
American Missionaries,
Christian *Oyatoi*, and Japan,
1859-73

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Introduction

Serendipity and sea power allowed the United States to be the first Western country to open mid-nineteenth-century Tokugawa Japan to intercourse with the West.¹ Ever since Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry's black ships arrived off the coast of Japan in 1853, there has existed a special relationship between the two countries. The subject of this book, the beginnings of the Protestant missionary endeavour from the United States to Japan from 1859 to 1873, was one important manifestation of this special American-Japanese relationship. This study contends that an understanding of the American missionary movement in Japan is of considerable importance not only in American-Japanese relations but also for our understanding of the broader reciprocal responses of Americans and East Asians to each other's values.

The process of the reciprocal transmission and transformation of ideas, and specifically Protestant Christianity, from one culture to another had unforeseen results for both Americans and Japanese. As well as making very significant contributions to the development of the Christian movement in Japan, American missionaries and Christian *oyatoi* (foreigners employed by the Japanese government or Japanese organizations) were responsible for the introduction of a wide range of Western ideas into Bakumatsu and early Meiji Japan. Indeed, it has to be emphasized that the American missionary part in the Christian contribution to Japanese culture extended far beyond things religious. In keeping with earlier work on the Canadian and British missionary movements in the Japanese Empire, *American Missionaries, Christian Oyatoi, and Japan* stresses the role played by American Protestants as both Christian missionaries and informal agents of their own country and civilization.² It underlines the importance of missionaries as an integral part of the American community living in treaty port Japan and their interplay, or lack of it, with both Japanese and their

fellow westerners. Although the prime motive of missionaries in Japan was a Christian proselytizing one, their significance also lies in the link they provided between the American world and East Asia. The investigation of missionaries, Christian *oyatoi*, and those Japanese with whom they had contact provides an invaluable lens through which to view both the tensions and challenges within the developing Japanese relations with America and the West, and the strains and disorientation within Japanese society, culture, religion, and politics during the halcyon years of revolutionary change between 1859 and 1873.

The American Protestant missionary experience is exemplified by the activities of missionaries, both male and female, belonging to the four big denominational missions at work in Japan during the 1860s: the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States (the American Church mission); American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational); and the Presbyterian/Reformed group made up of the Presbyterian Church of the United States North and the (Dutch) Reformed Church of the United States. This book concentrates on the activities of those groups in Yokohama and the Kantō region. As the methodological approach employed is chronological, comparative, and analytical, reference is also made to other groups: the Baptists, Anglican, and Presbyterian missions – both American and European – where their activities entwined with those of the four major denominations.³ The work of society missionaries is only one part of the American Christian endeavour in Japan. This book also stresses the importance of Christian laypeople working as *oyatoi* to bring the Christian message to Japanese schools outside the confines of the treaty ports. The intention is not to provide a detailed history of these missionaries and their theology but, rather, to analyze the phenomenon of the American missionary movement as a story worth telling about a significant aspect of the history of American and Japanese international relations. This study sets out to survey the activities of American missionaries and key lay Christians and the responses and consequences their endeavours evoked across cultural barriers during a dynamic period of change in Japanese history. In that way, the book will shed further light on the nature of the American-Japanese relations as well as enhance understanding about the importance of the informal contact between Americans and Japanese during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the missionary movement provided.

American Missionaries, Christian Oyatoi, and Japan, 1859-73 deals with the beginnings of sustained American Protestant contact with Japan, which started with the visits of China missionaries to Japan in the fall of 1858 at

the time of the Harris Treaty, followed by the first group of missionaries establishing residence in Nagasaki and Kanagawa in the summer and fall of 1859.⁴ It investigates the development of the missionary and Japanese Christian movements down to the formation of the first significant Japanese Christian band, the Yokohama Band, in 1872.⁵ This small group of Japanese Christians became the single most important coterie of Christians in forging and leading the evangelistic Christian movement that in the late 1870s and early 1880s burst out of the confines of treaty port Tsukiji into metropolitan Tokyo and beyond. Yokohama Band members were instrumental in taking the Christian message along the silk trade roads into the Kantō plain and west to Niigata on the Japan Sea side, spreading the Christian Gospel north into the Tōhoku region, west into Chiba, and south into Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures. Yokohama Band members directly influenced other Christian groups, including the Shizuoka and Hirosaki bands in the early 1870s; their formations are also examined in this book, as they are integrally tied to events predating 1873. The Shizuoka and Hirosaki groups provide examples of different types of Christian bands to that formed in Yokohama. In looking at the members of the Yokohama and other Japanese bands, the book also emphasizes that Japanese opinion leaders, peer pressure and family ties, knowledge of Christianity acquired from reading Chinese-language sources, and discussions with friends were as significant, if not more so, than the role of the missionary in persuading young Japanese to become Christian.

Protestant Christianity spread along skeins of friendship, family, class, and economic and social contact. It was driven forward by the faith-fired engine of Japanese who had stumbled on, by chance or by providence, American missionaries in Yokohama or Christian *oyatoi* teachers in provincial schools of Western studies. A second source of Christian sympathizers that also should not be overlooked in any consideration of the early development of the Japanese Christian movement are those converted to or influenced by Christianity while studying overseas in the United States or Europe. Although the formation of the Yokohama Band was four years into the new Meiji era that began with the Restoration of 1868, it marks for both the parallel histories of the American missionary and the Japanese Christian movement, the end of the first period of Japanese contact with Protestantism, which was characterized by missionary preparation for the future against a background of strict prohibition of Christianity. The year 1873 saw the beginning of a new second period, for it was in that year following the decision of the Japanese government to remove the proscription edicts against Christianity from public view that missionaries and

Japanese Christians began to openly proselytize the Japanese. This second period from 1873 is characterized by the very significant expansion of both the missionary movement and the Japanese Christian movement in the years up to 1890. Such is the enormous canon of literature concerning this latter era that it is best dealt with as a separate study. Indeed, the attraction of the period between 1859 and 1873 is that the relatively few missionaries and even fewer Japanese Christians make it manageable to look at in the detail it deserves but has seldom received in studies, which tend to investigate longer time frames.

The importance of these fourteen years to the future of the Christian movement in Japan cannot be overestimated. These were years when major decisions, as Michael R. Auslin shows in regard to treaty relations, were taken about the shaping of the Japanese state.⁶ In shaping the Japanese state, decisions were also taken on granting religious toleration to Christianity. During the early seventeenth century, internal reasons caused the suppression of Christianity and led to the doom of thousands of Japanese Christians. After the reintroduction of Christianity in Japan in 1859, internal reasons led the Meiji government to continue on the prohibitory policies of the Tokugawa bakufu against Christianity – until religious toleration was finally granted with the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. It was Japanese success in diplomacy and negotiation with the Western powers that allowed the Meiji government to follow such a course without fear of retribution. The intellectual boundary that had served to cut off Japan from outside knowledge threatening to the Tokugawa regime continued to function in Meiji Japan and manifested itself, albeit in a limited form, as a barrier of resistance against outside religious ideas. What this did was ensure that even after missionaries began openly to evangelize the Japanese after 1873, few Japanese would become Christian.

In light of this, there is an element of contradiction in the term “preparation and promise” that Guido Verbeck, the Dutch Reformed missionary who wrote the first history of the Protestant missionary movement in Japan for the Osaka Missionary Conference of 1883, coined to describe the initial 1859 to 1873 period, as it represents missionary optimism rather than the more sanguine view about the long-term prospects for Christianity in Japan that emerges from this research.⁷ This study does show that missionaries made significant advances during this period and that the seeds they sowed with their educational and medical work helped to create an institutional base and a corps of Japanese converts vital to the growth of Protestant Christianity after 1873. Nevertheless, during these same years between 1859 and 1873, the reasons Japan never became a Christian nation can be

seen in opposition to this foreign faith, especially by the government. It has to be stressed that the promise of Christianity that missionaries saw even while the future Christianization of Japan was being precluded reveals that the transmission of values and beliefs across cultures is not simply a matter of acceptance or rejection. A smorgasbord, a veritable Viking's feast, of different ideas and knowledge was being offered up by missionaries and from which the Japanese freely picked, selecting those they considered the most delectable and valuable. It was not all or nothing when it came to Christianity. In their writings and correspondence, missionaries remained optimistic about the full acceptance of Christianity by the Japanese and maintained that Japan needed Christianity. This was not willful blindness to reality on their part or simple deference to those among their financial supporters above fifty years old (who were keen to see appreciable results before their time ran out) but a manifestation of the difficulty for contemporary Western missionaries of fathoming the contradictory currents within the alien Japanese society that surrounded them when it came to Christianity.

The analysis of missionary and Christian *oyatoi* literature raises the question of new approaches to missionary writings and history. Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*,⁸ there has been considerable academic interest in the question of orientalism as applied to Christian missions. One issue raised in this study is the applicability of orientalism in enhancing the understanding of missionary attitudes in Japan. Missionary literature reflected a wide spectrum of interests, falling into various loose categories: customs and manners, traditional religions, literature, scientific subjects, history, and language. Much effort was directed toward the practical concerns of translating the Bible, prayer books, and hymnals into Japanese, as well producing linguistic aids by way of grammars and dictionaries.⁹ As F.G. Notehelfer has pointed out, the westerner as recorder and observer provided a window into the social history of nineteenth-century Japan. He noted that for the sensitive European and American, Japan represented a strange but fascinating world that needed to be explored, observed, and recorded. Because everything was strange and new, even the most common and everyday elements of Japanese life became objects of scrutiny and comparison with the known and familiar. In the process, Western observers often concentrated on elements of Japan and Japanese life that Japanese regarded as too familiar to be recorded and preserved. Westerners, with their particular "vision" of nineteenth-century Japan, therefore provide the historian with useful insights into areas of Japanese life that were otherwise taken for granted and often ignored.¹⁰

Therein lies another of the attractions of looking at the missionaries in 1860s Japan.

Certainly, some of the views of missionaries about Japanese, and Japanese convert views about missionaries, can be seen to smack of orientalism or, conversely, occidentalism, at least from the vantage of hindsight. Chelsea Horton makes it clear in a review of a study of Canadian missionaries at home and abroad that missionary studies informed by developments in post-structuralist gender and cultural studies are to be commended, while the empirical genre of traditional mission studies is to be condemned. Horton also points out that there is an “overwhelming silence of missionary records on the experience of ‘Other’ and ‘Western’ women alike.”¹¹ Clearly, especially when it comes to transnational gender studies, some of the concepts of orientalism are of use in helping to understand the responses of missionaries to Japan. However, the ideas of Said as applied to Christian missions have to be regarded with great caution and careful scrutiny, as Andrew Porter so effectively shows in his analytical article on cultural imperialism and Protestant missionaries.¹² Jane Hunter, in her study of American missionary women and the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century China noted, “Supporters of American empire considered Christian religion as a necessary accompaniment to American expansionism, and in some cases the very justification for it.” Nevertheless, Hunter does go on to suggest that after American leaders began to understand the cost of imperialism, their support for political expansion declined and that they used “mission organizations as a partial strategy to retain the exhilaration of empire without paying its bills or taking on its corrupting responsibilities.” Missions were seemingly practising for Americans vicarious imperialism. Yet, Hunter stresses the central focus on Christianity in the work of women missionaries in China at the beginning of the twentieth century. She maintains “missionary women did not consciously work to enhance their own power in China or even to raise the status of women; rather, they aspired to bring Chinese women to the church in service both to God and to the Chinese Christian community.”¹³ Indeed, given the silence in missionary records about the experiences of the “other,” it might be concluded that an approach concentrating on orientalism is not be the best way of exploiting missionary materials. John M. Mackenzie in a perceptive chapter on missionaries, science, and the environment in nineteenth-century Africa has pointed out about David Livingstone that if he “could be turned into a multi-armed Hindu deity, we would find him bearing not only blessing and sextant but also magic lantern, scalpel, spade, level, brick, and bell.”¹⁴ The same would also apply to most of the American

missionaries who came to Japan after 1859: they were multiarmed individuals reacting to relations with other westerners and with Japanese on many levels. To approach the records and observations of missionaries by concentrating on the issues of American orientalism would appear to limit the study of missionaries to only one of their many arms. A stronger case can possibly be made for the writings of some of the Christian *oyatoi*, particularly the later writings of William Elliot Griffis long after he had left Japan, but caution still must be employed.¹⁵

Happily, the study of American missionaries, *oyatoi*, and Japanese Christians falls within the fold of the history of Meiji Japan's international relations. Kenneth B. Pyle, in an article on the deeper processes of history that worked on the making of modern Japan, suggests that historians of modern Japan over the last two generations have concentrated on the internal forces for change by investigating domestic factors and have tended to underestimate powerful external influences.¹⁶ In looking at the American missionary movement, this study investigates a significant external influence on Japanese society.

Utilizing both English- and Japanese-language sources, *American Missionaries* investigates the areas of prime concern for missionaries and the nascent Japanese Christian movement during these early years of Protestant endeavour in Japan. It is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 looks at Japan's first encounter with Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its legacy on attitudes toward Christianity. It proceeds to investigate the first American contacts with Japan, including the visits of Perry's squadron to the Ryūkyū Islands, where they encountered the first Protestant missionary resident in Naha. It goes on to look at the diplomatic foundations of American-Japanese relations in the treaties of Perry and Harris, before analyzing the first missionary impression of Japan and the first years of missionary residence in Nagasaki, Kanagawa, and Yokohama up to the aftermath of the Namamugi (Richardson) Incident in 1863. Chapter 2 looks at missionary hopes for change in the years after the Shimonoseki Incident of 1864. It deals with the activities of missionaries in Yokohama in teaching and their attitudes on Japanese politics and Christianity and ends at the conversion of the first Japanese Protestant in Japan. Chapter 3 is chronologically set amid the political turmoil leading to the Meiji Restoration in 1868. During these years, missionaries in the relative quiet of the treaty ports were actively employed teaching, engaging in medical work, preparing dictionaries, and translating the Bible. The broadening of missionary concerns beyond daily treaty port activities is seen in Chapter 4, which analyzes both the missionary and the diplomatic responses to the

key issue of the persecution of the Urakami Christians during the last days of the Tokugawa bakufu and first years of the Meiji period. Chapter 5 investigates the missionary and diplomatic help for Japanese students studying abroad in the United States, as those Japanese converted or influenced by Christianity overseas came to play a significant role in the future development of the Japanese Christian movement, that of the 1870s. Chapter 6 looks at the activities of missionary and American lay Christian teachers at schools of Western learning established at Niigata, Fukui, Shizuoka, and Hirosaki that had connections to the Yokohama Band. It also investigates Christian activity at the Kaisei Gakkō, the leading government institution of Western learning in Tokyo. These schools are important, for they helped to lay the groundwork for later Christian bands that would emerge in the 1870s. Chapter 7 details the arrival of new missionary reinforcements in Japan, the extension of missionary work from Yokohama to the Tsukiji treaty concession on the Tokyo waterfront, and the beginning of missionary work in the Kansai region with the opening of Osaka and Hyōgo (renamed Kobe in June 1869) as treaty ports. The climax to thirteen years of Japanese missionary work is reached with the growing size and sophistication of educational endeavour in Yokohama, including the creation of the first residential mission schools for girls, which contributed to the formation and composition of the Yokohama Band – the focus of Chapter 8.

The vast bulk of the research for this book was done in Japan, where universities and scholars have accumulated a treasure trove of materials relating to the missionary movement that is far more accessible to the scholar living outside, or even inside, the United States than are the church and university archives scattered inconveniently throughout America. Before the monumental work of Ōe Mitsuru on Bishop Williams and the American Church mission (Protestant Episcopal) in Japan, the lack of archival research into that mission surely reflected the isolation of the church archives in Texas.¹⁷ Happily, the Nippon Seikōkai (the Anglican Church in Japan) has at its headquarters microfilm copies of the Japan holdings of the American mother church, as well as a fine collection of Japanese- and English-language archival materials relating to missionaries and Japanese Anglicans. More holdings can be found in the libraries of the various campuses of Rikkyō University. What is true of the Anglicans is also true of the Congregationalists (International Christian University and Dōshisha), the Presbyterians and Reformed (Meiji Gakuin), and the Methodists (Aoyama Gakuin). There are specialized holdings in places such as

Tokyo Joshi Daigaku (Tokyo Woman's Christian University). The Yokohama Kaikō Shiryōkan, next to the famous Kaikan Kyōkai (Kaikan church) on the site of the first Japanese Protestant church near Yamashita Park, holds a veritable cornucopia of material relating to missionary and treaty port life in that city.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries were a harbinger of a growing American presence on the other side of the Pacific. The connection between Christianity and trade was clearly drawn by Orramel H. Gulick, an American Board (Congregational) missionary then working in Honolulu, who in 1861 pointed out that "as the people become civilized and Christianized a legitimate and healthy trade must inevitably spring up. It is my purpose to make a part of this trade contribute to my support, and to bring it into such a channel as to aid in the work of the missionaries and in the civilization of the people."¹⁸ The connection between Christianity and trade, with its obvious links to David Livingstone's contemporaneous work in central Africa, was matched if not surpassed by the connection between Christianity and science that was also pronounced in Livingstone's Christian message.¹⁹ The acceptance of the blessings of Western scientific progress was joined by missionaries to their desire to improve the civilization of the Japanese through Christianity, the essence of Western civilization. In looking at American images of China in the 1930s and 1940s, T. Christopher Jespersen has argued, "God and Mammon ... under paternalistic language and as part of a liberal-developmental ideology, forged the basic premise for American attitudes toward China. America would help China by bringing it into the modern world, which, of course, would be an 'American Century.'"²⁰ Earlier echoes of this can be seen in Gulick's statement.

