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Ernest Satow

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### **A Diplomat in Japan**

A brilliant linguist, Sir Ernest Satow (1843–1929) was recruited into the British consular service as a student interpreter in 1861. The following year he arrived in Japan, where he witnessed the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Meiji restoration of imperial rule. Drafted in the 1880s while he was consul-general in Bangkok, this 1921 account is based on the voluminous diaries Satow kept whilst in Japan between 1862 and 1869. As an interpreter he was present at many of the meetings between the diplomatic and military representatives of the Great Powers and of the Shogunate. Satow gives his opinions of the various officials he met, and describes the rising tensions that led to conflict between the Shogunate and the Emperor, civil war, and the reassertion of the Emperor's power. Satow's classic *Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (1917) is also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.

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Frontmatter

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## A DIPLOMAT IN JAPAN

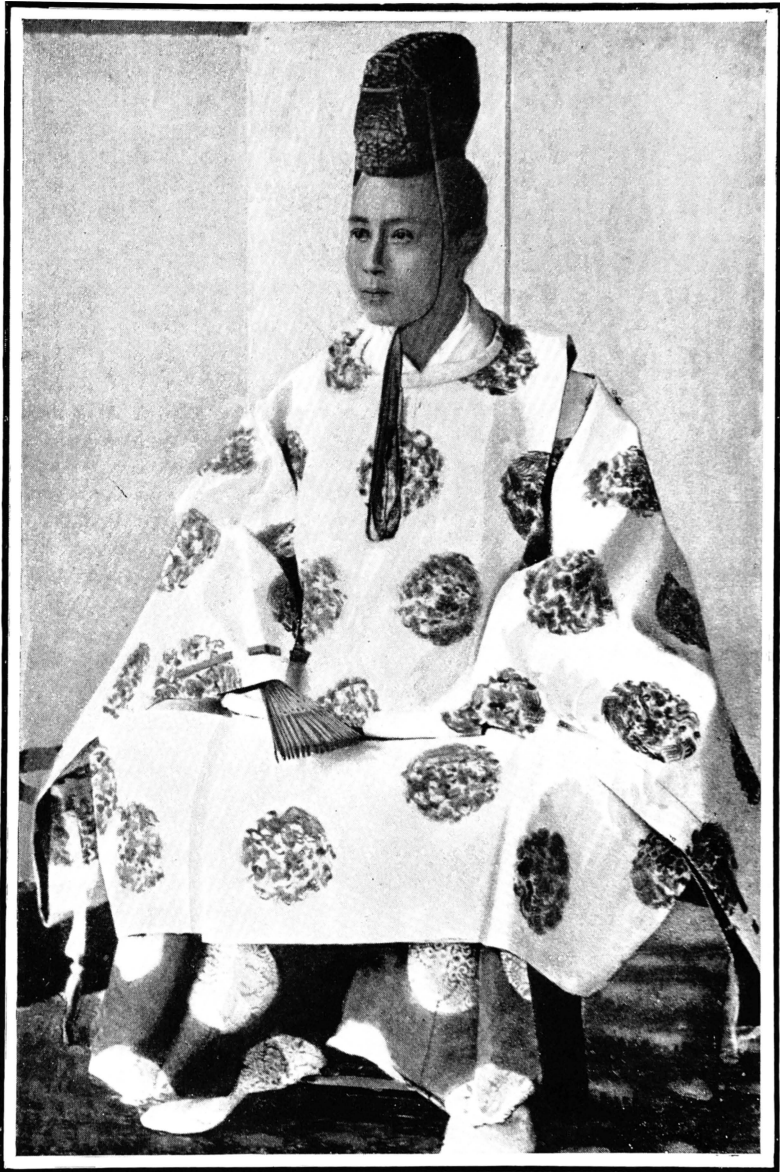
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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

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THE INNER HISTORY OF THE CRITICAL YEARS IN THE  
EVOLUTION OF JAPAN WHEN THE PORTS WERE  
OPENED AND THE MONARCHY RESTORED,  
RECORDED BY A DIPLOMATIST WHO TOOK  
AN ACTIVE PART IN THE EVENTS OF  
THE TIME, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF  
HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES  
DURING THAT PERIOD

