. He felt that these were issued to advance the 'new' law that all

foreign transactions had to be approved and go through the government. DeLong concluded he was "quite well satisfied that this Government is secretly enforcing this decree where it can thus directly and seriously crippling [sic] trade."[49] Hence, while DeLong approved of consolidation, he was annoyed with what he thought was the negative intent behind it. DeLong emphasized the importance of international trade and its role in modernizing the state. Furthermore, he believed the decrees regarding the *daimyos* to be ineffectual. Continuing in his March 1, 1871 report to Congress, DeLong wrote:

> The utter falsity of the assurances given us that these Daimios [sic] have surrendered up their power, their people and property, is also apparent for they buy and sell as usual, make loans, keep large standing armies, and own warships, and seemingly yield only such obedience to the central Government as their whims in interests may dictate.[50]

Therefore, DeLong was of the opinion that the government had no power to enforce its legislation against the *daimyo*. He believed the Meiji government to ineffective. Previously, Harris and Prayer had criticized the Tokugawa government for its ineffectiveness and lack of control. Because Japan was a feudal state, the Tokugawa government did not have a strong, central government. Meiji officials inherited all of the problems and weakness' of the Tokugawa government. Hence, their job was to fix them. Recall that, this measure abolishing the *han* and *daimyo* was the first step in dismantling the feudal state of Japan. As with any major structural change, it took time before it was completely instituted.

Moreover, the Imperial Decree of the abolition of the *han* and *daimyo* was not administered until August 29, 1871. DeLong

made this statement five months before that date. The reasons behind this discrepancy are obscure, especially when Griffis' account is taken into consideration. The province Griffis resided in received the edict in July 1871, which is still a month before the official date. It is my belief that the government sent out a measure that told of the intent to abolish the *han* and *daimyo* in March, but did not receive imperial authorization until August. This would account for DeLong's impression that the samurai lord's were not in compliance and thus government was supposed ineffectiveness.

In contrast, Beasley elaborated on the difficulties facing the Japanese government, difficulties to which DeLong did not seem to be sympathetic.

> [T]he humiliation at the hands of the West precipitated struggle and controversy... The controversy concerned both short-term diplomatic issues and long-term cultural ones, but it had a single, central thread: the extent to which Japan must abandon custom in order to save herself, first in the context of technology, or particular institutional devices to serve particular ends, and then, more generally, in the context of radical changes in society, such as industrialization had induced in the countries of the West.[51]

Since the enactment of this policy had to overcome the samurai's sense of tradition and values, and the objective behind the Meiji government's decision to abolish the domains was to create a strong, central government, the implementation and enforcement of this measure would take time to be properly and effectively put into effect. This lapse of time however, did not imply that the government was ineffective. Neither Jansen nor Craig treat DeLong's observation that the Meiji government was ineffectual, in part because they both were focusing on the events that led up to the 1868 restoration. They provide only a brief explanation

of the restoration process itself. There were policies that abolished both *daimyo* and *han*, but, it was DeLong's assertion that the Meiji government could not enforce them and that the reality was that nothing essentially had changed with the declaration of their abolition in 1871.

On the other hand, William Elliot Griffis, a contemporary of DeLong who was also in Japan during the restoration period, later wrote that Japan did indeed successfully abolish feudalism at the time. Consider Griffis' eyewitness account of the consequences after receiving the edict in Fukui in the province of Echizen on July 18,1871. He documented initial outrage and then orderly compliance on October 2, 1871, when "the lord of Echizen left his ancestral halls, and departed from Fukui to travel to Tokyo, there to live as a private gentleman, without any political power."[52] Returning to the discrepancy of dates, notice that there is three months between the reception of the edict and compliance. Before, I hypothesized that the Meiji government issued a decree and then got official authorization from the emperor five months later. If one takes into account the time it took for travel - Japan did not have a modern rail or canal system built at the time - it took a little over a month for the edicts to reach Echizen province. However, once the Imperial edict would have been received, the lord complied. Within the province there had been discussion of revolt because of the initial shock of what the edict implied. The samurai were going to loss their traditional home and employment. In the end, the samurai decided not to revolt; the lord and his retainers

eventually accepted and obeyed the order.