Peter Duus has stressed "a new vision of the United States as a future commercial and naval power in the Pacific was probably the most powerful force propelling the Americans toward the opening of Japan."²¹ This vision was not fulfilled during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because the United States could not rival the commercial and military predominance of Britain in East Asia (indeed, it would remain second in importance to Britain until the opening of the Pacific War in 1941).²² America could and did lead in the spiritual arena with a missionary effort in Japan, its closest neighbour across the Pacific. Missionaries were first allowed entry into Japan under the provisions of the revised Treaty of Kanagawa, which the long-suffering Townsend Harris,²³ the first resident American governmental official in Japan, was able to negotiate in 1858

with the Tokugawa shogunate. These events taking place in Japan during the 1850s coincided with a new revived interest in overseas missions in the antebellum United States and led American missionaries to become the vanguard of the extensive foreign missionary movement that came to operate in Japan and Korea as well as China during the late nineteenth century.

Already stepping stones to Japan on both sides had been occupied, as American missionaries were at work in China and, equally as importantly, as Gulick's case shows, in the Hawaiian Islands. It was from these two directions that the first missionaries started to arrive in Nagasaki and Yokohama in 1859. In particular, Japan should be seen as an extension of work in China, since not only were many of the first missionaries Old China hands, but the missions themselves were often administratively linked to their counterparts in China. Naha in the Ryūkyū Islands, where Bernard Jean Bettelheim served as a medical and evangelistic missionary for the Loo-Choo Naval Mission between 1846 and 1854,²⁴ was as close to Japan as missionary work could be undertaken before Harris' treaty. Although the Ryūkyū Islands were not formally claimed by Japan until October 1872, Bettelheim is regarded in Japanese Anglican history as the first resident foreign Protestant missionary.²⁵ Any consideration of missionary work in Japan must take him into account not only because he had contact with Japanese during his years in Naha but also because of his translations of parts of the Bible into Japanese.²⁶ Moreover, Bettelheim can be seen to be representative of a type of evangelistic missionary who became the object of suspicion, if not open dislike, from ordinary laypeople for being narrow-minded. Protestant missionary contact with Japan did antedate Bettelheim: as early as 1837, missionaries sailed from Hong Kong on board the *Morrison* in its unsuccessful attempt to open American trade relations with Japan. The translation of the Bible into Chinese and the first attempts by early China missionaries to translate Bible passages into Japanese provided Japan missionaries after 1859 with the benefit of an accumulated Western knowledge about the Japanese language, which was helpful to their own efforts to translate the Bible into Japanese, and also with the advantage of being able to introduce Christian ideas to the Chinese literate Japanese through the medium of Chinese before Japanese translations were made. Prior experience as China missionaries before coming to Japan also helped to influence the approach of missionaries to mission work in Japan, as exemplified in their efforts to engage and convert the educated elite rather than more ordinary folk, and in their emphasis on educational and medical work.

Missionaries took advantage of the commercial trade routes and passenger steamship lines connecting the treaty ports of Japan to the East Asian dynamo of Shanghai and the China coast treaty ports. Late-nineteenth-century missionary life in Japan was punctuated by journeys, starting with the voyage that first brought the missionary to Japan and which was only the beginning of repeated comings and goings between the United States and Japan – between “home” and “away” – that made up the missionaries’ state of “permanent impermanence,” to borrow the term Elizabeth Buettner applied to resident British-Indian families in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century India.²⁷

Missionaries were only one part of the American community in Japan, and there was an antipathy between them and some secular Americans and other foreign residents in the treaty ports because of differences in both moral values and religious views (or lack of). Douglas Moore Kenrick quotes John R. Black, the Scottish Yokohama newspaperman, who wrote as late as 1880 that the opinion of some westerners, though not the majority, was that “missionaries are the bane of foreign intercourse; that all hatred shown toward foreigners both by Chinese and Japanese has originated in their dislike to them; and that the best thing that could happen, to facilitate good feeling between foreigners and natives, would be to ship off the whole of the staff of missionaries, be they of whatsoever denomination they may, and leave the religion of the natives uninterfered with.”²⁸ J.E. Hoare thought that in the nineteenth century “whatever the relationship between ‘Christianity and Commerce’ was[,] in theory there was little evidence of its operations in practice in Japan during the Meiji period.”²⁹ Animosity among the Western community in Yokohama during its early years was not restricted to missionaries: when a British diplomat accused the merchant body of being “the scum of Europe,” businessmen retaliated by accusing the officials of their countries with abuse of privileges and inadequate assistance to their nationals, and denying diplomatic and consular figures access to the merchants’ main communal refuge, the Yokohama United Club, until 1865. Arthur Collins Maclay wrote, “The missionary furnishes an apparently unailing source of recreation. He is served up with peculiar relish. The Oriental settlements seem to take unbounded interest in the private affairs of this harmless portion of the community.”³⁰ Kenrick notes, “Yokohama’s vital citizens [the Western ones] scourged themselves with antagonisms ranging from individual jealousies to group and national rivalries. Apart from hostility between businessmen, diplomats, and missionaries, verbal conflict between the different nationalities simmered constantly and frequently found strong expression in the

English language press."³¹ It is certainly an understatement to say that the treaty port of Yokohama was a dynamic and lively place to live. The larger-than-life figure Michael Buckworth Bailey, the British chaplain of Christ Church, Yokohama, which catered to the foreign community, provided Harold S. Williams, the energetic Australian scribe of amusing and mildly indiscreet tales of foreigners in Mikadoland, with good copy.³² Yet, Bailey is remembered for publishing a Japanese-language paper, *Bankoku Shinbunshi*, which aimed to "acquaint Japanese with the affairs of all nations" and lasted for a full two years and five months after 1867.³³ Sometimes, merchants and missionaries could be friends; Francis Hall was only one example of a merchant who was a close friend of the missionaries.³⁴ From time to time, the various groups that made up the Western community in Yokohama put aside their differences and came together on good terms, not the least because many shared a fascination with things Japanese; this coming together led, for instance, to missionaries, diplomats, merchants, and naval officers cooperating to found the Asiatic Society of Japan, the famous learned society, in Yokohama in 1872.³⁵

The Asiatic Society of Japan has played an important role both in introducing scholastic rigour to the study of Japanese society, culture, politics, and religions and in helping to put Japanese studies into the pattern of international academic disciplines. Two missionaries who loom large in this study, James Curtis Hepburn, the Presbyterian medical missionary, and Samuel Robbins Brown, the Dutch Reformed missionary, were both among the founding members of the society and served as the second and third presidents of it.³⁶ However, with the marked exception of Arthur Lloyd,³⁷ the British Anglican and sometime president, whose voluminous studies of Japanese Buddhism take up so much space in the society's *Transactions* during the doldrum days of the 1890s, missionary contributions to the scholarly understanding of Japan were largely made outside the confines of the Asiatic Society. To some extent, this reflected the fact that missionaries, unlike their colleagues in Taiwan and Korea, were not the vanguard of Western specialists of Japanese studies, except, as the cases of Hepburn and Brown illustrate, in that most basic of Japanese studies, that of the language itself. Indeed, other than the translation of the Bible, Hepburn's dictionary must be viewed as the single most important missionary contribution in the field of literary endeavour during the late nineteenth century.³⁸ In the process of living, working, and studying in Japan, missionaries were in their own way making history. This is a particularly germane time to investigate the American missionary movement

during its first years in Japan because of the current vogue in academic research into early American visitors to Bakumatsu and early Meiji Japan, Charles Longfellow, the poet's son, among them.³⁹ In this Americans are still far behind British academics who, goaded by the energetic Sir Hugh Cortazzi, an ex-ambassador, have produced under the auspices of the Japan Society scores of portraits of Britons with Japan connections and Japanese with British ties.⁴⁰ Although the American missionary movement can claim to have provided a very significant vehicle – perhaps even the most significant outside of intergovernmental ones – of contact between Americans and Japanese, many networks of contact were in the process of being developed during this period. It is important to situate the missionary endeavour within the context of the beginnings of the broader American exploration of Japan and its culture, which the new research is illuminating. The forthcoming sesquicentennial of the beginning of American Protestant missionary work in metropolitan Japan in 1859 also serves to draw attention to those pioneer missionaries and to reappraise their ideas and influence.

In a classic 1965 article on American missionaries and Japanese Christians, which remains a seminal work for those studying the development of the Protestant movement and its relationship to the modernization of Japan, John Howes concentrates on the examples of three society missionaries and two lay Christians (James C. Hepburn and James Ballagh, and Jerome Davis, Leroy Janes, and William Smith Clark, respectively) and five Japanese Christians (Honda Yōichi, Uemura Masahisa, Ebina Danjō, Kozaki Hiromichi, and Uchimura Kanzō) who were led by one or another of the missionaries toward becoming Christian. Each of the ten share characteristics, according to Howes, that reflected the American Protestant missionary movement and the general nature of the Japanese Christian leadership. Both Americans and Japanese “came from religiously conservative groups who felt themselves losing status in their home lands.”⁴¹ Howes argues that the five Americans “brought a specific kind of faith with them. It had grown originally in New England and was spreading rapidly in the American west. It emphasized personal conversion, implicit faith in the Bible, moral rigor, and a sense of mission.”⁴² These views came to be shared by the Japanese converts. *American Missionaries* shows that this list needs to be reappraised and modified, and the emphasis on New England Puritanism moderated in light of recent research. Through this study I also hope to draw attention once again to the role of missionaries in the early relations between Japan and the United States.

There has been, of course, an abiding interest in early American contacts with Japan, as seen in Edward R. Beauchamp's short study of William Elliot Griffis, a leading Christian *oyatoi*.⁴³ The interest in Griffis owes much to Ardath W. Burks at Rutgers University for drawing attention to the rich archival vein of that university's Griffis Collection, resulting in studies of overseas students, foreign *oyatoi*, and Meiji Japan.⁴⁴ The Griffis connection is also seen in Hazel Jones's monograph on foreign *oyatoi* in Meiji Japan.⁴⁵ This interest was very much in keeping with the then broad concern of North American scholars in the modernization of Japan and the role of Americans in it. This study makes a contribution to the field of *oyatoi* and Griffis studies by looking at what Griffis and the Christian *oyatoi* saw as the root of modernization, Christianity.

More recent academic interest has turned the focus on the modernization of Japan to emphasize the individual and the American discovery of Japanese culture. In this, much is owed to the work of F.G. Notehelfer, whose outstanding monograph on Captain Leroy Janes, an American Christian teacher in Kumamoto during the mid-1870s, was followed by his brilliant editing of the journal of Francis Hall, an American merchant in Bakumatsu Japan.⁴⁶ Notehelfer's monograph on Janes served to put an individual traditionally relegated to the backwater of Japanese Christian history into the full mainstream of American academic interest in early Meiji Japan and its encounter with the West. Francis Hall was a devout Christian who had close contact with American missionaries in Kanagawa and Yokohama. However, his interest in Japan did not revolve around the propagation of the Christian message but, rather, secular concerns. Hall represents American-Japanese contact at the individual and local level. Japanese interest in the minutiae of local or regional history and institutional history means that the contributions of individual foreigners such as Hall or his missionary friends to the founding of universities, schools, newspapers, businesses, and churches are not forgotten in Japan. It has to be borne in mind that for missionaries and other Americans resident in Japan during the 1860s and early 1870s, American-Japanese relations was very much localized to the treaty ports of Yokohama, Tsukiji, Osaka, Hyōgo (Kobe), Niigata, Hakodate, and Nagasaki, or to Fukui, Shizuoka, Tokyo, or Hirosaki, beyond the treaty port pale where Christian *oyatoi* were able to gain employment. Although Christianity had profound national significance to Japan in terms of its continued prohibition or its toleration and its implications for Japanese society, religions, politics, and foreign relations, missionaries themselves were playing to local audiences rather than on the national stage. This helps to explain the general lack of attention to

missionaries in standard accounts of American-Japanese relations, which are concerned with government-to-government relations. As will be shown, American missionaries had significant contact with American diplomats at a personal level and in official dealings. Of considerable help in illuminating the diplomatic dimension has been Jack L. Hammersmith's study on the development of the US legation in Japan.⁴⁷ The importance of diplomatic materials in the study of missionary and Japan Christian movements during this period cannot be underestimated.

Although Duus's brief textbook on the Japanese discovery of America reveals little Japanese interest in American Christianity, its final excerpt taken from Griffis's *The Mikado's Empire* does reveal the importance that Griffis and those of his spiritual ilk put on Japan's acceptance of Christianity as the way through which Japan could take its equal place among the foremost nations of the world.⁴⁸ There were others, of course – Edward Sylvester Morse, the Tokyo Imperial University teacher and proponent of Darwinian ideas, prominent among them, who would virulently disagree about the importance of Christianity.⁴⁹ Morse and those associated with him in Boston and at that city's Museum of Fine Arts were concerned with preserving the best in Japanese traditional art, architecture, and culture and opposed to changing the soul of Japan. The very New England, where Puritanism had flourished, also produced in its cultural world in the late nineteenth century an intellectual elite that had no sympathy with the Christianization of the Japanese.

The American missionary movement in Japan was only part of a great American adventure with Bakumatsu and early Meiji Japan and must be seen in that context. Diplomatic history retains its primacy in the study of international relations because the cause and effect of a government's international policy can be concretely monitored in diplomatic correspondence and reports. The conclusions that can be reached by looking at the interplay of American missionaries and Japanese converts as a window through which to study international relations are much more nebulous,⁵⁰ for although the ultimate aim was to convert a nation, it was being done one person at a time. Moreover, for every Griffis there was an Edward H. House, and for every erratic Leroy Janes there was a gallivanting Charles Longfellow, who suffered no qualms of conscience over indulging in carefree hedonistic pleasures. Yet many Americans, House and Longfellow included, were attracted to Japan and its traditional culture. Every variety of American came to Japan and made positive and negative contributions to American-Japanese relations, but still – and this should not be forgotten – the missionaries stand out.

They stand out perhaps not in the way that they might have liked, for it proved unnecessary, despite Griffis' belief, for Japan to become Christian in order to gain equality with the Western powers. Griffis stated at the conclusion of *The Mikado's Empire* that "with those forces that centre in pure Christianity, and under that Almighty Providence who raises up one nation and casts another down, I cherish the firm hope that Japan will in time take and hold her equal place among the foremost nations of the world, and that, in the onward march of civilization which follows the sun, the Sunland may lead the nations of Asia that are now appearing in the theatre of universal history."⁵¹

By 1905, Japan had demonstrated with her victory of Russia that the acceptance of Christianity was not needed. Likewise, partly through the missionaries' own fault (but only partly), the Christian message that they propagated failed to appeal to a large number of Japanese. Misguided though their hopes for a transformed Japan with Christianity at its root might have been (especially when viewed from the vantage point of the post-Christian early-twenty-first century), few other Americans could rival missionaries in their commitment to improve Japan and better the lives of ordinary Japanese. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Americans from every walk of life (who never had a hope themselves of journeying to Japan) shared in this commitment; they were the ones who gave their hard-earned pennies to support missionaries in far-off Japan. The realization of the Christianization of Japan was not to them a ludicrous pipe dream but a real possibility, despite the early setbacks Christianity had first encountered in Japan in the sixteenth century.