BY

THE RIGHT HON. SIR ERNEST SATOW

G.C.M.G., LL.D., D.C.L.;

British Minister at Peking 1900-05;

Formerly Secretary of the British

Legation at Tokio

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLANS

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

**T**HE first portion of this book was written at intervals between 1885 and 1887, during my tenure of the post of Her Majesty's minister at Bangkok. I had but recently left Japan after a residence extending, with two seasons of home leave, from September 1862 to the last days of December 1882, and my recollection of what had occurred during any part of those twenty years was still quite fresh. A diary kept almost uninterruptedly from the day I quitted home in November 1861 constituted the foundation, while my memory enabled me to supply additional details. It had never been my purpose to relate my diplomatic experiences in different parts of the world, which came finally to be spread over a period of altogether forty-five years, and I therefore confined myself to one of the most interesting episodes in which I have been concerned. This comprised the series of events that culminated in the restoration of the direct rule of the ancient line of sovereigns of Japan which had remained in abeyance for over six hundred years. Such a change involved the substitution of the comparatively modern city of Yedo, under the name of Tôkiô, for the more ancient Kiôto, which had already become the capital long before Japan was heard of in the western world.

When I departed from Siam in 1887 I laid the unfinished manuscript aside, and did not look at it again until September 1919, when some of my younger relations, to whom I had shown it, suggested that it ought to be completed. This second portion is largely a transcript of my journals, supplemented from papers drawn up by me which were included in the Confidential Print of the time and by letters to my chief Sir Harry Parkes which have been published elsewhere. Letters to my mother have furnished some particulars that were omitted from the diaries.

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Frontmatter

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## PREFACE

Part of the volume may read like a repetition of a few pages from my friend the late Lord Redesdale's "Memories," for when he was engaged on that work he borrowed some of my journals of the time we had spent together in Japan. But I have not referred to his volumes while writing my own.

ERNEST SATOW.

OTTERY ST MARY,  
*January 1921.*

*Note.*—In pronouncing Japanese words the consonants are to be taken as in English, the vowels more or less as in Italian. *G*, except at the beginning of a word, when it is hard, represents *ng*.

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the Evolution of Japan when the Ports were Opened and the Monarchy Restored

Ernest Satow

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER I</b>		
APPOINTMENT AS STUDENT INTERPRETER AT YEDO . . . . .		PAGE 17
<b>CHAPTER II</b>		
YOKOHAMA SOCIETY, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL . . . . .		22
<b>CHAPTER III</b>		
POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN JAPAN . . . . .		33
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>		
TREATIES—ANTI-FOREIGN SPIRIT—MURDER OF FOREIGNERS . . . . .		42
<b>CHAPTER V</b>		
RICHARDSON'S MURDER—JAPANESE STUDIES . . . . .		50
<b>CHAPTER VI</b>		
OFFICIAL VISIT TO YEDO . . . . .		61
<b>CHAPTER VII</b>		
DEMANDS FOR REPARATION—JAPANESE PROPOSALS TO CLOSE THE PORTS—PAYMENT OF THE INDEMNITY . . . . .		72
<b>CHAPTER VIII</b>		
BOMBARDMENT OF KAGOSHIMA . . . . .		84
<b>CHAPTER IX</b>		
SHIMONOSEKI : PRELIMINARY MEASURES . . . . .		95
<b>CHAPTER X</b>		
SHIMONOSEKI—NAVAL OPERATIONS . . . . .		102
<b>CHAPTER XI</b>		
SHIMONOSEKI—PEACE CONCLUDED WITH CHOSHU . . . . .		116

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08095-8 - A Diplomat in Japan: The Inner History of the Critical Years in  
the Evolution of Japan when the Ports were Opened and the Monarchy Restored