Meanwhile, Jansen underscored the fact that there was a crisis of finance for the Meiji government, and that under the centralized power of government "[t]he samurai, rapidly losing their military utility and weighing down the public payrolls, were inviting targets for reform-minded modernizers."[53] Jansen's conclusion, then, was that the abolition of samurai privileges was believed by some Meiji bureaucrats, such as Tomomi Iwakura and Kaoru Inoue, to be essential to reforming and modernizing Japan. Craig supplemented Jansen by emphasizing that the process of centralization required the destruction of Japan's feudal institutions and structures.[54] The abolition of the samurai class was a natural extension of this process.

In comparison with the assertions of Beasley, Griffis, Jansen, and Craig, DeLong's observations of ineffective and retrogressive government seem to be drastic. Although there was undoubtedly some truth to his words, the Japanese government essentially remained in control and it successfully modernized Japan. Meiji officials sought to modernize federal government through abolishing feudal institutions, stabilize and stimulate government finances, and industrialize Japan. These long-term, principle objectives of Meiji government may not have been readily apparent to a foreigner in the midst of the reforms. Griffis opinion was written in retrospect, as was Beasley, Jansen and Craig's. Thus, all of them have the benefit of knowing what Japan became. DeLong's reports provide the impression that perhaps it was not such a guarantee that Meiji government would

be successful. Moreover, that the initial political reaction to Meiji government was one of apprehension and regret of relations with the Tokugawa government. At least, DeLong had a higher opinion of Tokugawa official's potential than Meiji official's potential.

Regardless of his personal opinion, DeLong actively helped instigating the abolition of samurai status. One issue that became central was the samurai's use of the sword. The significance of the sword rested upon the symbolic qualities that it held for the samurai - it connected authority, superiority, and lifestyle. Besides, it was a weapon that could be used to kill. In a communiqué dated March 26, 1870 (26th of 2nd month of 3rd year Meiji) Japanese Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Sawa Nobuyoshi and Terashima Munemori, replied to DeLong's request that the Japanese government ban sword wearing among samurai.

> [T]he sword has become a thing demanded by etiquette and the practice is one of gradual growth. From at this present time it is the ingrained habit of every soldierly heart to look upon the absence of the sword as a breach of etiquette. The proof of its being a thing of etiquette is that farmers and tradesmen distinguished for eminent services have come to have the privilege of wearing a sword, and this being considered a special distinction is in accordance with the theory of government which has existed for many years. If we were to suddenly revolutionize this practice without creating some distinction to replace the sword and making the Samurai class discover and accept the reasonableness of not constantly wearing their weapons, the Samurai and the common people would be discontented.55

The Japanese ministers assured that the lawlessness demonstrated by some was not representative of the whole and that there was effective punishment for those who abused the privilege of wearing the sword. However, a policy that would abolish sword wearing could not be put into effect because it was an age-old tradition that both commoner and samurai insisted on retaining.

Moreover, there was an assumption by the Meiji officials that the samurai class would still be in existence even if there were no sword wearing. At this time the officials were not prepared or willing to accept the seeming contradiction of the samurai appearing in public without their sword. This reasoning must have frustrated DeLong and his associates because it justified the policy of the government and the samurai's right to wear and use their sword. The government also brushed over DeLong's assertion that the aggressive hostility shown towards foreigners by samurai was uncivilized.

DeLong expressed his opinion of the above Japanese assertions to Congress on January 20, 1871:

> The sword should be the symbol of honor and distinction and should be entrusted only to those who will not disgrace it but how frequently may men of the sworded [sic] class be seen in the streets of Yedo in an excited state threatening defenseless people with this weapon and cutting at dogs or committing other offences. Surely such men are not worthy of the privilege of carrying arms; and how can the Government who allows them to do so disclaim responsibility for the violence they commit?[56]

DeLong obviously felt that although the wearing of the sword was definitely an honor, the samurai, in general, were not capable or responsible enough to retain that privilege. Furthermore, he implied that a government that allowed such lawless behavior was not truly in control over its subjects. Interestingly, in 1871 the Meiji government enacted legislation that allowed the samurai to chose not to wear his sword in public.

The Meiji government did eventually produce an edict that abolished the wearing of the sword in 1876. This was an outcome of the government's decision to gradually abolish the samurai class. Considering that the process did extend over a period of 6 years, the government's forestallment of action in 1871 can be

explained by the perception that the abolition of the sword-wearing privilege needed to be implemented gradually if the validity of the new government was not to be undermined. Recall that the Meiji government had just been instituted and still needed the support of the samurai class. Therefore, Meiji officials could not afford to lose too much support of the samurai class. Each measure the government proposed that dismantled feudal institutions and ideals met with rebellion in some sector of Japan and too much reform at one time could well spell the destruction of the Meiji government.