Nevertheless, missionaries were confronted with the residue of hostility toward Christianity that was a result of Japan's first experience with the foreign religion. Yet, as Chapter 1 shows, during the later part of the 1860s and early 1870s, a changing intellectual atmosphere in Japan was starting to appear that might provide some hope for the future of Christianity in Japan.

Abbreviations

ABCJM	Papers of the Japan mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AC	Accession number
ADM	Admiralty
Despatches US Consuls	United States State Department Despatches from United States Consuls to Japan
Despatches US Ministers	United States State Department Despatches from United States Ministers to Japan
ECJR	Archives of the Episcopal Church, RG71 DFMS (Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society) Japan Records
JMRCA	Papers of the Japan Mission of the Reformed Church in America
KJJNH	<i>Konsaisu Jimei Jitei: Nihon Hen</i>
KSMK	<i>Kirisutokyō Shakai Mondai Kenkyū</i>
MGBP	Meiji Gakuin Brown Papers
MGC	Meiji Gakuin Collection
MGVP	Meiji Gakuin Verbeck Papers
NA/PRO	National Archives/Public Record Office
NKRDJ	<i>Nihon Kirisutokyō Rekishi Dai Jiten</i>
PCBFMJ	Presbyterian Church Board of Foreign Missions, 1833-1911, Japan Mission
Rikkyō	Rikkyō Daigaku Hyaku Nijūgo Nenshi Henshū Iinkai, ed., <i>Rikkyō Daigaku hyaku nijūgo nenshi</i>
WEGC	William Elliot Griffis Collection
YKS	Yokohama Kaikō Shiryōkan

American Missionaries,
Christian *Oyatoi*, and Japan,
1859-73

1

Beginnings in Bakumatsu Japan

Christianity was introduced into Japan in the mid-sixteenth century when Francis Xavier landed in southern Kyūshū.¹ For nearly a century, Jesuit, and later Franciscan and Dominican, missionaries propagated the Gospel in Kyūshū and southern Honshū. Yet, by the early seventeenth century, all missionaries had been driven out of Japan, and Christianity had been proscribed, more for political reasons than religious ones. It was not until 1859, after the signing of the series of treaties between Japan and the Western powers, that missionaries once again were allowed to reside in Japan, and then only within treaty port concessions. It was only in 1873 that they felt free to proselytize openly among the Japanese, though the official proscription of Christianity was not removed until the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889.

This chapter begins by looking at Japan's first encounter with Christianity and its legacy in terms of the development of an anti-Christian tradition. In part because of its hostility to Christianity, the Tokugawa bakufu instituted a *sakoku* (closed country) policy, which Commodore Perry's two visits to Japan shattered. The chapter goes on to investigate the first American contacts with Japan, including the visits of Perry's squadron to the Ryūkyūs, where they encountered the first Protestant missionary resident in Naha. It analyzes the diplomatic foundations of American-Japanese relations in the treaties of Perry and Harris before detailing the first missionary impression of Japan and the first years of missionary residence in Nagasaki, Kanagawa, and Yokohama up to the aftermath of the Namamugi (Richardson) Incident in 1863. American missionaries with the capacity to communicate with educated Japanese in Chinese allowed the Protestant missionary movement to swiftly exploit the Christian possibilities in Japan after the opening of the first Japanese treaty ports. In that sense, missionary work in Japan was simply an extension of existing work in metropolitan

China and not a dramatic new departure. Although it was the Harris Treaty that gave the China missionaries their opportunity to begin their work in the treaty ports, it was British and French military power that allowed them and all other foreigners to remain in Japan. Before 1863, it was by no means certain that the American missionary movement would continue to exist; after that date, there was no doubt that westerners and the missionary movement were in Japan to stay. Thus, the resolution of the Namamugi Incident to the satisfaction of the British and Western communities in Japan marked for the American missionary endeavour the end of the first phase of their experience in Japan.

The pioneer American missionaries when they began to arrive in Japan in late 1859 found themselves in a country that prohibited Christianity beyond the treaty ports as a result of its first encounter with the Western religion.

Japan's First Encounter with Christianity and Its Legacy

From the late 1630s until it was broken by the arrival of Commodore Perry and his black ships in 1853,² Japan's international relations were governed by the Tokugawa bakufu's self-imposed policy of isolationism, the so-called *sakoku* (closed country) policy, which became more stringent as the years advanced.³ Tokugawa culture, Auslin argues, "rested on three interlinked boundaries that formed concentric circles emanating from Edo Castle": the innermost was ideological and protected the authority and position of the shogun, who was responsible for both foreign and domestic policy; next was an intellectual boundary that served to cut off Japan from "foreign knowledge that might lead to new conceptions of the polity"; and last was the physical boundary of the seventeenth-century maritime edicts that separated Japan from contact with foreigners, with a few exceptions. By 1872, Auslin contends, the Iwakura Mission the Meiji government sent overseas to renegotiate the treaties of 1858 had "surrendered the idea of maintaining boundaries, and instead set the stage for the transformation of Japanese culture as a whole."⁴ This is generally true, but the transformation was only partial, for it did not include religious toleration and left intact that part of the intellectual boundary that protected religion and traditional or newly invented religious values that served to bolster the authority and position of the emperor or to enhance governmental control over society.

There is no doubt that missionaries subscribed to the view enunciated by Griffis in his famous 1876 study of Japan, *The Mikado's Empire*, when he wrote about the achievements of "our missionaries, a noble body of cultured

gentlemen and ladies, with but few exceptions, [who] have translated large portions of the Bible in a scholarly and simple version, and thus given to Japan the sum of religious knowledge and the mightiest moral force and motor of civilization."⁵ Griffis firmly believed, as did many Christians, both American and Japanese, that Christianity was the motor of civilization. This notion would be vigorously challenged by other Americans and Japanese, especially after the introduction of Darwinian and evolutionary thought into Japan in the late 1870s.

However, it was the acceptance of this idea by Japanese Christian inquirers that allowed them to rationalize becoming Christian as a patriotic gesture for the benefit of Japan. In 1871, when *Taiseijin no jōsho ni gisu* ("Memorial on the Imitation of Westerners"), the memorial written by leading Confucian scholar Nakamura Masanao (Keiū) to the emperor advocating freedom of Christian worship, was published, this underpinning was already beginning to form.⁶ It had gained considerable influence among Christian sympathizers by April 1876, when Yokoi Tokio, a member of the Kumamoto Christian Band, wrote to Christian friends in Nagasaki that the civilizing of Japan could not be undertaken without encouraging the spread of Christianity.⁷ If Japan was to gain equality with the Western powers in terms of military strength and international recognition, it needed to be transformed by new ideas of civilization and enlightenment, summed up in the slogan *bunmei kaika* ("civilization and enlightenment"). To some Japanese, Christianity was considered the spiritual basis of the visible power of Western countries – the religion of enlightenment. These Japanese, therefore, became Christian out of patriotism for the new Japan. For Griffis and his ilk, before the engine of Christianity, once geared into drive, could motor a civilized Japan to her sun-kissed place among the foremost nations of the world, certain challenges had to be overcome.

It was evident that the proclamation of the Christian Gospel in Japanese culture would inevitably involve conflict with traditional ideas and religions and would require the taking in of elements capable of becoming the flesh and blood of Japanese Christianity. During the Bakumatsu and early Meiji periods, Christian ideas were largely unknown but still widely feared and were part of a European culture that was new to the Japanese. Foremost among the obstacles confronting Christianity was the antipathy toward the Western religion that stemmed from Japan's first experiences with it during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The traditional arguments against Christianity were highly sophisticated and continued to exert an influence and to resonate well beyond the

Tokugawa and Meiji periods. Kiri Paramore has stressed that “the image of Christianity contained within anti-Christian discourses has come to be discussed in terms of its role as a ‘representation of the other’ over the course of the Tokugawa period, that is, as ‘an imagined rather than real projection of what was alien to the consciousness of order, a necessary “demon,” an oppositional figure against which the early modern Japanese order was established.’”⁸ This resonates with Carol Gluck’s view that Japanese Christians during the 1890s served as “metaphorical foreigners in whose alien reflection the silhouette of patriotism emerged that more clearly”⁹ for those developing ideology during the late Meiji period. Sugii Mutsurō has argued that the development of anti-Christian thought was broadly based. He points out that Christianity was attacked because it was foreign. This attack was backed up by the prestige of Japanese tradition, by traditional thought that was intimately connected with established religion, and through the use of arguments for the defence of the fatherland and of Japanese religion.¹⁰ During the Tokugawa period, Yamaguchi Teruomi has more recently stressed, various anti-Christian arguments, many of which had strong xenophobic undertones or were filled with spy-conspiracy theories, were put forward to justify Christianity’s prohibition.¹¹

Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi notes that the late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century Tokugawa philosopher Arai Hakuseki held that “Christianity was a doctrine unsuited to and incompatible with Tokugawa Japan’s bakuhan state and social order.”¹² Furthermore, Wakabayashi argues that Arai implied in his writings that if state authority was to maintain both its territorial integrity against foreign nations and its political stability at home, it had to control the spiritual and religious lives of its people, allowing it to propagate those beliefs and values best suited to its socio-political structure while at the same time excluding any outside doctrines that might be harmful.¹³ In looking at the development of influential Mito ideology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Victor Koschmann concluded that Aizawa Seishisai, one of the leading Mito school scholars, held the view as well that religion must also serve the interests of the government.¹⁴ The lesson that Aizawa drew from the Christian century was that the loyalty of Japanese Kirishitan to their object of worship took precedence over their loyalty to their feudal lord, the very keystone of Tokugawa society.¹⁵ Kenneth B. Pyle stresses that Aizawa argued that the bakufu, in order to counter the ideological threat Christianity posed, should have the emperor “propagate a Japanese state religion to cultivate national unity and mass loyalty. Aizawa called this spiritual unity *kokutai*, or ‘what is essential to make a people into a nation.’”¹⁶ Of

particular interest in Aizawa's ideas about Christianity, which also manifested itself in the writings of other Japanese, both anti- and pro-Christianity, was his view of its ideological centrality in Western thought.

The arguments put forward in the anti-Christian treatise *Benmō* by the Confucian scholar Yasui Sokken in 1873 not only summed up the traditional Japanese criticism of Christianity but also pointed to the crux of opposition, which was that the Western religion threatened to disturb Japanese society and its form of government.¹⁷ That form of government was presided over by the emperor, to whom loyalty at all levels was expected. As Robert Bellah has shown, in Japan, loyalty permeated the whole of society and became an ideal of all classes, and it took precedence over the Confucian ideal of filial piety. This was very different from China, where filial piety superseded loyalty, which was very restricted in its focus and applied only to those holding office and not even to all members of the gentry class.¹⁸ Because of this difference in Japan, many of the early Protestants encountered hostility from family members and acquaintances, as well as from Buddhists and Shintoists. Notto R. Thelle saw Buddhism after 1868 threatened from all sides and facing a possible death blow from a vigorous Christian Church.¹⁹ Therefore, Buddhists had no room for concessions when dealing with Christianity.

From the start, the question of the proper relationship between Japanese Christians and their society bedevilled Japanese Christianity. Christianity was regarded as a foreign religion (*jakyō*). Ōuchi Saburō, the Christian historian, saw the disdain of Japanese for *jakyō* during the Meiji period take the form of expressions such as *tōyō no geijitsu, seiyō no gijutsu* (Eastern arts [aesthetics] and Western techniques) and *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western learning), meant to affirm the superiority of Japanese philosophy, religious beliefs, and aesthetics and infer that the West was weak in those things because it had only techniques. This helped to reinforce and foster the idea of Japan as the land of the gods (*kamiguni*).²⁰ In this, Japanese Christians were the victims of two factors: one, the historical perception of Christians held by both the authorities and many of their fellow Japanese as a result of the first Japanese experience with Christianity; and two, the historical method of dealing with Christians, which was persecution. Tokugawa and early Meiji policies toward Christians did not widely differ, and as late as 1872 Christianity was regarded as a danger to the state. So deeply engrained was anti-Christian feeling within Japanese society that there was little need for public proscription edicts against it. Because of this, the eventual rescinding of anti-Christian edicts by the Meiji authorities in 1873 was simply a cosmetic change; it did nothing to alter the opposition

to Christianity among the general Japanese public or to modify Meiji government religious policies in favour of Christianity. Missionaries, for their part, took the rescinding of the edicts as the signal to begin the open propagation of the Christian message to the Japanese. This in itself was an example of misunderstanding or misinterpretation across cultural boundaries on the part of missionaries, for the authorities had conceded very little.

Early Contacts with Tokugawa Japan

The *sakoku* policy, which restricted contact between Japanese and westerners (except for the Dutch at their factory on Deshima Island in Nagasaki harbour), was effective in part because the Western powers simply did not challenge it. With the China trade proving to be commercially profitable, there was no reason to believe that Japan could yield greater profits than China and thus no grounds justifying the nuisance of breaking the self-imposed Japanese isolation. In 1792, the first Russian expedition to Japan under Adam Kirilovich Laksman (1766-96?), arrived in Nemuro, in Hokkaidō, with orders from Catherine the Great to repatriate Japanese castaways, but Laksman's attempt to open diplomatic and trade relations came to nought because of Japanese prevarication and lack of Russian will.²¹ It was not until 1804 that the Russians made another (unsuccessful) attempt to open relations with the Japanese.

By that time, American ships were active in the China trade.²² American contact with Japan began at the end of the eighteenth century. In early May 1790, the first-known American vessel to arrive in Japan, the small brigantine *Lady Washington*, visited the southern tip of Honshū off the Kii Peninsula, claiming shelter from a storm.²³ Between 1797 and 1809, twelve American ships visited Nagasaki under charter of the Dutch governor general in Java. The early visits of chartered American ships led to nothing, and, as Samuel Eliot Morison has pointed out, no American ship managed to trade with Japan from 1807 to 1853.²⁴ This was partly due to bad luck.

As early as 1815, Captain David Porter, famous for commanding the USS *Essex* in the eastern Pacific during the War of 1812, suggested a commercial and scientific expedition be undertaken to Japan, but this idea found no favour with the US government.²⁵ By 1822, however, as many as thirty American whaling ships were operating in the neighbourhood of Japan, far from the ports of Hawaii, where they could be repaired and victualled, and it was inevitable that some ships might try to make contact with the Japanese.²⁶ In 1832, President Andrew Jackson sent Edmund Roberts to conclude treaties with countries in the Middle East and Asia, but Roberts,

after successfully negotiating treaties with both the Sultan of Muscat and the King of Siam, died in Macau before reaching Japan.²⁷ The stepping stone to Japan from Hawaii was the Bonin Islands (also known as the Ogasawara Islands), which had been permanently settled as early as 1830 by twenty or so people, including Nathaniel Savory from Massachusetts, who arrived from the Hawaiian Islands.²⁸ Whalers and naval ships, Perry's among them, visited Port Lloyd, the chief settlement, to get supplies.²⁹ However, it was left to American merchant Charles W. King, who had business interests in Canton, to make the first concerted effort to open Japan to American trade.

In 1837, King sailed from Canton aboard the *Morrison*, ostensibly to land seven shipwrecked Japanese sailors on the shores of Tokyo Bay.³⁰ The real purpose of this private endeavour was to trade.³¹ Christianity also joined this commercial attempt to break down Japan's isolationist policy: S. Wells Williams, an American Board China layman missionary, sailed on the ship at King's invitation.³² Karl Gutzlaff and Peter Parker, two other famous China missionaries, were also on board.³³ The *Morrison* was fired on by the Japanese and failed to land its Japanese castaways. The incident caused the Japanese authorities to discuss the issue of castaways, but they decided not to change their policies.³⁴ Morrison has noted that as a result of the publicity the *Morrison* received, Japan rarely dropped out of sight in Washington, and American Protestant missionary societies already operating in Africa, India, China, and Polynesia saw Japan as a potential new mission field.³⁵ The dramatic growth of New England whaling activity, which saw an estimated two hundred American whalers operating in the north Pacific close to Japan by the mid-nineteenth century, made it increasingly pressing for the US government to make a formal attempt to inaugurate relations with Japan.³⁶ Furthermore, the conquest of California in 1844 brought Americans to the Pacific littoral facing Japan, and the prospect of direct trade across the Pacific became a burning issue.³⁷

In June 1846, Commodore James Biddle entered Japanese waters but returned home to the United States without opening Japan to American trade.³⁸ Biddle could claim the distinction of being the first American naval officer to anchor a fleet off Japan and to palaver with Japanese officials.³⁹ Although Biddle was under orders to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce similar to the one he had just ratified with the Qing government in China, the Japanese realized that he was in a hurry to return to the United States and so refused to negotiate.⁴⁰ Knowing that Biddle was going to Japan in June or July, in April 1846 the French had sent a naval squadron to the Ryūkyū Islands to negotiate a treaty with the Ryūkyūan court at

Naha, the motive being to make the Ryūkyūs the French entrepôt for trade going to Nagasaki. The French had then sailed for Nagasaki, hoping to reach there at the same time as Biddle was at Uraga, at the entrance of Tokyo Bay. A permanent French presence had existed in Naha since 1844, when a young Roman Catholic missionary, Théodore-Augustin Forcade, had settled there. This French activity had raised the question of Tokugawa shogunate's responsibilities toward the Ryūkyūs and its place within the *sakoku* policy. Fearing that it would run afoul of Japanese domestic policies restricting trade, the Satsuma *han*, one of the most powerful *han* of the period and which maintained a lucrative trade from Kagoshima with the islands, argued that the Ryūkyūs should be regarded outside Japan. The bakufu decided to side with the Satsuma position on the separation of the Ryūkyūs from Japan because of the possible harmful consequences for Japan of a military conflict between France and the Ryūkyūs.⁴¹ Although the bakufu's response had the immediate benefit of averting a possible war with France over islands on the Japanese periphery, it marked a weakening of its diplomatic powers and a bolstering of Satsuma's power, as it was now able to enrich itself (without Tokugawa restrictions or supervision) through its trade with the Ryūkyūs. The Ryūkyūan authorities were also weakened because they could no longer rely on Tokugawa support if they chose to resist Western pressure to open the islands to trade.