Ernest Satow

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>CHAPTER XII</b>	
<b>THE MURDER OF BIRD AND BALDWIN . . . . .</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>CHAPTER XIII</b>	
<b>RATIFICATION OF THE TREATIES BY THE MIKADO . . . . .</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>CHAPTER XIV</b>	
<b>GREAT FIRE AT YOKOHAMA . . . . .</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>CHAPTER XV</b>	
<b>VISIT TO KAGOSHIMA AND UWAJIMA . . . . .</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>CHAPTER XVI</b>	
<b>FIRST VISIT TO OZAKA . . . . .</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>CHAPTER XVII</b>	
<b>RECEPTION OF FOREIGN MINISTERS BY THE TYCOON . . . . .</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>CHAPTER XVIII</b>	
<b>OVERLAND FROM OZAKA TO YEDO . . . . .</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>CHAPTER XIX</b>	
<b>SOCIAL INTERCOURSE WITH JAPANESE OFFICIALS—VISIT TO NIIGATA, SADO GOLD MINES, AND NANAŌ . . . . .</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>CHAPTER XX</b>	
<b>NANAŌ TO OZAKA OVERLAND . . . . .</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXI</b>	
<b>OZAKA AND TOKUSHIMA . . . . .</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXII</b>	
<b>TOSA AND NAGASAKI . . . . .</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXIII</b>	
<b>DOWNFALL OF THE SHOGUNATE . . . . .</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXIV</b>	
<b>OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR (1868) . . . . .</b>	<b>295</b>

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08095-8 - A Diplomat in Japan: The Inner History of the Critical Years in  
the Evolution of Japan when the Ports were Opened and the Monarchy Restored

Ernest Satow

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXV</b>	
<b>HOSTILITIES BEGUN AT YEDO AND FUSHIMI . . . . .</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXVI</b>	
<b>THE BIZEN AFFAIR . . . . .</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXVII</b>	
<b>FIRST VISIT TO KIOTO . . . . .</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXVIII</b>	
<b>HARAKIRI—NEGOTIATIONS FOR AUDIENCE OF THE MIKADO AT KIOTO . . . . .</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXIX</b>	
<b>MASSACRE OF FRENCH SAILORS AT SAKAI . . . . .</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXX.</b>	
<b>KIOTO—AUDIENCE OF THE MIKADO . . . . .</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXI</b>	
<b>RETURN TO YEDO AND PRESENTATION OF THE MINISTER'S NEW CREDENTIALS AT OZAKA . . . . .</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXII</b>	
<b>MISCELLANEOUS INCIDENTS—MITO POLITICS . . . . .</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXIII</b>	
<b>CAPTURE OF WAKAMATSU AND ENTRY OF THE MIKADO INTO YEDO . . . . .</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXIV</b>	
<b>ENOMOTO WITH THE RUNAWAY TOKUGAWA SHIPS SEIZES YEZO . . . . .</b>	<b>395</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXV</b>	
<b>1869—AUDIENCE OF THE MIKADO AT YEDO . . . . .</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>CHAPTER XXXVI</b>	
<b>LAST DAYS IN TOKIO AND DEPARTURE FOR HOME . . . . .</b>	<b>409</b>

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08095-8 - A Diplomat in Japan: The Inner History of the Critical Years in  
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Ernest Satow

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
THE LAST OF THE SHOGUNS . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
SIR ERNEST SATOW—1869 . . . . .	56
SIR ERNEST SATOW—1903 . . . . .	56
PAYMENT OF THE INDEMNITY FOR THE MURDER OF RICHARDSON	80
KAGOSHIMA HARBOUR : BOMBARDMENT . . . . .	90-91
THE STRAITS OF SHIMONOSEKI . . . . .	106-107
INTERIOR OF A JAPANESE BATTERY AFTER THE LANDING OF THE ALLIED NAVAL FORCES . . . . .	112
DAIMIO OF CHO-SHIU AND HIS HEIR . . . . .	184
CHO-SHIU COUNCILLORS . . . . .	184
GROUP PHOTOGRAPHED DURING A VISIT TO OZAKA . . . . .	192
NIRO GIÖBU, A SATSUMA COUNCILLOR . . . . .	272
KATSU AWA NO KAMI . . . . .	272

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