Meanwhile, Griffis favorably treated another aspect of samurai status abolition, that of Japanese conscription begun in 1873. In his opinion this act was a great achievement by the government and effectively placed Japan within the ranks of modernity and civilization. He wrote in retrospect, in 1907, that:

> The idea of a national army of soldiers, infused with loyalty to the Emperor, born into a new patriotism, educated in the public schools, and made democratic by the camaraderie of conscription, that should level all class distinction while in the ranks, was born in ... July,1870.57

Griffis believed a conscription army to be a signifier of democratic ideals and a nation's greatness. The advent of a conscription army placed Japan militarily on a par with other European nations. Especially significant was Griffis' phrase "level all class distinction". Since the samurai class had heretofore been the nation's military and social superiors, this phrase demonstrates Griffis' understudying that the samurai class status would and should be eradicated. Griffis was also here

expressing the American ideals of democracy and equality, which could not support the assumptions of a caste type system - hence again, the leveling of the samurai class was called for. The incorporation of conscription, then, was supported by Americans for its essential nullification of the status by birth embodied in the samurai class.

Overall, then, Americans thought that the Japanese were becoming more civilized with the abolition process and it was an essential component of modernization. Griffis offered the same conclusions in his text The Mikado. In sum, Jansen, Craig, and Beasley elaborate on how the process was a natural extension of modern development, thereby further extending previous American rationales. DeLong's unique position in relation to the Japanese government provided insight not only into how Americans scrutinized the Japanese assimilation of Western cultural ideals, but also into American's active participation in the abolition process itself. Although DeLong's perception of events was limited, his reports were instrumental in illustrating the extent to which American ambassadors involved themselves in Japanese affairs during the Meiji Era's reforms.

BRITISH OPINION AND CONTRIBUTION

The British evaluated the developments in Japanese society and government as progressive and civilized. Accordingly, Britain decreased its military presence in response to its belief that Japanese government and society were becoming increasingly stable and humane, and thus, civilized. Between 1863 and 1871,

there was a decrease of 454 British troops (from 1,087 to 633) and 234 British marines (from 539 to 305).[58] The interesting aspect of the table referred to above was the gradual reduction of troops over a long period of time. Therefore, the probability that the troops were deployed because of upheaval elsewhere in the British empire is low. Of course, the presence in Japan of other foreign powers, such as America, may have encouraged the reduction of British military presence as well as checking British imperial desire. Griffis, in fact, implies this by stating: "Except for Millard Filmore, Perry, and Harris, and the appearance of the United States in Asia, early in the era of steam navigation, who knows whether Japan would have maintained her sovereignty?"[59] In light of the British policy of armed presence, Griffis' statement, assigned credit to the Americans and not to the Japanese for keeping Japan autonomous. However, although this may have been the case initially, the point here is that the British military presence was significant for its implication that Japan was barbaric, just as the subsequent reduction of that presence provides some evidence that Britain was beginning to view Japan as 'evolving'.

Moreover, Britain would imply support for the Meiji government in their dispute with China over the Island of Formosa in 1874. When Thomas Francis Wade, the English Foreign Minister in China, was obliged to give his opinion of the situation he stated: "the progressist [sic] tendency manifest in Japan, again by its contrast with the reactionary spirit of the Chinese, assuredly put the latter at a disadvantage in foreign opinion."[60]

Wade perceived Japan as progressive. What events in Japan would have led Wade to believe Japan was progressive? By this time Japan had started a complete reworking of government and had recently passed laws effectively abolishing the feudal political and military authority of the samurai class: abolishment of the *han* and *daimyo* and instituting a conscription army. Coupled with the rapid industrialization taking place through the Meiji government, Wade very likely saw these abolition measures as steps towards elevating Japan's international status. The Japanese were progressing from a semi-civilized to civilized status.

More revealing of British opinion of Japan's abolition process was a series of 1909-1910 lectures delivered at Oxford by John H. Gubbins, who had been resident in Japan during the abolition process.