In light of what happened in the Ryūkyūs, the bakufu was relieved that Biddle simply sailed away. Incidents, however, continued to take place that caused concern to the Americans. In April 1846, the whaler *Lawrence* was wrecked, and seven crew members eventually taken to Nagasaki, where they were finally allowed to leave in October 1847, on board a Dutch ship bound for Batavia (present-day Jakarta).⁴² Even though they were relatively well treated in Japan, one of the seven died of disease in Nagasaki, and the *Lawrence's* second mate later claimed in a Singapore newspaper that the Japanese had murdered the dead man.⁴³ In May 1848, fifteen sailor deserters from the whaler *Lagoda* (seven Americans and eight Hawaiians) landed in Hokkaidō. They were sent to Nagasaki, where they remained over the winter of 1848, during which time one of them died of disease and another committed suicide.⁴⁴ They were an unruly lot. Happily for them, the Dutch consul in Canton informed the American commissioner in China, John W. Davis, that they were being held in Nagasaki.

Davis arranged for the sloop USS *Preble*, under Commander James Glynn, to go to Nagasaki to obtain the release of the American prisoners. The *Preble* sailed from Hong Kong on 21 February 1849, stopping at Naha, where Glynn interviewed the ever complaining Bernard Jean Bettelheim,

the Protestant medical missionary who had been living there since May 1846. As a result of this meeting, Glynn adopted a more militant attitude toward the Japanese than had the pusillanimous Biddle.⁴⁵ Arriving in Nagasaki on 17 April, Glynn was able to rescue the thirteen surviving *Lagoda* deserters and also bring away Ranald MacDonald, the son of a Hudson Bay factor who had been so attracted to Japan that he had purposely landed there and whose presence in Nagasaki Glynn had been previously unaware of.⁴⁶ As well as retrieving the American prisoners, Glynn had other purposes in coming to Nagasaki: to obtain permission to have an American consul in Japan, and to arrange the use of an island near Edo (or Yedo, renamed Tokyo in 1868) as a coaling station on the proposed steamship route between San Francisco and Shanghai.⁴⁷ In order not to jeopardize the release of the Americans, he chose not to bring up these other issues with the Japanese authorities. Glynn was able to report to Washington that he thought conditions were favourable for another attempt to open Japan if a strong naval force could be sent.⁴⁸ William McOmie has argued that the supposedly bad treatment of the *Lagoda* crew by the Japanese received much attention back in the United States, initiating a wave of popular prejudice and resentment against Japan.⁴⁹ John Curtis Perry has suggested that it was only the prospect of steam navigation across the Pacific and the possibility of Japan as a source of coal that led to the development of serious American interest in negotiating with Japan.⁵⁰ It was envisaged that once a trans-Pacific trade route had been established, United States commerce could effectively compete against that of Britain, dependent on the longer trade route from the Atlantic, for the lucrative China trade.

Bettelheim in the Ryūkyū Islands

Although Britain was loath to open trade relations with Japan, British naval officers were instrumental in beginning what is now considered by many (especially Japanese Anglicans) to be the first Protestant mission to the Japanese, the Loo-Choo Naval Mission. Bernard Jean Bettelheim and his English wife were associated with the British Anglican Church Missionary Society and were the Loo-Choo Naval Mission's resident medical missionary couple in Naha between 1846 and 1854.⁵¹ A miserable time Bettelheim had of it, for he was beaten and ostracized by the Ryūkyūans and held in contempt by commanders of Royal Navy gunboats that infrequently visited them.⁵² In early February 1852, Bettelheim wrote to Commander Charles Shadwell of HMS *Phoenix* complaining about his treatment at the hands of Japanese soldiers and arguing that British settlers would never be safe

until gunboat diplomacy was used to teach the Japanese a lesson.⁵³ Shadwell strongly disagreed about the need for gunboat diplomacy and thought Bettelheim exaggerated his complaints about the Ryūkyūan authorities. In his report on his visit to the Ryūkyūs, Shadwell wrote that Bettelheim's enthusiastic zeal was undoubted but that he was narrow-minded in his view of the world and that his isolation in Naha had led to "an idiosyncratic turn of mind which renders him an unsafe guide in matters which might involve grave political consequences."⁵⁴ The charge that Bettelheim was narrow-minded was a common criticism of evangelistically minded missionaries, but there is no doubt that he had developed in Naha an idiosyncratic turn of mind.

Bettelheim fared little better when Commodore Perry first visited Naha in May 1853. He had a long conversation with Perry soon after his arrival, very likely giving him a full report of his frustrations with the Ryūkyūans and what he saw as their negative characteristics.⁵⁵ McOmie has suggested that, as a result of his meeting with Bettelheim, Perry was prepared to match the chicanery and duplicity that Bettelheim saw in the Okinawan authorities with "a little Yankee diplomacy."⁵⁶ By the end of Perry's visit to Naha, however, Perry's relations with Bettelheim were not good, and the commodore rejected Bettelheim's offer to join the expedition to Japan as an interpreter. This was much to the relief of Samuel Wells Williams, the expedition's missionary interpreter, who had developed a real dislike for Bettelheim while Perry's flagship was anchored off Naha.⁵⁷ Part of the problem was Bettelheim's acting as an agent for the American warships in the purchase of provisions during their extended visits in 1853 and 1854, leading to suspicions that he was lining his own pockets. Yet, the officers of USS *Plymouth* thought his services had been so valuable to them during the winter of 1853 that they presented him with a silver goblet worth \$80.⁵⁸ Attitudes toward Bettelheim among Americans with Perry's squadron were mixed. Lieutenant George Henry Preble of the USS *Macedonian* was generally sympathetic, but he thought that despite Bettelheim's sincerity and enthusiasm, he was the worst kind of person to be a missionary to the Ryūkyūans: his great contempt for them meant that he knew less about the Ryūkyūans after eight years than some knew after eight months.⁵⁹ William Heine, the official artist with Perry, clearly liked Bettelheim. Heine was very impressed when he became, by chance one night in February 1854, an unseen onlooker at the Bettelheim family's evening prayers.⁶⁰ The German-speaking Heine was a young man and possibly a little homesick, which might account for why he found the prayers of a close-knit family so touching. His overall generosity of feeling toward Bettelheim might

also be a reflection that the polylingual missionary's German was better than his English. On 15 January 1854, Bettelheim preached aboard the *Macedonian*; Preble recorded that "it was an ingenious and animated discourse to which his foreign accentuation and broken English gave additional force. Reading the Hymns was rather a stumbling block to him but he showed he conceived their sense."⁶¹ Since Bettelheim was unable to convert the Ryūkyūans to Christianity, Preble thought his chief contribution was the translation of the Scriptures into Ryūkyūan language and the construction of a Ryūkyūan dictionary.⁶² A linguist said to have mastered thirteen languages, Bettelheim managed to translate four chapters of the New Testament into the Ryūkyūan language.⁶³ This work was probably the most positive and lasting legacy of his sojourn in Naha. Under pressure from the Ryūkyūan authorities, Perry agreed to evacuate the Bettelheims from Naha.

In March 1854, Perry's supply ship *Supply* took Bettelheim's family to Shanghai, and later in June Bettelheim himself left Naha for good aboard USS *Powhatan*.⁶⁴ He left behind his replacement, C.H. Moreton, formerly of the London Missionary Society, and Moreton's wife, who had arrived in Naha that February, to continue on the mission alone.⁶⁵ Bettelheim made the first step toward establishing Protestant missions in metropolitan Japan, which the northward movement of American warships under Perry from the Ryūkyūs presaged. Unfortunately, in December 1855, his successor, Moreton, fell ill and left Naha to return home. There was difficulty finding another missionary, and in 1861 the Loo-Choo Naval Mission was formally ended. What monies were left over were given to the British Anglican Church Missionary Society for the development of its future Japan mission, which eventually began in 1869.⁶⁶

Perry and Harris and the Opening of Japan

Such events as the end of the Loo-Choo Naval Mission were in the future, however. Writing in 1851 to Captain John H. Aulick, who was to take command of the American East India Squadron with instructions to open relations with Japan, Daniel Webster at the US Department of State thought that the trans-Pacific route from the United States's Pacific coast to China was the last link in the chain of oceanic steam navigation. He wanted Aulick to get permission from the Japanese emperor for American steamers to purchase coal in Japan on their outward and inward voyages.⁶⁷ Webster stressed to Aulick that he was to ensure that Japanese officials understood that the American government would never interfere with the religion of other countries – a recognition of Japanese hostility toward Christianity.

Webster had no desire to upset the Japanese. Aulick was given full powers to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce between the United States and Japan along the lines of the American treaties with China, Muscat and Oman, and Siam (present-day Thailand). The aim of such a treaty was to ensure not only the right of entry to American ships at one or more Japanese ports in order to dispose of their cargoes but also, more importantly, that the Japanese authorities protect shipwrecked American sailors. As a sign of goodwill, several shipwrecked Japanese sailors who had been picked up at sea by the barque *Auckland* were to be returned home.⁶⁸

Unfortunately for Aulick, Washington removed him from command of the East India Squadron before he had a chance to go to Japan.⁶⁹ Perry was appointed Aulick's replacement, but his price for accepting it (he had hoped earlier to be named to the more prestigious command in the Mediterranean) was to be in charge of an enlarged squadron to carry out the mission to Japan. From January 1852 until he finally sailed in late November 1852 on board the USS *Mississippi* for Hong Kong, Perry's attention was directed toward carefully planning the mission. He arrived in Hong Kong in early April 1853, but because of the political and military situation in China as a result of the Taiping rebels threatening Shanghai, Perry and his squadron were prevented from leaving Chinese waters until late May.⁷⁰ They arrived in Naha on 26 May, when Perry spoke to Bettelheim. Hiroshi Mitani points out that Perry's interest in the Ryūkyūs and the Ogasawara Islands was to establish two resupply ports and places of refuge for American whaling ships in the Pacific that would remain even if he was not successful in obtaining port facilities in Japan.⁷¹ In June 1853, Perry visited the Ogasawaras and landed livestock at Port Lloyd on Peel Island (now known as Chichi Jima), buying land on which to construct an office, wharf, and coal bunker,⁷² as well as ten acres for himself by way of speculation. The visits to the Ryūkyūs and the Ogasawaras were only preliminary visits before going onto Japan. Believing that Japanese officials and the Dutch East India Company officials at Deshima would throw obstacles and delays in the way of his achieving any favourable result from his visit, Perry decided to avoid Nagasaki and instead go straight to Edo, the seat of the Tokugawa government. Perry was adamant that "the Japanese can be brought to reason only through the influence of their fears, and when they find that their sea coast is entirely at the mercy of a strong naval force, they will be induced, I confidently hope, to concede all that will be asked of them."⁷³ Even if unsuccessful in negotiating a treaty with the Japanese, Perry thought the display of American naval power would cause the Japanese to treat any future American castaways well.

On 8 July, Perry and a squadron of four ships anchored outside Uraga harbour. This first visit lasted all of eight days, during which time Perry was received on shore and succeeded in delivering President Fillmore's letter to the governor of Uraga. Not having provisions and water to stay long in Japanese waters, and concerned about the danger to American interests caused by the burgeoning Taiping Rebellion,⁷⁴ Perry was content to quit Japan, with the promise that he would return in the spring of 1854 for the Japanese authorities' response to the president's letter. The day before Christmas 1853, Perry wrote from Hong Kong that the French and the Russians were particularly interested in his activities and that the Russian admiral had been pursuing him for several months, going first to the Ogasawara Islands and then to Nagasaki, not suspecting that Perry would travel directly to Edo. Perry was in no mood to cooperate with other powers in making a treaty with Japan. He wrote, "I shall in no way allow of any infringement upon our national rights; on the contrary I believe, that this is the moment to assume a position in the East, which will make the power and influence of the United States felt in such way, as to give greater importance to those rights, which amongst Eastern nations are generally estimated by the extent of military force exhibited."⁷⁵ Perry returned in early February 1854 with an enlarged squadron, and this second time they stayed for a considerable time. On 31 March 1854, Preble wrote with obvious relief, "Eureka! It is finished! The great agony is over! In vulgar parlance the egg has hatched its chicken today."⁷⁶ He reported that the treaty had been signed between Japan and the United States to the satisfaction of everybody, including those like himself whose only role in helping to bring about a historically important treaty was merely adding the colour of navy blue and physical presence to back up the American negotiations and to fill up places at the hard-drinking diplomatic receptions. It was not until 11 April, however, that Preble's ship, the *Macedonian*, eventually set to sea for Port Lloyd in the Ogasawaras for provisions. It was Perry's lot to succeed finally in establishing relations between America and Japan, not via a Pacific route but, rather, by following the traditional approach from the China coast.

The Perry expedition was a major strain on American naval resources, and Commodore Perry undertook it with fewer ships than he would have liked.⁷⁷ Duus has noted that Perry's was more successful than other, earlier Western attempts to open Japan because Perry designed his encounter to overwhelm the Japanese not only with the military and technological superiority of the Americans but also with their cultural and moral superiority.⁷⁸ Perry and his men brought presents, including an impressive

miniature steam railway, scientific apparatus, handguns and rifles, and lots of whisky and champagne. Nevertheless, as John Curtis Perry has pointed out, Washington ignored Perry's proposals for Japan and the Pacific, and furthermore, "despite the hoopla it caused in the United States – and Perry possessed great skills of self-advertisement – his treaty was not much."⁷⁹ Mitani certainly would agree, for only two ports, Shimoda and Hakodate, were opened to American ships to obtain water, food, and coal, and no agreement had been made on permanent diplomacy or trade with Japan.⁸⁰

John H. Schroeder notes that Perry, on his return to the United States in early 1855, received laudatory letters from former president Fillmore and other high officials, an admiring New York chamber of commerce presented him with a 381-piece silver service (estimated to be worth more than \$6,000), the merchants of Boston struck a gold medal in his honour, and the then president, Franklin Pierce, who had signed the Treaty of Kanagawa, met with him personally. Congress voted him its thanks for his efforts and generously reimbursed him for his diplomatic duties, appropriating further funds to finance the publication of the official account of the expedition.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Perry was not extolled by the press as a national hero, and most ordinary Americans viewed his accomplishments as not very great. To be fair, Perry's return to America occurred at a time when there were plenty of other news stories from overseas, including the war in the Crimea and the burgeoning Taiping Rebellion in China. At home there were growing political tensions within the United States after Congress in May 1854 passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which reopened the issue of slavery in the federal territories and led to a national political uproar that resulted in the creation of the Republican Party. Akira Iriye has argued that Perry saw his expedition to Japan as only the beginning of an assertive American foreign policy in the Pacific and that Perry insisted the United States acquire or at least gain control over Taiwan and the Ryūkyū Islands in order to prevent European powers, especially the British, from establishing their hegemony over the region, but that very few of his contemporaries held such a grand vision of America as a power in Asia.⁸² Despite Perry's efforts, Japan remained a distant land of secondary importance to the United States and a country much smaller in size and less fascinating in culture than China; it was also deemed as having less economic potential as a trading partner than its continental Asian neighbour.⁸³

While Perry was negotiating with the Japanese, the Ringgold-Rodgers expedition (1853-55), another American naval force, was conducting a

scientific reconnaissance in the North Pacific, which included surveying much of the eastern coast of Honshū without either Japanese permission or interference. Merchants were not far behind. In May 1854, while Perry was still in Japan, the whaling ship *Eliza F. Mason*, out of New Bedford, put into Hakodate to test the provisions of the treaty that allowed American ships to enter that port for supplies. In July 1854, *Lady Pierce*, owned by Silas E. Burrows of Mystic, Connecticut, arrived at Uraga, at the entrance of Tokyo Bay. Burrows, described as the first American tourist in Japan, was interested in scouting out commercial opportunities.⁸⁴ From his observations, Burrows thought the Japanese atheists. Nevertheless, he wanted to ensure that any shipwrecked Japanese were well treated by Americans so that no future historian would be able to record that a “Pagan monarch in the 19th century” had more enlightened principles than those on which Christianity was founded.⁸⁵ Although both naval expeditions and Burrows were interested in opening the way for increased American trade with China and Japan, it was the diplomat Townsend Harris who actually succeeded in negotiating the commercial treaty in 1858 that effectively opened Japan to American trade.⁸⁶

Harris arrived at Shimoda to take up the position of consul general in accordance with Article 11 of the Perry Treaty, only to be refused permission to land by the Japanese authorities, whose interpretation of the Chinese version of the treaty led them to conclude that the case for Harris’ right to reside in Shimoda was weak.⁸⁷ He eventually was allowed to land and take up residence at Gyōkusenji Temple, but it was over a year before Harris was permitted to visit Edo to negotiate a new treaty with Japan.⁸⁸ In part, this long wait was the bakufu’s payback for the representative of a country that had humiliated and damaged Tokugawa authority in public through Perry’s visits. More importantly, the bakufu wanted to conclude treaties with the Dutch and the Russians before beginning a new round of negotiations with the Americans.⁸⁹

Once Harris was finally granted an audience with the shogun, he set out from Shimoda, on 23 November 1857, in a cavalcade made up of 350 guards, officials, porters, and standard bearers whose duty was to escort Harris and Heusken, his Dutch interpreter, to Edo.⁹⁰ The reason for such pomp was that the bakufu originally conceived Harris’ official visit to Edo to be a public declaration of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Western powers.⁹¹ It took seven days to reach Edo travelling along the scenic Tōkaidō, the major road running from Kyoto to Edo.⁹² Harris was a Protestant Episcopalian and a strong Christian (clearly, one of the reasons why Griffis found him an attractive subject for a biography), and on

Sunday, 6 December 1857, he read the full Christian service for the Second Sunday in Advent in Edo, with Heusken as his congregation.⁹³ Harris saw this as a first blow against the Japanese persecution of Christianity and made it clear to Heusken that he would demand in his negotiations with the Tokugawa government the Americans' right to free exercise of their religion, as well as their right to build churches, and the abolition of the Japanese custom of trampling the Cross, something the Dutch had never objected to.⁹⁴ Harris was able to achieve these three goals, in Article 8 of the Harris Treaty, thus building on the precedent set by the Dutch, whose treaty of January 1856 provided that within their buildings at Deshima the Dutch could practise "their own or the Christian religion."⁹⁵ In mid-December 1857, after he had had his audience with the shogun and presented his letter from the president, Harris spoke to Hotta Masayoshi, a senior member of the bakufu council, about a new treaty. He was allowed to remain in Edo and, in January 1858, negotiations began in earnest.

This was not what the bakufu had originally planned, as it had intended that the negotiations for a new treaty would begin only after Harris had returned to Shimoda.⁹⁶ In speaking to officials in Edo about what he wanted the treaty to contain, Harris intimated that there were three main points: diplomatic representation in Edo, freedom of trade without the interference of government officials, and the opening of additional ports. He assured them that he was not asking for exclusive American rights but a treaty that would be acceptable to all the great Western powers.⁹⁷ Harris was negotiating on the basis of precedents set, as in the case of the Dutch and Christianity, in early treaties with other powers, and on the basis of a paper that outlined a commercial treaty, which Harris explained article by article to the Japanese and wanted them to seriously consider. Mitani points out that the bakufu had anticipated establishing trade relations similar to those offered to the Dutch and Russians, opening Yokohama as an alternative to Shimoda and agreeing to Harris' proposal to officially authorize the stationing of an American diplomatic agent.⁹⁸

Although the negotiations were unhurried, they seemingly progressed quite smoothly, at least from Harris' point of view. The unhurried pace can be put down to the Japanese having already decided what form the treaty would take, though the final treaty would be different from what they had initially envisaged. On the issue of diplomatic representation, the right of the minister to reside in Edo was not denied, but it was recommended that Kawasaki or Kanagawa were more suitable places for his first residence. Harris rejected the commercial terms that the Dutch and Russians had agreed to because he wanted the Japanese to agree to the terms

set out in his draft commercial treaty, which looked to the opening of eight ports and also Edo and Miako (now Kyoto) to American trade and residence. The Japanese offered to open Kanagawa and Yokohama in exchange for closing Shimoda,⁹⁹ and to open Edo to trade. Where they dug in their heels was in their rejection of Harris' call to open other ports,¹⁰⁰ but the only concession Harris made was to drop his demands for the opening of Miako and the right of Americans other than diplomatic and consular personnel to travel in the interior of Japan. Only one of the Japanese proposals managed to survive, and that was to have Washington as the venue for the exchange of the instruments of ratification.¹⁰¹ Auslin points out that the treaty had similarities to the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing in the opening of a small number of treaty ports, the restrictions on foreigners' travel outside the treaty concessions, and freedom of religion being permitted only in the port settlements.¹⁰² In sharp contrast to the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin, which opened many more treaty ports, gave foreigners greater freedom to travel in the interior, and allowed Christianity to be preached openly and protected by the Chinese,¹⁰³ the bakufu in both the Perry and Harris treaties prevented the importation of opium, ceded no land outright, prohibited travel in the interior, paid no indemnity to the West, and contained Christianity to the treaty ports.¹⁰⁴ In comparison to the Chinese, the Japanese clearly got off lightly.

It was still a fine achievement on the part of Harris and his interpreter Heusken without the backing of a large naval presence to negotiate a treaty, which largely followed Harris' design. The Scotsman John R. Black, in his *Young Japan*, published in 1883, was highly critical of Harris, saying that in sharp contrast to the accepted view that Harris gained all his demands simply by patience, perseverance, and consideration for the Japanese, he had, in fact, exploited Japanese fears of English and French power after England and France's success in the Second Opium War and the subsequent 1858 Treaty of Tianjin to cajole the Japanese to sign his treaty.¹⁰⁵ The late W.G. Beasley, an expert on the politics of Bakumatsu Japan, certainly subscribed to this view.¹⁰⁶ In his textbook history of modern Japan, Andrew Gordon agrees, pointing out that Harris had warned the bakufu negotiators to sign his treaty before the British arrived to drive an even harder bargain and that the Japanese had "signed a treaty that very nearly replicated the Opium War settlement with China, without a shot being fired."¹⁰⁷ This was true but, as Auslin has shown, it was the earlier 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the First Opium War, rather than the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin, which ended the Second. Gordon also argued that the bakufu knew their domestic opponents would attack their decision to sign the Harris Treaty

but felt they had no better option and so signed the United States-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce on 29 July 1858.

There now was a possibility that the United States could capitalize on Harris' diplomacy to play a leading role among Western powers in Japan. American influence on Japan stemming from the Harris Treaty reached a high point in early 1860 when the Japanese looked to the United States Navy for help in the Pacific crossing to San Francisco of the *Kanrin Maru*, the first Japanese ship to attempt this. George M. Brooke has argued that this help laid a practical foundation on which the United States Navy could build a significant role for itself in the development of the Japanese navy but, unfortunately, the opening of the American Civil War in 1861 negated that, and the Japanese turned to the British Royal Navy.¹⁰⁸ The start of the Civil War not only caused lost opportunities for the United States Navy but also brought the whole American effort in Japan to a stop. It was the British who ensured the security of the treaty ports as anti-foreign sentiment in Japan turned violent. So serious was the perception of the threat to the safety of westerners in Japan that the British and French felt it necessary to maintain garrisons of British and French marines and soldiers in Yokohama between 1863 and 1875.

In 1858, however, optimism about Japan was on the rise. Perry had been ahead of his time in advocating a forward American policy in Japan and the western Pacific, but Harris deservedly receives the credit for negotiating an actual trade treaty between the United States and Japan. Accounts of Perry's visits to Japan began to appear in the popular press in early 1856 and struck an important chord in what Akira Iriye sees as nineteenth-century American internationalism.¹⁰⁹ Iriye maintains that the Perry expedition and the opening of Japan offered a perfect example of what America could do in, and for the benefit of, the world by inducing a people who had hitherto resisted contact with outsiders to open their country, with Americans taking the lead in bringing them the benefits of civilization. At least in hindsight Americans saw the Perry expedition as internationalist in nature, an attempt to relate the two neighbours across the Pacific by the universalistic twin-laned bridge of commercial and cultural intercourse: Americans would not only bring civilization to Japan but also disseminate knowledge of Japan to the rest of the world.¹¹⁰ The dual nature of the framework beneath American internationalism, the admixture of commerce and culture, was by no means unique to Americans, for that was what the Scotsman David Livingstone espoused for central Africa. Indeed, in the context of American activity, by the mid-nineteenth century the combination of American merchants and missionaries was already well

established in the Ottoman Near East and in Qing China. Japan was psychologically different from those two places for American merchants and missionaries because it was Perry who had opened Japan in 1853 and it was Harris who had negotiated in 1858 the first commercial treaty with the Japanese. This provided them with the opportunity to be the first to bring the benefits of American trade and American Christianity and culture to metropolitan Japan. In 1858, even Hakodate, recently visited by numerous American whalers, seemed to hold alluring possibilities. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* suggested that it might take the place of the Sandwich Islands as a port of supply, since the Japanese port was seen to offer equal advantages for shipping and storing oil as Hawaii, but its climate was cooler.¹¹¹ Unfortunately for Hakodate, this did not happen.

The descriptions of Japan and the Japanese written in the wake of Perry's visits helped to ignite the interest of American Christians in Japan. Most Americans' perceptions of Japan were based primarily on accounts in the popular press, and Christine M.E. Guth maintains "the steady stream of illustrated articles that appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *The Nation*, and other periodicals following Perry's expedition gave birth to a vast and enduring repertory of images of the island country."¹¹² Toshio Yokoyama in analyzing British stereotyped images of Japan from 1850 to 1880 reached a similar conclusion, arguing that articles on Japan in British periodicals led to the idea that Japan was a singular and mysterious country.¹¹³ There is no reason to believe that the image of Japan in American periodicals was different. The stream of information about Japan gathered momentum in 1858 when *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, for instance, provided readers with a first-hand account of an American in Japan. The anonymous author wrote that his views about Japan had undergone a dramatic change: before his visit he had thought the Japanese to be a "species of a semi-cannibal race" who indulged in the practice of "trampling upon the Cross" but after actually seeing them, he believed Japanese manners, social qualities, civilization, and intellect were superior to all nations in the East, with the sole exception of Persia.¹¹⁴ Although it was usual to compare the Japanese favourably to the Chinese, that here it was the Persians only underlines the very high opinion accorded to Japan as seen in Nagasaki in 1858. Although this example comes from the secular press, the popular press for American churchgoers also included church journals, magazines, and pamphlets. Indeed, one member of Perry's expedition, Jonathan Goble, who later became the pioneer Baptist missionary in Japan, had deliberately joined the expedition in order to scout out Japan as a potential mission field.¹¹⁵

Information about Japan available to the pioneer missionaries who came to Japan in 1859 was substantial. The *Chinese Repository*, edited by Elijah Coleman Bridgman and S. Wells Williams and published in Canton between 1832 and 1851, contains numerous articles on Japan and remains valuable for pre-*kaikoku* (pre-1853) knowledge of Japan. Contributors include well-known China missionaries Robert and James Morrison and Karl Gutzlaff, and mission-oriented merchants such as Charles W. King. Although Samuel Robbins Brown, the pioneer Dutch Reformed missionary, did not write on Japanese topics, he contributed articles to the *Chinese Repository* while a China missionary and so was familiar with the journal. Much information about Japan could be derived from published Portuguese Jesuit or Dutch sources.¹¹⁶ Yokoyama points out that two abridged editions of Kaempfer's "Account of Japan" appeared in 1852 and 1853, and that John Murray, the Edinburgh publisher, also brought out in 1852 a new edition of Mrs. William Busk's at the time anonymous compilation of works by Philipp Franz von Siebold and others at the Dutch Factory at Nagasaki dealing with the customs and manners of the Japanese.¹¹⁷ Missionaries might not have read von Siebold, as Perry had done, or Engelbert Kaempfer, as Harris had, but they could have read contemporary writers who utilized those writers' books. One such work available to missionaries was Richard Hildreth's flawed study that relied on earlier writers, from Marco Polo to the Dutch factors at Deshima in Nagasaki harbour.¹¹⁸ Charles MacFarlane's second-hand compilation is of some value because it mirrors the knowledge of Japan available in England and the United States immediately before the sailing of Perry's expedition.¹¹⁹ As far as religion was concerned, MacFarlane followed Kaempfer, who had Shinto and Buddhism rather mixed up. Andrew Steinmetz wrote another collection that would have been available to the pioneer missionaries.¹²⁰ Further, as well as Hawks's official narrative of the Perry Expedition, two descriptions of it by participants were also quickly published.¹²¹ What is difficult to determine is not so much the availability of information about Japan but whether prospective missionaries actually read it. What is much more evident is the impact of Perry's expedition on the decision of American Churches to open work in Japan.

The news of the opening of Japan stimulated American Churches to take up the challenge of mission work in this hitherto closed country. Those missionary societies that already had mission fields in China or Hawaii only had to wait for diplomatic negotiations on the opening of American and other foreign residence in Japan to be complete before they could begin work in Japan. In the official Perry narrative, Hawks provided hope by

stressing that the opposition to Bettelheim in the Ryūkyūs came not from the locals but from the authorities, for political reasons – they were afraid of offending their Japanese masters.¹²² A similar view about Japan itself was held by George Jones, the chaplain of Perry's flagship, who believed there would be no difficulty introducing Christianity if it weren't for government influence and interference. He maintained that the government was "exceedingly jealous about our religion" and believed that officials and others who had a deep dislike of Roman Catholicism had to be made aware of the differences between Protestants and Catholics, and until they were, no form of Christianity would get a foothold in Japan.¹²³ Indeed, once in Japan, Protestant missionaries certainly tried to differentiate themselves from their Roman Catholic counterparts.

By 1859, with the ratification of the Harris Treaty, the first missionaries were able to take up residence in the treaty ports. Pride of first place went to the Protestant Episcopalians, but the Presbyterians and the Dutch Reformed Church rapidly followed. The Dutch Reformed Church had quickly raised \$7,000 to equip and send missionaries out to Japan, for at that stage it was believed that the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries were the most likely to be acceptable to the Japanese; Nagasaki, with its connections to the Dutch, was seen as an important location for the new mission.¹²⁴ In itself this was another sign of the diffident if not deferential approach (as seen earlier in Webster's instructions to Aulick) the Americans took in leading the world in opening Japan to trade and now to Protestant Christianity. The missionaries wanted to fit in with the Japanese, but what the Dutch Reformed authorities did not realize when sending out missionaries to Japan was that the Dutch merchants on Deshima Island in Nagasaki harbour had no desire to disturb their trade with Japan by attempting to allay Japanese suspicions of Christianity.

The only advantage the Dutch Reformed missionaries might have had over others was that one of their pioneer missionaries, Guido Verbeck, was a native Dutch speaker. This was a major help to him in studying Japanese since J.J. Hoffman of Leiden University, the then leading European specialist on the Japanese language, published first in Dutch or German, as did another Japanese-language expert, Donker Curtius of the Dutch factory in Nagasaki.¹²⁵ It was by chance that the Dutch Reformed missionaries were beaten in the race to claim being the first missionaries to arrive in Japan. The American Church (Protestant Episcopal) missionaries, John Liggins, and Channing Moore Williams arrived in Nagasaki direct from Shanghai.¹²⁶ Further, the Presbyterian lay medical missionary Dr. James Curtis Hepburn, even though he had left the United States later than Brown,

Verbeck, and Dr. Duane B. Simmons, the three pioneer Dutch Reformed missionaries, also beat them to Japan.¹²⁷

Whether they arrived first, second, or third, the pioneer missionaries landed in a Japan that was sympathetic neither to their presence as foreigners nor to their religion, banned as it had been for over two hundred years. Nevertheless, fear or worry about hostility to them personally or to their religion did not deter missionaries from undertaking the daunting task of commencing the campaign to Christianize Japan.