> [D]efective as their knowledge of Western countries might be, some at least knew enough to understand that feudalism was a stage of evolution which most European countries had passed, and it is not assuming too much to suppose that in their eagerness to imitate the progress of other lands they very soon came to realize that the abolition of the dual system must entail the abolition of clan government, and that the continuance of feudalism, no less than that of the Shogunate, was incompatible with the new extension given to foreign relations.61

Gubbins had an evolutionary world view of the European countries which he believed Japan conformed to. Gubbins compared European to Japanese development: Since Europe had already abolished feudalism, it was only natural for Gubbins to assume that eventually Japan would also abolish feudalism. Hence the British were firmly of the opinion that Japan was well on its way to modernizing and civilizing upon the Meiji government's precedent of dismantling feudal institutions. This process met with the

profound approval and support of the British government.

The British responded to the specific abolition issues not only with approval but also through their active participation in the abolition process. Algernon Bertram Mitford (Lord Redesdale) resided as a junior foreign officer and translator in Japan from 1866 to the beginning of 1870. Since he was there during the transition from Tokugawa government to Meiji, Mitford only witnessed the beginnings of the abolition process, specifically the edict divesting all political and military powers from the *daimyo* and incorporating all the finances of the *han* into the central government. In 1869 Mitford was of the opinion that all the most powerful *daimyos* humbly complied and that others followed their lead; there were very few calls for reconsideration of the edict.[62] Thus Mitford thought that it was an orderly transition supported by all. Beasley clarified the discrepancy between dates in the American and British documents by maintaining that the issue was repeatedly discussed within government in 1869 and was overwhelmingly supported by the majority of the *daimyos*. "[B]y the time a decision was taken at the end of July only fourteen still stood out. There was, in fact, little open opposition anywhere."[63] Together, Mitford and Beasley support the theory that most everyone was encouraged by and accepted the change.

Beasley's analysis credits Sir Harry Parkes, British Foreign Minister in Japan from 1865 through the early 1880's, with helping to motivate Meiji officials to abolish feudal institutions.

> A different kind of outside prompting came from Harry Parkes, who never ceased to remind the men in power of the need to make Japan "into one firm and compact State, governed by uniform and just laws," not merely because this was the way to be civilized, but also because it would give the council a means of intervening in local affairs in order to punish samurai who attacked foreigners.[64]

Thus Sir Harry Parkes actively encouraged the new Meiji government to consolidate their authority. It was Parkes' opinion that eradicating samurai control through consolidation of the federal government would modernize and civilize Japan. More revealing, however, was his direct correspondence with Tomomi Iwakura.

> Significantly, Iwakura, discussing the domestic situation with Parkes on May 20, 1871, linked three things: the abolition of the domains, the formation of an imperial army from units that would no longer be under domain control, and a substantial reduction of samurai stipends. What all this amounts to is that the debate within the government was about means, not ends, about implementation, not the political goals of national strength itself.[65]

Parkes directly advised Meiji officials on the specifics of abolition. They spoke not only of consolidation but also of the possibility of having to abolish the samurai status as well. In order to have a conscription army, samurai status would have to be abolished. Recall that the specialty and significance of the samurai lay in their identity as the warrior class, conscription nullified that status. Moreover, the reduction of stipends also introduced the process by which the government would relieve itself of responsibility for the social welfare of the class; this in itself encouraged the abolition of samurai privileges. Parkes' discussion with a leading Meiji official is evidence of direct British involvement of the process. Without a doubt, then, the British desired Japan's "evolution" out of its feudal status into the modern world through the eradication of the old

ways. The British therefore encouraged and supported the Japanese desire to assimilate Western ideals; they also helped shape the direction and implementation of the abolition of samurai status.

CONCLUSIONS

Upon the opening of relations between Japanese and Western governments the Anglo-Americans saw the abolition of the samurai class as essential to the progress and modernization of Japan. Ideologically, this notion fit with Anglo-American concepts of progress and state evolution that would mirror the European experience. The abolition process involved two points of interpretation: first, what the Anglo-Americans originally thought of the samurai class, and second, what the Anglo-American involvement was in the abolition process.

Anglo-Americans had a critical view of their Japanese peers, in that they saw them as relics of the European Middle Ages. By the late nineteenth century, Japan had become a stagnated culture that tenaciously held onto their traditional beliefs and feudal institutions. Thus, although there had been rumors of Japan's greatness, they were outdated by almost 200 years. The Perry expedition embarked towards Japan with some knowledge of this state of affairs, yet as evidenced by their writings, they were not truly prepared for the reality. In short, they were surprised and disappointed with the feudal country. These members laid the foundation for the new Western opinions that would form regarding Japan: namely that it was a semi-civilized

country akin to medieval Europe. The Anglo-American successors of the Perry expedition, later defined the samurai as hostile, ineffective, and pompous. Defined as such, the samurai class held a negative image within Anglo-American circles of opinion. Although they were interesting, it was generally felt that their era had passed and that it was time for Japan to rid itself of this antiquated class.