First Impressions of Nagasaki

Edward W. Syle, a Protestant Episcopal missionary working in China who took advantage of the port call of the USS *Powhatan* to visit Nagasaki in September 1858, described Nagasaki, the surrounding countryside, and the Japanese in glowing terms and felt himself “one of the Japan-smitten enthusiasts, whose numbers are great among the ships’ companies that have lately visited these almost enchanted islands.”¹²⁸ Importantly, Syle, fresh from China, compared the Japanese very favourably to the Chinese, and came to the conclusion that “in regards to *naturalness* of manners, intelligence, readiness to learn, neatness, cleanliness, and quiet,” the Japanese were much the superior. He also stressed, perhaps more indirectly criticizing the Chinese, the care with which the Japanese treated the environment when he added, “Nothing can excel the beauty of their hill-terrace cultivation ... Here, more than any place I can recall in the East, is it true that *every* prospect pleases.”¹²⁹ These positive first impressions were important, and it was fortunate for the future of American-Japanese relations that Syle landed at Nagasaki. Later, for instance, missionary first impressions of Osaka when it was opened as a treaty port in the late 1860s were much less positive: Osaka when approached from the sea did not offer the verdant greenery and fiordlike features of Nagasaki but, rather, gave off the dismal impression of dank tidal flats and low dingy buildings. Just as Japanese first impressions of the United States varied so, too, did those of missionaries. Syle’s positive attitude to Japan and the Japanese was undoubtedly enhanced after the vice-governor of Nagasaki invited him, not without some inveigling on Syle’s part, to return to Nagasaki to teach English to government interpreters. Syle recorded that he was assured he would have a house where he could live with his wife and children. Syle had told the Japanese authorities that he was a Christian preacher and not merely a teacher but had promised to write to his foreign mission board in America to see what could be done to meet their wishes that he

teach English to the interpreters, which he viewed as providing “a providential opening.”¹³⁰ From the very beginning, teaching English was seen by missionaries as the means by which they could introduce Christian ideas to Japanese. In October 1858, on the point of writing to the Protestant Episcopal Foreign Missions Committee in New York to ask it to authorize the mission in Shanghai to begin mission work in Japan, Syle wrote to Harris about the best location for the first missionaries. Although he had been invited to become a teacher of the “American” language in Nagasaki, he had learnt from Henry Woods, the chaplain of the *Powhatan*, that Harris favoured the establishment of the Protestant Episcopal mission within reach of Edo.¹³¹ In reply, Harris advocated Kanagawa as the first location of the Episcopal mission, predicting that if an English-language school was established there, it would be immediately filled with pupils.¹³²

To teach English to the Japanese was certainly the advice of S. Wells Williams, who was by then serving as the secretary and interpreter to the American legation in China and was a member of the American party that visited Nagasaki. Williams wrote that the most promising plan was to station in Nagasaki a missionary who would teach English to the Japanese while learning the Japanese language.¹³³ Guido Verbeck, who became the resident Dutch Reformed missionary in Nagasaki in 1859, also understood the importance of educational work.¹³⁴ Verbeck, believing that the Japanese interest in discovering useful knowledge about the outside world could be exploited to draw them to Christianity, was quick to see that missionaries could use simple technical and educational props to attract the interest of the Japanese. In April 1860, he wrote to Isaac Ferris, the Reformed missionary society secretary in New York, that as well as the sale of Chinese books, other items, especially those things that illustrated useful knowledge, such as a “microscope, one of Pike’s large Magic Lanterns, with astronomical and Scripture illustrations, Globes (or at least a terrestrial one) Maps (one of Calton’s illustrated Atlases [sic] would be excellent), Pictures (large and colored ones would be best) and especially a *Planetarium*,” would attract people.¹³⁵

It was not Verbeck but the Protestant Episcopal missionaries Liggins and Williams who were the first Protestant missionaries to begin missionary work in Nagasaki and Japan. Both were graduates of the Virginia Theological Seminary.¹³⁶ The idea of beginning a Japan mission had been first mooted by Bishop Boone of China at the annual meeting of Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1858.¹³⁷ In supporting the establishment of a Japan mission, Boone was apparently influenced by the

opinion of certain American naval officers on the “prospect of the field” and the successful conclusion of the American-Japanese treaty, which allowed Americans to take up residence in the treaty ports effective 4 July 1859.¹³⁸ Indeed, in his negotiations with the Japanese, Harris was directed by the secretary of state “to do his best, by all judicious measures, and kind influence, to obtain the full toleration of Christian religion in Japan, and protection for all Missionaries, and others, who should go there to promulgate it.”¹³⁹ These directions were not lost on Harris, whom Protestant Episcopal sources noted was “an Episcopalian from New-York city,”¹⁴⁰ and later described as being “a CHRISTIAN man”¹⁴¹ in his actions. In his negotiations over the commercial treaty with the Tokugawa authorities, he had brought up the issue of religion. In early March 1858, Harris had pointed out to them that most Western countries practised religious freedom and that no country now desired to propagate its religious faith through force of arms like the Portuguese had attempted to do when they came to Japan 250 years before. Harris insisted that every religion could be found in the United States and that even Buddhist temples could be seen standing near Christian churches.¹⁴² (Although Harris might have had difficulty finding an example of a Buddhist temple close to a Christian church.)

It is interesting that Harris differentiated between mid-nineteenth-century Christianity and the Christianity propagated by the Portuguese at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The idea of religious freedom was enshrined in Article 8 of the commercial treaty, which was signed 29 July 1858. Harris proudly wrote that this article gave him unalloyed pleasure because it gave all Americans the free exercise of their religion and the right to build churches.¹⁴³ Importantly, Article 8 also protected the Japanese religious practices from any attempt by Americans to damage temples or shrines, to insult Japanese religious ceremonies, or to excite religious animosity. As well, it stated that the practice of trampling religious emblems had already been abolished.¹⁴⁴ Christians in the sixteenth century had been known to damage Buddhist temples, and Article 8 stopped overenthusiastic American Christians from doing the same thing. But it did not prevent missionaries or others from renting temples as personal homes. Harris explained that there would be no difficulty in introducing Christianity into Japan, if American and other missionaries followed the example set earlier by St. Francis Xavier, for “all the Japanese Government desires is, that religion shall not be used as a cloak to conceal ulterior purposes, or to promote discord among the People.”¹⁴⁵ Clearly, Harris thought that Article 8 gave missionaries the right to introduce Christianity into Japan (though

in reality this was restricted to the treaty ports). It might well be that it was beginning to dawn on him that he had not obtained for missionaries in Japan the same freedoms as the China missionaries enjoyed under the 1858 Tianjin Treaty, and he had to put the best face possible on the circumscribed rights he had obtained. It is amusing in light of his earlier views on the Portuguese and Christianity that he would point to a Portuguese (albeit by then a saint) as a model for American missionaries to follow. Harris was being naive if he believed there would be no difficulty in introducing Christianity and badly misled if he considered the bakufu's only concern with Christianity that it not be used to hide ulterior purposes or promote discord.

In late March 1859, John C. Lowrie wrote to Harris of his apprehension that some of their friends were too sanguine in their hopes for Christianity in Japan; he felt it was still too early to see how the Japanese officials would construe Article 8. Lowrie wondered whether the Japanese would restrict it to those who were already Christian, that is, permit Americans to observe the rites of Christianity but not allow them to propagate it.¹⁴⁶ Around that time, Liggins wrote to Harris from Nagasaki wanting clarification on the diffusion of Christianity by missionaries under the treaty and asking whether the limited circulation of the Scriptures would be considered a violation of the letter or the spirit of it.¹⁴⁷ Happily, Liggins was able to get a quick answer, being able to interview Harris when the latter was on a visit to Nagasaki.¹⁴⁸ Writing to New York after speaking to Harris, Liggins emphasized it was important for American Christians to realize from the start the limited extent to which Japan was opened to missionaries, for "nothing is said in any of the Treaties about Missionaries and no toleration for Christianity was demanded except for foreigners."¹⁴⁹ This was very different from the position in China, where the missionaries were allowed under treaties to propagate the Christian message to the Chinese. The reason for this Liggins put down to the Chinese government's having no prejudices against missionaries, whereas Harris had found the bakufu deeply opposed to Christianity and "not only anxious to proscribe missionaries but also to have Christianity inserted with Opium in the new treaty as a prohibited article."¹⁵⁰ Liggins did not blame Harris for failing to get Christian toleration inserted into the treaty because he believed Harris could not have done more without resorting to measures beyond those recommended to him. He pointed out that the American treaty did not contain a clause, as the Dutch treaty did, prohibiting the importation of Christian books to Japan. Moreover, he felt sure that Harris would persist in efforts to gain toleration until he was successful. Liggins is certainly

being charitable to Harris. Nevertheless, Harris' diplomatic efforts sparked missionary optimism that was further bolstered by favourable reports coming from missionaries themselves.

Williams, in 1859, was very aware that the Roman Catholics had been expelled from Japan in the seventeenth century, and stressed that the wisest policy was to proceed discreetly in new attempts to make known Christian truths in order to avoid a similar fate.¹⁵¹ Like many nineteenth-century Protestants, Williams had a profound dislike of Roman Catholicism. Yet, the possibility that there might be some residue of knowledge about Christianity among Japanese that could be reawakened by missionaries was an idea that already had surfaced in reports from Japan.¹⁵² Japanese experiences during the so-called Christian Century, therefore, could be seen as both negative and positive in terms of the likely impact on any future missionary work. Conscious of this, the Protestant Episcopal Church was clearly influenced by Williams' advice to try to use English-language teaching as a means of creating opportunities for evangelistic work.¹⁵³ In doing so, they were able to keep usefully occupied until such time that they would be able to propagate the Christian message freely.

Although teaching English and selling Christian books were seen as useful, Verbeck was conscious that there was an anti-Christian interest behind the demand for Chinese-language Christian books from eager Buddhist priests, a demand so high that he was able on occasion to unload them by the caseload. Martin's *Evidences of Christianity* was especially popular. Martin Wyckoff, later writing about Verbeck in the *Japan Evangelist*, noted that in 1868 Buddhist priests had published a pamphlet entitled "Tales of Nagasaki: The Story of the Evil Doctrine," in which they took a very dim view of the Protestant religion of which Verbeck was a clerical missionary representative. They had written that Protestantism was "a very cunning doctrine ... and it is really more injurious than the Roman Catholic doctrine."¹⁵⁴ This reveals that the general attempt by Protestant missionaries, including Verbeck, to distance Protestantism from Roman Catholicism because of its past history in Japan did not work. One difference that the Buddhist priests did notice was that the two Christian Churches were trying to convert different groups of people. They thought correctly that the Roman Catholics were focusing their attention on the middle to the lowest classes of society, while the Protestants tried to proselytize those belonging to a socially higher position than the middle class.¹⁵⁵ The Urakami Christians ("hidden" Christians living in Urakami village outside Nagasaki) with whom the Roman Catholics were in contact during the mid-1860s were farming folk; Verbeck's Japanese contacts, or the ones

that attracted him most, were overwhelmingly samurai. The Buddhist priests thought that the Protestants were so eager to spread their Christian message as widely as the Roman Catholics that “a person called Maria, the wife of one Verbeck, a priest of Jesus, left her child at the breast and went to China in a steamer. She went as far as Shanghai and Hongkong for the purpose of getting priests residing there to come with her to Japan.”¹⁵⁶ It was certainly not uncommon for wild rumours to be circulated about missionaries, sometimes leading to confrontation, as happened in Takow, Taiwan, in 1868 and Tianjin, China, in 1870. Rumours also flew in Nagasaki, though fortunately never led to bloodshed.

Despite the rumours, Verbeck continued to tutor Japanese in English (his own second or third language), and by December 1860 he was able to report that he was teaching English to four Japanese students (three of whom were government interpreters).¹⁵⁷ Language teaching was one of Verbeck’s fortes. It was just as well, for the time when Christianity might spread rapidly appeared to be a long way off. Verbeck in Nagasaki is another example of a missionary who made excellent progress in learning Japanese without the Chinese background of Hepburn, Brown, and Williams. In June 1861, he was linguistically confident enough to attack Rutherford Alcock’s Japanese-English grammar as “entirely superficial” and had begun to redo Bettelheim’s Japanese translation of the Gospel of Luke with two “good native scholars.”¹⁵⁸ Verbeck was able to report at the end of 1861 that, as well as his translation work, he was continuing to teach English. He had seven pupils that year, including three government interpreters; the others were samurai from different *han* who had come to study English on their own initiative. He had the more advanced students reading the Testaments in Chinese, which they could understand, and then in English as a way to teach them English while also giving them religious instruction.¹⁵⁹ The authorities did not seem to worry about this pedagogical tool, continuing to send pupils to him. By the end of 1862, Verbeck’s students had advanced so far in their studies that he was able to establish a Bible class.¹⁶⁰

In spite of Verbeck’s success, Williams had reservations about Nagasaki because of another legacy of the Tokugawa shogunate’s *sakoku* policy: the Dutch merchant presence. Williams believed that the way of life of the Dutch merchants was “not calculated to recommend Xnty [Christianity] to the Japanese,” and that, more importantly, the Dutch minister, Donker Curtius, had indicated that he would brook no Dutch missionaries in Japan and gave the impression that he would do all he could to hinder missionary work. This was in very sharp contrast “to the honorable course worthy

of the Christian representation of a Christian nation" taken by Harris.¹⁶¹ In late June 1859, Liggins and Williams, influenced by Harris, were thinking of relocating to Kanagawa, though Liggins thought they would still have to contend there with the bad influence of sailors as they would in Nagasaki.¹⁶² He was quite right that missionaries would have difficulty contending with the deleterious influence of visiting seamen and resident foreign merchants who saw missionary activity as an obstacle to their enjoyment of the salacious pleasures of the treaty port life. The so-called Butterfly Game, a system in which the Japanese authorities helped lonely Western men acquire a temporary Japanese wife, existed into the 1880s in all the treaty ports the Japanese opened, and the lack of morals displayed by single Western males in the treaty ports was clearly a source of concern for missionaries.¹⁶³

In late September 1859, Liggins wrote from Nagasaki to Harris to say that he and Williams had decided to relocate to Kanagawa but that the news of the murder of Russian sailors by Japanese had impressed on them how insecure westerners there were. He asked Harris two questions: whether it was true that it was not advisable for westerners to go about unarmed there, and whether they would be able to find a good house.¹⁶⁴ A few days earlier Harris had written to Syle that the murder of five Russians at Yokohama had been exaggerated in the press and that it had been a simple act of brigandage.¹⁶⁵ It was the murder of the Russians that seemed to have changed Liggins' mind about Kanagawa and stopped Williams and him from relocating there. He did tell Harris that he had heard from Syle that Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn were expected to leave Shanghai soon for Kanagawa and that Brown was daily expected in Shanghai and would also be coming to Kanagawa.

Kanagawa might be preferable to Nagasaki, but Williams still hoped that the projected revision of the treaties in 1862 would allow missionary access to Edo. However, James Curtis Hepburn, the American Presbyterian missionary doctor newly arrived in Kanagawa, provided Williams with a rather dismal assessment of Kanagawa.¹⁶⁶ Hepburn further cautioned Williams, stressing that Harris had told him that even once treaty opened Edo to trade in 1862, he doubted clerical missionaries would be allowed to live there – though an exception might be made for medical missionaries, since merchants needed doctors.¹⁶⁷ In mid-March 1860, Liggins reported that recent letters from missionaries in Kanagawa had led him to believe that it was better for them to remain in Nagasaki.¹⁶⁸ As it turned out, Williams was thankful that he had not moved to Kanagawa or to Edo: opposition to the Tokugawa policies toward westerners resulted in disturbed political

atmospheres there.¹⁶⁹ This made it necessary for a missionary to be especially careful and reduced his freedom of action. In Nagasaki, it was easy to secure Japanese-language teachers, and missionaries were not conscious of any restrictions in their contact with Japanese. The Japanese there appeared to be less hostile to westerners. Nevertheless, Williams was surprised that the Japanese did not hold westerners in great contempt because of the shameful indignities the Dutch had allowed the authorities to heap on them.¹⁷⁰

From the start, Williams was conscious that his Episcopal Church had been the first in the Japan field, and he used that fact to try to persuade the mission authorities in New York to send out more missionaries. In April 1860, with Liggins having left Japan ill, Williams asked for another clerical missionary to be sent out, stating, "We want a ripe scholar among us." He considered neither Liggins nor himself a scholar, and one was needed because the Scriptures still had to be translated.¹⁷¹ As well as being an able scholar, the new missionary needed to have other, more important, characteristics, including great prudence and sound judgment – important because the Japanese, unlike the Chinese, had a strong government and would not permit violation of the treaties, especially any made in the name of religion. The most vital prerequisite for a new missionary was that he be a man of large-hearted piety with a "deep ardent love to the Lord Jesus, and for souls for whose salvation, the Saviour was content to die. He should have patience as well as perseverance – one who can labour on quietly, without being discouraged, till God in His own good time shall open a wide and effectual door for proclaiming the everlasting Gospel in Japan."¹⁷² Williams saw no immediate prospect of being allowed to engage in active missionary work, but he hoped the visit of the Japanese commissioners to the United States would stir up interest in Japan among Church members. Yet, he maintained there was much encouragement for the future success of Japan missions because he detected elements in the character of ordinary people that were receptive to Christianity and boded well for its rapid spread "when the barriers raised by their Rulers are thrown down."¹⁷³

In June 1861, as there was no proper missionary work to report on, Williams took the opportunity to go into considerable detail about the system of control the Tokugawa shogunate used to deter people from becoming Christians. He still insisted that missionaries in Japan were not idle, for there was preparatory work to be done in learning Japanese and translating Christian books into Japanese. He was pleased that Liggins' replacement, Dr. H. Ernest Schmid, a medical doctor, was attracting a large number of Japanese.¹⁷⁴ Even though the Christian message could not be propagated,

medical work was proving one way for missionaries to attract Japanese.¹⁷⁵ As well as ministering to the ill in the foreign community in Nagasaki, Schmid gave both English classes and instruction in Western medical practices to Japanese students.¹⁷⁶ Medical work would later become one of the hallmarks of the work of the American Church mission in Japan. The importance of education and of establishing educational institutions was again, like medical work, something that Williams stressed from the very beginning of his long career.

Living in Kanagawa

While Williams and Liggins remained in Nagasaki, Hepburn took up residence in Kanagawa, the first missionary to do so. On 18 October 1859, the day he landed there with his wife, Clara, he wrote to Harris that he came out as a missionary physician under the care of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions "intending to make myself useful in any way which Providence may open to me."¹⁷⁷ Already he had met General Dorr, the American consul at Kanagawa, who had generously offered to assist him in getting a house. A few days later, in reply to a letter from Harris, Hepburn made it clear that he was not a reverend but a lay medical doctor.¹⁷⁸ He told Harris that with Dorr's help he had secured accommodation in a dilapidated temple formerly occupied by the Dutch consulate. He had chosen it as his home for two primary reasons: it was mainly unoccupied, whereas other temples he had seen had priests living in them (whom he did not want to alienate by turning them out); and it was large, which allowed him to offer lodgings to friends whom he expected to arrive in Kanagawa soon. He specifically had Samuel Robbins Brown in mind, and he thought the Dutch Reformed missionary could renovate and make very comfortable a building adjoining the Hepburn home. A joke later developed that Jōbutsuji, the old Pure Land Sect temple, which Hepburn rented, had been rejected by the Dutch consul as unfit for a stable but was furnished by the governor of Kanagawa as being fit for the US consul's physician, the honorary position Hepburn came to hold.¹⁷⁹ The fact is that Hepburn was happy with his choice, and Samuel Robbins Brown, the Dutch Reformed missionary who arrived two weeks after Hepburn, was very relieved to be able to stay in the Jōbutsuji compound with the Hepburns.¹⁸⁰ Brown had been worried about accommodation, and so he and Simmons had left their families and Verbeck, who was waiting before travelling to Nagasaki, in Shanghai with Syle and Bridgman and gone to Kanagawa with only Francis Hall, Brown's travelling companion, armed with introductions to Harris.¹⁸¹ On their arrival, General Dorr took them

to Jōbutsuji to see the Hepburns, whom Brown had met years before in Macau. Brown immediately saw that the temple had two advantages: its covered walkways between buildings, which would allow the two families to visit each other regardless of rain, and its largish garden. Later, in April 1860, the Baptist missionary Jonathan Goble and his wife arrived, also living for a time at Jōbutsuji. Simmons, Brown's Dutch Reformed colleague, lived with his wife in the Zen-related Sokoji Temple.¹⁸² Harris saw Kanagawa, which was on the Tōkaidō and thus on the direct road to Edo, as being the principal treaty port in the Kantō region until Edo was opened. As a result, he deliberately assisted missionaries in obtaining places there to live. The Tokugawa authorities sought to develop Yokohama as the treaty port because its location, some miles from the Tōkaidō, was more isolated. The Western merchant community much preferred Yokohama to Kanagawa for its fine deep-water harbour and voted with their feet to live in Yokohama, leaving the American diplomats and missionaries increasingly isolated and exposed in Kanagawa. It was only in the spring of 1862 that Hepburn finally moved from Kanagawa to the house and compound at Kyoryūchi no. 39, in the heart of the treaty port of Yokohama. It would be Hepburn's home until 1876.

In Kanagawa, Hepburn and his wife, Clara, quickly established themselves comfortably in Jōbutsuji. Even if they could not evangelize the Japanese, church services were held at Jōbutsuji for the American diplomatic personnel, for Western merchants from Yokohama, and for the missionaries themselves.¹⁸³ Like the Browns, the Hepburns had lived in China during the 1840s, and this clearly influenced Hepburn's approach to Japan in the key areas of intellectual thought and language study. Hepburn's correspondence from Singapore and China to the Presbyterian mission board in New York between 1841 and 1845 throws valuable light on the approach that he subsequently adopted in his mission work in Japan. As what applies to Hepburn about his China experience applies also to those other missionaries with China experience, Brown among them, it is useful to look at Hepburn's letters from China in some detail.

It is evident that the Hepburns must have had a singularly strong commitment to missionary work to even consider leaving a comfortable life in New York to return to East Asia in 1859 after their experiences in China. Hepburn's China letters are full of complaints of constant ill health owing to fever; Clara Hepburn was always sick and incredibly lucky to have lived. Although Hepburn rarely mentioned personal loss, fever killed at least two of his children in Singapore, and only one, Samuel, born in Amoy in 1844, survived into adulthood.¹⁸⁴ In October 1844, having already been

ill with fever and facing what portended to become a storm of sickness in the missionary community in Amoy, Hepburn wrote that he had grudgingly sent his wife and little son to Macau in order to save their lives.¹⁸⁵ So unhealthy was Amoy that Hepburn, a medical doctor, was undoubtedly correct in thinking they would die if they remained in Amoy. The move of Clara and Samuel to Macau presaged the final decision in 1845 to leave the China field and return to the United States. Three years later, Brown also returned home from China because his wife was ill. Happily, in sharp contrast to Singapore and Amoy, Kanagawa and Yokohama (despite its poor drainage and polluted canal ways) proved to be healthy places to live. Indeed, the missionary community in Kanagawa was constantly deluged by missionary visitors from China who came seeking to restore their health.¹⁸⁶ Even in Japan, though, Clara Hepburn's health remained delicate. Another missionary wife, Eliza Weeks Goble, who was also often sickly, morbidly believed from the start of her missionary career that she would die in Japan. This turned out to be the case, though not as a martyr to fever or some tropical disease but more prosaically to cancer, in 1882.¹⁸⁷ In general, the visiting China missionaries were correct in seeing Japan as a healthy place.

If a concern for health matters was one legacy of the Hepburns' China experience, another was an appreciation for the need to know Confucian thought. In June 1845, Hepburn wrote that when the Chinese read the Scriptures, "they were very fond of making quotations from their own classics of parallel passages – to say that this verse is just as Confucius or Mencius says etc."¹⁸⁸ He firmly believed that if a person wanted to be an acceptable teacher to the Chinese, he or she had to study their standard books and be able to use them as weapons of offence or defence in conversations.¹⁸⁹ And so, Hepburn brought with him to Japan the desire to study the Confucian classics and to find common intellectual ground that might bolster the argument for Christianity. In turn, this caused him look to educated Japanese, those familiar with the Confucian classics, as potential converts. In contrast, the Baptist missionary Goble, who was less educated than Hepburn and had no China experience, was more than happy to look to the common folk.¹⁹⁰

Language study was a major struggle for all missionaries on arriving in Japan. The impact of Hepburn's China experience on his language skills is difficult to know, as fourteen years elapsed between Hepburn's leaving China and his arriving in Japan. In Singapore in 1841 he had begun studying the Hokkien dialect. In 1843 he moved to Amoy, then newly opened as a treaty port as a result of the 1842 Nanjing Treaty that ended the First

Opium War (1839-42), happily noting that he was able to use there the only dialect with which he had made any progress.¹⁹¹ This did not mean he was fluent in it. In January 1844, he wrote positively that he was very satisfied “to be settled amongst the people, whom we might enjoy free and intimate intercourse with and have greater facilities in getting the language. All that is now wanting to our entering actively in our work is a knowledge of the language.”¹⁹² In 1845, Hugh Brown, one of Hepburn’s missionary colleagues in Amoy, noted that “the language of Foo-chow is said to be the most barbarous, i.e., rough and difficult – this is so [word illegible – “very”?] discouraging.”¹⁹³ Missionaries in China had to confront the fact that there were many Chinese dialects, and moving to a new place from Amoy to Foochow, or Amoy to Ningpo (where Hepburn thought of moving in 1845), often meant having to start from scratch learning a new dialect. After joining his family in Macau, Hepburn wrote in July 1845, “I shall help bro. Happner in his school, devote myself to getting a better acquaintance with Chinese works,” this so that he was able to speak to the many Hokkian people living there.¹⁹⁴ It is fair to say that Hepburn’s Chinese was still a work in progress when he left China, even after four years of studying the Hokkian dialect. He was reading and saw book knowledge, which would fit in with his views on Confucian thought, as a means by which to say something meaningful to a Chinese audience.

The legacy of Hepburn’s language experience in China, therefore, was not so much knowledge of Chinese – which everything in his letters points to being modest – but, rather, the process of studying and acquiring a language. Hepburn’s monumental achievements in creating a magnificent Japanese-English dictionary and later translating the New and Old Testaments into Japanese were the result of having excellent Japanese assistants and helpers such as Kishida Ginkō.¹⁹⁵ It was not Hepburn working alone that produced this enormous canon of work but a partnership between him and his Japanese assistants. A missionary was as good as those Japanese who helped him, and Hepburn had some outstanding helpers. Hepburn’s dictionary and translations built on the foundation of the accumulated work of others, as was the case with Bettelheim before him. Hepburn’s China experience was also likely useful in helping him to discern the good Chinese scholars among those Japanese who were willing to help him.

Unlike Hepburns’, Samuel Robbins Brown’s China experience made him very sure of his ability to master Japanese, and he came to be proud of his Japanese ability, though possibly with less justification than in Hepburn’s case. Shortly after arriving in Japan, both Brown and Hepburn began the

arduous task of learning Japanese. In February 1860, Brown wrote that they had no teachers, though Hepburn had a servant from Edo who helped him. Brown thought they might have to apply to the authorities for teachers and would be sent interpreters, who, being government employees, were the least desirable language teachers.¹⁹⁶ By April, Brown had managed to get a bona fide teacher – one who was not an interpreter – and had settled down to study Japanese.¹⁹⁷

Brown had the advantage over Hepburn of knowing more Chinese, having lived there for nine years. Furthermore, Brown had been a teacher in early life to the deaf and mute and was perhaps more sensitive than Hepburn in interpreting body language and the physical aspects of learning a foreign language, including replicating the accent. He thought Japanese was in some respects a difficult language but believed if his life was spared in such dangerous times he would master it, and he had already begun to write a book of phrases to help other westerners learn Japanese.¹⁹⁸ In September 1862, Ernest Satow, a young student interpreter at the British legation newly arrived in Japan, visited Brown in Kanagawa. There he found another British consular figure, John Frederick Lowder, on the point of marrying Brown's daughter.¹⁹⁹ Satow arranged for Brown to give him two Japanese lessons a week.²⁰⁰ These, Satow thought, were of the greatest value to him and later recalled that, besides making him repeat sentences from Brown's own *Colloquial Japanese* and explaining the grammar, Brown read with him from a Japanese collection entitled *Kiu-o Dōwa* so that he might gain insight into the construction of the written language.²⁰¹ In seeking out Brown to help him learn Japanese, Satow must have known that he had a reputation as a competent scholar.

In the meantime, Hepburn was continuing his language studies. In September 1862, he confidently hoped "some day to be a good Japanese scholar."²⁰² He kept his Japanese teacher busy translating the Chinese Scriptures into Japanese, and he himself began toying with the idea of producing an English-Japanese dictionary. He felt a good dictionary would take time but "a smaller and less pretentious one might be published sooner," and he thought that foreign merchants would happily contribute the funding needed for its publication.²⁰³ It shows something of Hepburn's standing in the foreign community that he believed that the merchants would support his dictionary project. He probably thought Francis Hall, Brown's friend and a successful businessman, would be able to help in this regard. As well, Brown had received an offer of financial help from William Keswick, the head of Jardine Matheson, the famous merchant trading company, in Yokohama.²⁰⁴

In Nagasaki, Williams was having trouble with Japanese. In January 1862, he complained that almost all his time was occupied with language study and that although some progress had been made, he felt that “in a language so difficult, of which there is neither dictionary, nor grammar, and with indifferent teachers, it cannot be otherwise than slow.”²⁰⁵ This did not stop him from beginning to translate the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As early as April 1861, Hepburn had started to translate the Gospel of Mark to test his translation abilities.²⁰⁶ He was helped by having gone over a Japanese dictionary (something Williams believed did not exist),²⁰⁷ which allowed him to collect a large number of words and phrases and enabled him to begin reading Japanese books in order to gain more knowledge of Japanese. In translating the Gospel of Mark, Hepburn used a Chinese Bible, which he believed meant that the labour of translating the Gospel into Japanese was “half done,” as the Japanese translation would be written with Chinese characters arranged to indicate Japanese word order and with Japanese case and verb endings interposed.²⁰⁸ Hepburn realized that all educated Japanese could read the Chinese Bible without difficulty, transposing as they read just as westerners did with Latin.²⁰⁹ This again underlined what he had learnt in China – that book learning was important. In his translation work, it also helped Hepburn that he shared accommodation with Brown, with whom he could compare translations. He possibly also had access to S.W. Williams’ manuscript Japanese translation of Mark, which Brown possessed.²¹⁰ Although Hepburn, Brown, and Williams laboured on their translations, they knew that educated Japanese could learn about Christianity quite independently of them by reading the Chinese Bible and Christian tracts in Chinese.²¹¹ This highlights the importance of Chinese: not only did it allow Japanese to gain knowledge of Christianity, but a translation of the Bible into Japanese would have been extremely difficult without the prior existence of a Chinese Bible.²¹²

Occupied with his language study, Brown was happy that he had made the decision to leave the United States to become a missionary in Japan. He had around him at Jōbutsuji plenty of familial company – his wife; his eldest daughter, Julia, and her younger sister, Hattie; his son, Robert; and his former parishioner, the first single-woman missionary in Japan, Caroline Adriance.²¹³ Although they were living in an old temple, they had with them some familiar comforts, including a piano, and their living quarters had all the atmosphere of a Christian home. Brown was well pleased with his physical surroundings, yet one thing spoiled Japan. “It is heathenism that spoils every thing here, which it can spoil,” he wrote, castigating those

who thought only in terms of material things. “[I] will tell you that Japan is the happiest country under heaven.”²¹⁴ Brown warned that Japan was not the land of innocence and purity that some newspapers said it was, for “vice stalks abroad in the street in the form of lechery and debauchery and indecency beyond all that it ever fell to my lot to see in China.”²¹⁵ Newspapers were on his mind, as he had recently been offered a job as a correspondent in Japan for the Shanghai-based *North China Herald*. Obviously, Brown was deeply affected by what he viewed as the immorality of the Japanese (though many foreigners in Yokohama would not have found it offensive, since the treaty port was a place for white mischief). Even though Brown might well have been prudish by any standard, it is surprising that he found Japan more given to vice than China.