Once the internal divisions over leadership within Japan had more or less been resolved, with the Meiji restoration in 1868, a dramatic overhaul of the social and governmental structures took place. Significantly, Japan was heavily influenced by Western ideals and culture. In fact, the new government would rapidly Westernize. This goal was set by the new Meiji officials as a means of establishing for Japan some status within the West and maintaining its self-determination. Anglo-Americans highly encouraged this process, seeing it as a sign of Japanese determination to become civilized.

To this end, Anglo-American Foreign Ministers often proposed methods to the government to hasten industry and modernization. Specifically, they advocated the dismantling of feudal institutions. A major part of this process was the abolition of samurai status. The foreign ministers directly raised before the Japanese government such issues as *han* abolition and state centralization, the eradication of the privilege of wearing swords in public, and the reduction of samurai stipends. Although Anglo-Americans can not be credited with the implementation of these policies, their support and encouragement

contributed to the pace with which the government in fact followed through and abolished their old customs.

As with any change, there was revolt and disaffection. Also, for many Western powers the process seemed to take longer than expected. However, the Meiji government did succeed in its abolition of samurai status and shortly thereafter Japan took its place as a respected member among the circle of Western powers.

IMPLICATIONS

By 1905, Japan had established itself as an Asian imperial power who could successfully contend with the West. Japan was a modern nation: there were railroads, industry, a modern military with modern defense technology, a parliamentary styled government, and free commerce. Japan had become civilized by Western standards. Although the samurai class was abolished, many members of the government were still, primarily, from this status group. Hence, they did not loss all of their previous power. Instead, the new reforms simply enforced the meritocratic measures advocated during the Tokugawa era.

The abolishment of the samurai class helped speed the break-up of the feudal institutions and structures that were adverse to modernization. With the dismantling of the samurai class, federal government was consolidated and strengthened, nationalism was fostered, and samurai became more democratic. The financial burdens of the samurai class were dissolved, which freed government to utilize revenue to foster industrialization. Thus, the abolishment of the samurai class was an integral part of the

Meiji government's desire to rapidly modernize Japan.

Japan's entry into the Western power circle heralded its influential role in world affairs. Moreover, Japanese ingenuity and determination allowed it to become one of the leading technological nations of today; this development is a far cry from its feudal roots of only 120 years ago. Japan's international status and involvement of today would have been unthinkable to Westerners in the 1860's and 1870's. Regardless, Anglo-Americans actively contributed to setting Japan upon its modern, industrial path.

If it had not been for Commodore Perry's insistence of opening Japan to American trade and relations, who knows what status and role Japan would have played in the past 100 years? However, it is safe to assume that Japan would not have been a key player in world events nor would it be an industrial leader today.

End Notes

1. For a detail account of the Tokugawa structures and the restoration movement refer to W.G. Beasley, The Meiji Restoration (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

2. Ibid., 407.

3. Ibid., 411.

4. John H. Gubbins, The Making of Modern Japan (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971 reprint), 89.

5. Janet Hunter, Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 44.

6. Ibid.

7. Beasley, 338.

8. Gubbins, 96.

9. Ibid., 89.

10. Peter Duus, Feudalism in Japan. 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 110.

11. E. Herbert Norman, Soldier and Peasant in Japan: The Origins of Conscription (New York: AMS Press, 1943), 43.

12. Roger Pineau, ed. The Personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry (City of Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968), 62.

13. Boleslaw Szczesniak, ed., The Opening of Japan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 146.

14. Ibid., 136.

15. Ibid., 128.

16. Ibid., 216.

17. Pineau, 185.

18. Ibid., 211.

19. Szczesniak, 118 & 120.

20. Ibid., 124 & 181.

21. Ibid., 207.

22. In fact, this is the famous case of Yoshida Shoin ho was ultimately imprisoned not executed.

23. Szczesniak, 216.

24. Ibid., 138.

25. Ibid., 150.

26. F.G. Notehelfer, ed. Japan Through American Eyes: The Journal of Francis Hall 1859-1866 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 294.

27. Ibid., 272-273.

28. US National Archives, Despatches from US Ministers to Japan 1855-1906. Microcopy No. 133, Roll 7. Townsend Harris to US Secretary of State, August 1, 1860.

29. JJ O'Meara, Irish University Press Area Studies Series: British Parliamentary Papers, Japan. Volume 1. Reports, Correspondence, Returns and Dispatches Respecting Japan 1871-1899 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), 223.

30. Sir Earnest Satow, A Diplomat in Japan (London: Seeley, Service, & Co. Limited, 1921), 129-130.

31. Notehelfer, 245.

32. O'Meara, 223.

33. U.S. National Archives, Townsend Harris to Secretary of State, July 1858.

34. U.S. National Archives, Despatches from US Ministers to Japan 1855-1906. Microcopy No. 133, Roll 12. Robert Prayer to US Secretary of State, July 8, 1862.

35. Notehelfer, 320.

36. Thomas C. Smith, "Japan's Aristocratic Revolution" Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750-1920 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 140.

37. Ibid.

38. US National Archives, Roll 7. Townsend Harris to US Secretary of State, July 1858.

39. M. William Steele and Tamiko Ichimata, eds., Clara's Diary: An American in Meiji Japan (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1979), 65.

40. Notehelfer, 132.

41. Marius Jansen, Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), ix.

42. Ibid., 145.

43. US National Archives, Despatches from US Ministers to Japan 1855-1906. Microcopy No. 133, Roll 16. DeLong to US Secretary of State, 19 January 1871.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Albert Craig, Choshu in the Meiji Restoration (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 353.

48. Ibid., 370-371.

49. US National Archives, Roll 16. DeLong to Secretary of State, 1 March 1871.

50. Ibid.

51. Beasley, 407.

52. Jansen, 361.

53. Craig, 371.

54. William Elliot Griffis, The Mikado: Institution and Person (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), 191.

55. US National Archives, Roll 16. Nobuyoshi to DeLong, 28 March 1870.

56. Ibid., DeLong to US Secretary of State, 20 January 1871.

57. Griffis, 347.

58. JJ O'Meara, Irish University Press Area Studies Series: British Parliamentary Papers, Japan. Volume 3. Reports, Correspondence, Returns, and Dispatches Respecting Japan 1871-1899 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), 101. For copy of Table see Appendix.

59. Griffis, 269.

60. O'Meara, 132.

61. Gubbins, 216.

62. Hugh Cortazzi, ed., Mitford's Japan (London: The Athlone Press, 1985), 149-151.

63. Beasley, 332.

64. Ibid., 344.

65. Ibid., 345

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APPENDIX

JAPAN (NUMBER AND EXPENSE OF FORCES).

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 11 March 1872;—*for*,

"RETURN of the Number of TROOPS and MARINES stationed in *Japan* during each Year from the Ratification of the Treaty with *Japan* in 1859, to the 31st day of December 1871 together with the Sums expended in conveying such TROOPS to and from *Japan*, and maintaining them in that Country."

War Office, 6 February 1873.

EDWARD CARDWELL.

RETURN of the Number of TROOPS and MARINES stationed in *Japan* during each Year from the Ratification of the Treaty with *Japan* in 1859, to the 31st day of December 1871, together with the Sums expended in conveying such TROOPS to and from *Japan*, and maintaining them in that Country.

YEAR.	TROOPS. Number.	Cost of Maintenance.	Cost of Conveyance.
		£.	£.
1864	1,087		
1865	940		
1866	919		
1867	797	382,701	18,399*
1868	748		
1869	699		
1870	659		
1871	633		

From 1 September 1864 to 31 August 1871.

YEAR.	MARINES. Number.	Cost of Maintenance.	Cost of Conveyance.
		£.	
1863	539		
1864	539	64,992	
1865	539		
1866	539		
1867 - -	—		
1868 - -	—		
1869 - -	—		
1870	305	32,229	
1871	305		

From 10 December 1863 to 31 January 1866.

From Oct. 1870 to 31 Dec. 1871.

The Marines were conveyed in Her Majesty's Ships, and the cost cannot be ascertained.

* The greater portion of the Troops were conveyed in Her Majesty's Ships, and the cost of conveyance cannot be accurately ascertained.

War Office, 24 January 1873.

H. Campbell Bannerman.