Missionaries, merchants, soldiers, and sailors were not the only westerners who came to Yokohama and the other treaty ports. Almost from the start, Japan was a destination for globe-trotting Americans whose interests were not converting the Japanese to Christianity but pleasure and relaxation – and satisfying their curiosity. The promise of sexual adventure was an important element of the allure of Japan as a tourist destination for Americans from the 1860s onward. Some of these peripatetic visitors clearly liked to frequent tea houses and brothels, which Brown undoubtedly disapproved of. Among the first to visit Japan was Richard Henry Dana Jr., the author of *Two Years before the Mast*. Dana arrived in 1860 and published a description of the Gankirō, a templelike establishment in Yokohama’s Miyozaki brothel district built expressly to cater to foreign visitors.²¹⁶ Guth has noted that Western men far from home and the social restraints of Western society sowed their wild oats; the “Japanese, like all ‘Oriental’ women, were understood to be not only promiscuous, but also racial and cultural inferiors who didn’t need to be treated with the same respect accorded women of one’s own background.”²¹⁷ Compared with American women, who were demanding a more prominent role in society, Japanese women were attracted to many Western men because they could remain deferential and subservient to the men’s wishes. It was not uncommon for westerners, including Charles DeLong, the married American minister in Japan during the early 1870s, to have Japanese mistresses or to frequent bordellos. Missionaries such as Brown could only be disappointed that many Americans and other westerners, both bachelor and married, willingly indulged themselves in the vice of the floating world of the Yokohama prostitutes and brothels.

In April 1861, Hepburn informed his missionary authorities in Philadelphia that he had opened a dispensary in Kanagawa for a month’s trial to

see if it could succeed.²¹⁸ He had established this free medical clinic at the Sokoji Temple, which had served as the home for Simmons and his wife.²¹⁹ The clinic soon failed once the authorities, wanting the missionaries to move to Yokohama, put pressure on patients to stop going to it.²²⁰ As well as treating patients, Hepburn taught Japanese doctors Western medical practices. This was how he first met both Kishida Ginkō, who became his assistant, and the uncle of Hayashi Tadasu, who later became one of Clara Hepburn's students in Yokohama. Hepburn also served as Harris' doctor, which allowed him a certain freedom to travel.²²¹ Clara, in 1860, opened the first missionary English-language school in Japan, but it closed when she returned to the United States in 1861 because of her worry over their son, Samuel. In the fall of 1862, Hepburn was teaching nine students sponsored by the Kanagawa authorities to study science, including Ōmura Masujirō,²²² who became a very important figure in the Meiji Restoration, and Harada Goichi, later an army general.²²³ Hepburn taught them by having them read the Bible in Chinese and English.²²⁴

Although they were teaching and studying Japanese, missionaries could not avoid hearing about the terrorist acts the anti-foreign *shishi* were perpetrating. Brown was unnerved in April 1860 by the murder in Yokohama of two Dutch sailors who had been killed by sword-wielding assailants on the street without warning and also by a recent and bloody attack by Mito *rōnin* (masterless samurai from the city of Mito, in the Kantō region) on Ii Naosuke, whom Brown described as the Japanese prince regent. Brown noted a little optimistically that as a consequence of this, the government had redoubled its efforts to stop the murder of westerners as well as protect itself against internal enemies.²²⁵ Brown had little knowledge of the nature of the Tokugawa government; he saw the shogun as the emperor of Japan and apparently knew nothing of the real emperor in Kyoto. It was a misconception about the Japanese system of government that he shared with Harris, with whom he had spent ten days in Edo as guest chaplain. Brown was correct in seeing the attack of the Mito *rōnin* as stemming from their disapproval over the bakufu's policies toward foreigners. He was glad that Harris in Edo had a guard around his house of twenty armed Japanese officers, a number that had been doubled in the wake of the attack on Ii.

The government had decreed that all foreign houses, not only diplomatic ones, have armed guards. Brown had five armed government officers, night and day, at the gate to Jōbutsuji. The only person who did not have such guards, for an unexplained reason, was Simmons. Each time Brown or the other missionaries left home, they could ask to be accompanied by

an armed officer. Such was the concern for the safety of the missionaries that an official had come down from Edo for the single purpose of seeing for himself that the missionary residences in Kanagawa were properly defended. In January 1861, Harris told the British minister in Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock, of a rumour that some six hundred Mito *rōnin* were planning to attack Yokohama, burn it down, and kill all the foreigners and all diplomatic and consular staffs. The British had made it clear to the governor of Kanagawa that they regarded him and the other high officials as being responsible for the protection of all foreigners and diplomats. As a precaution, Alcock asked the British rear admiral, then visiting Yokohama, to delay his departure and stand by with his flotilla in case of emergency.²²⁶

In January 1862, Williams noted it was “indeed ‘the day of small things’ in Japan” but still there was hope for a brighter future. At the same time, he feared there was a possibility of war between Japan and one of the foreign powers because of the frequent murders of unoffending foreigners, the attack on the British legation, the non-observance by the Japanese of treaty stipulations, and the not infrequent causes of irritation and complaint that were given to the Japanese by foreign individuals and officials.²²⁷ It was the Japanese alarm at the landing of some Russians on Tsushima Island to make repairs to their ship that had sparked Williams’ fear of war.

Hepburn in Kanagawa did not see war between Japan and a foreign power breaking out, but he did report the murder of two English Royal Marine guards of the British minister in Edo and added, “Foreigners are hated by the upper class. They would gladly exterminate us all or drive us from the country.” Hepburn had a good grasp of the political realities of Japan: he realized that the “Taikun” (shogun) in Edo was “never regarded by the people here, as anything else than a servant of the Emperor – the highest executive officer, the general in chief, as his name signifies (Taikun means ‘great general’)” and derived all his authority from the emperor. Hepburn knew that the emperor lived in Kyoto, but what he could not understand was why the Dutch in their books on Japan had referred to him as the “spiritual emperor” unless it was because of the meaning they drew from his being called “Tenshi, Son of Heaven.” The Western powers had initially misunderstood the nature of the political structure in Japan, as they had assigned the emperor only a spiritual role and had signed the treaties of 1858 with the Tokugawa shogunate. It was only later, in 1864, after they had come to realize that the emperor and not the shogun was the highest political authority in Japan, that the emperor was asked to ratify the treaties. Hepburn, with his knowledge of China

and its imperial Son of Heaven, had surmised the real position of the emperor in the political life of Japan. He also realized that some of the daimyō (feudal lords) were challenging the right of the Tokugawa shogunate to rule and that there was popular support for this. He noted that the shogun had the power of the sword and the purse but was regarded as “a monster. The Daimios and the people are attached to the Mikado and in case of need would support him against the Taikun.”²²⁸ Appreciating the depth of anti-shogun feeling, Hepburn felt that one of the possible consequences of the Western powers signing the treaties with bakufu was that the shogun, if his rule was seriously challenged, might look to the Western powers for help.²²⁹

Not only did the political situation looked difficult, but money was always a problem, especially for a mission that was not converting any Japanese to Christianity. Without a doubt, the Japan mission of the Presbyterian Church was an expensive undertaking: the accounts for the year ending 1 October 1862 show that \$6,093.87 had been expended, \$800 of which was Hepburn’s salary.²³⁰ In June 1862, Hepburn asked the mission authorities in Philadelphia for a clerical missionary – he considered the mission incomplete unless it had an ordained clergyman – and he expressed his hope that authorities were not thinking of abandoning the Japan field because it did not have one. Like Williams, Hepburn wanted “cool-headed, judicious men ... full of the holy spirit, but not fanatical. He should be a man of good courage, for I fear the days are coming which will try us severely.”²³¹ Already the Dutch Reformed Church in late 1861 had replaced its medical missionary, Simmons (who had resigned), with a new clerical missionary, James Ballagh.²³² Attending the seminary in 1859 when the first call went out for missionaries for Japan, Ballagh, who had already decided to become a missionary either in India or China, was influenced toward Japan after reading a pamphlet by Dr. Talbott Watts and later hearing an address by Brown.²³³ It was at Brown’s request that Ballagh, designated to go to China, was sent instead to Japan to fill the vacancy Simmons left.²³⁴ Even though there was evidently interest among Ballagh’s fellow seminarians to go to Japan as missionaries, his appointment would be the last Dutch Reformed one until after the Civil War.

The advent of the Civil War, while not referred to directly, was one reason Hepburn was concerned that the Presbyterian authorities in Philadelphia might entertain the idea of abandoning Japan. Certainly, it made the question of sending out missionary reinforcements much more difficult. Moreover, although Hepburn desired to keep costs down, the Presbyterian mission was faced with considerable additional costs because Hepburn

had recently acquired Kyoryūchi no. 39 in Yokohama and was building a house. His move from his temple dwelling in Kanagawa to Yokohama was long overdue.

In September 1862, the Namamugi Incident, which took place on the Tōkaidō close to Kanagawa, underlined how exposed the missionaries there were. Hepburn's medical work brought him a few patients daily but did not meet his expenses. But he had gained goodwill for his help during the cholera outbreak in the summer of 1862, and he could capitalize on this in more safety in Yokohama.²³⁵

The Namamugi Incident and Its Aftermath

What could happen to those foreigners who did not have the goodwill of the Japanese was vividly illustrated in the Namamugi Incident. One Sunday afternoon in September 1862, Charles Lenox Richardson, a British merchant visiting from Shanghai, was out riding with three friends, including a woman, along the Tōkaidō near Kanagawa when they met a procession guarding the former daimyō of Satsuma.²³⁶ Apparently feeling that the four foreigners did not show the appropriate respect for the daimyō, the Satsuma retainers killed Richardson and wounded the three others.²³⁷ As it was not a premeditated attack, Richardson's murder occurring as it did so close to Kanagawa only reinforced the unpredictable dangers that faced Hepburn and Brown and their families. Called on to attend to the two male survivors of the attack, Hepburn saw first-hand the Satsuma samurai's handiwork.²³⁸ In late September 1862, Verbeck, clearly in light of the Richardson murder, thought it strange that so many murders of foreigners took place in Edo and Kanagawa, yet none occurred in Nagasaki. He believed, deluding himself perhaps, that the answer lay in the more appreciative attitude of the Japanese higher classes in Nagasaki to foreigners.²³⁹ Williams had earlier also seen a difference between Nagasaki and Yokohama in the Japanese treatment of foreigners; this may simply have been because Nagasaki was far from the centre of Tokugawa power, which allowed its authorities greater leeway in their dealings with foreigners.

Although Nagasaki might have been calm, tensions between the Japanese authorities and the British government over the Richardson murder increased over the winter. The issue was taking time to resolve thanks to the Taiping Rebellion and the resulting unstable situation in the Yangtze Valley, which prevented the British from gathering sufficient naval forces in Japanese waters to press their demands. In late April 1863, Hepburn wrote from Yokohama that the English had sent a large fleet there and if the Japanese refused to deal with the murderers of Richardson and pay an

indemnity, there would be war.²⁴⁰ He added that there was much alarm in the foreign community and that most people were ready to flee at a moment's notice – Sir James Hope, the British vice-admiral, had told them that he could not protect them and if war broke out they would have to shift for themselves. Americans had been told by their diplomatic minister to take an inventory of their property to the US consulate. As the Japanese regarded all foreigners, including Americans, as enemies, Hepburn and his missionary colleagues would have to flee along with everybody else if war broke out and the treaty port could not be protected. Hepburn admitted that he had always felt that “there must be some great overturning here before the Gospel would have a full course in this land,” but he shrank from the idea of having to leave his comfortable new home. He hoped the Japanese would acquiesce to the British demands, which all those in the foreign community thought to be perfectly just. In any case, he thought the Japanese government was not ready to go to war, even though it had been busy arming itself over the last three years. Hepburn did not want war, yet he believed that there would be no improvement in conditions in Japan for either merchants or missionaries without it. In contrast to the recently departed Harris, who held a positive view of events in Japan, Hepburn thought that things could not be worse and that foreigners lived in greater personal danger of assassination than before. Despite the danger, Hepburn continued his missionary work. The closure of his school after his pupils had been called away to take up various positions in the Tokugawa government gave him more time to devote to translating the Gospels, and even though he had not yet opened his dispensary, he was treating a few patients daily.

In early May, Brown also noted the threat of war between England and Japan over the British demands for compensation from the government for the burning of their embassy in Edo, which had occurred earlier in 1862, and for Richardson's murder. He believed the one way the bakufu could ensure peace was to follow the advice the American minister had given them: to yield to the British demands. Brown made the point that the Satsuma *han* could raise 100,000 troops and also was wealthy as a result of its trade with China through the Ryūkyū Islands. Although the Royal Navy had fourteen or fifteen warships off Yokohama, Brown felt that it had the strength only to injure and provoke the Japanese and not enough power to take or hold any territory. This made him fear any British action that could lead to other Western nations becoming involved in a war.²⁴¹ Brown advocated that all the foreign powers form a united front to deal with issues with the Japanese in order to prevent individual countries from

using gunboat diplomacy, which could have serious repercussions for all the various nationalities in Japan. He was acutely aware that American citizens had no protection except that provided by the British or other foreign powers.

A few days later, on 11 May, Hepburn wrote that he could take some comfort in the arrival in port of USS *Wyoming* but that he felt the Japanese had made up their minds to go to war; indeed, they were assembling a large force around Yokohama, which the foreign powers did not intend to defend. This meant that the treaty settlement would likely be destroyed. The American minister had assured him that the mission board would be indemnified if mission property was destroyed, but Hepburn had no great confidence that this would happen.²⁴² If war forced him to leave Yokohama, he did not want to return home or go to another mission field; he felt he was almost too old to start learning another language, and thought that he would go to Nagasaki if it was not harmed. His next choice was Macau, where he would wait until it was safe to return to Japan. He believed Macau to be the healthiest place in the East, but if he could not go there, he planned to go to north China. San Francisco, last on his list, would be tolerable if he could take a Japanese-language teacher with him.²⁴³ Although he thought it would be difficult to persuade a language teacher to accompany him to San Francisco, it seems he was not planning to allow the pleasures of California interfere with his Japanese-language study while he waited to return to Japan.

Hepburn's fears of having to evacuate Japan disappeared quickly. On 15 May he wrote that the state of affairs was much quieter, the British having given the Japanese an extension for answering their demands. Although the likelihood of war between Japan and Britain had receded, Hepburn perceptively noted that there was now a possibility of civil war. He saw that the British demands had caused a great deal of excitement throughout Japan, resulting in the development of strong party feelings and hostilities among the ruling classes that might cause a civil war involving Britain and France taking sides with the shogun against the daimyō.²⁴⁴ Importantly, Hepburn also reported that the British and French had come to see the necessity of protecting Yokohama, and they would not begin operations elsewhere until more troops had arrived to protect that city. Interestingly, as the crisis eased, Hepburn's attitude toward the Tokugawa shogun was softening. He wrote that the shogun had not yet returned to Edo from Kyoto but that he would come back with orders from the emperor to expel all foreigners and destroy Yokohama. As this was contrary to the shogun's own inclination and judgment, Hepburn hoped it would lead

the shogun to stand up against the emperor and the daimyō in favour of the foreigners. Hepburn thought that if this happened, it might lead to the opening up of all Japan, to the introduction of Christianity, and to the overthrow of the feudal system and the elevation of the oppressed lower classes.²⁴⁵ Hepburn believed that it was only through a great political upheaval that a way would be open for the introduction of the Gospel into Japan.

Whatever happened, Hepburn was going to stay on in Yokohama as long as he could. The Dutch Reformed missionaries were still in Kanagawa, but they would have to withdraw soon to Yokohama, where they had already begun to look for housing.²⁴⁶ Hepburn was thankful that he had already found a home because house rents were very high, ranging from \$50 to \$100 a month.²⁴⁷ While the Dutch Reformed missionaries were looking for houses in Yokohama, Hepburn welcomed a new Presbyterian colleague, David Thompson, who arrived 18 May.²⁴⁸ Within a few days of his arrival, Thompson wrote to Lowrie that the bakufu had agreed to the British demands and that “the emperor, after consulting the Gods at Miaco [Kyoto], has concluded not to wage war on the foreigners. Thus you see that owing to the clemency [sic] of these heathen Gods, we have the promise and some little prospect of peace for the present.”²⁴⁹ This statement is revealing, for it is clear that even though Thompson had been in Japan barely a week, he was not going to have any truck with the “heathen Gods” of the Japanese. Hepburn thought Thompson would make a useful missionary.²⁵⁰

In the same letter, Hepburn thankfully noted that the Tokugawa government had acceded to the British demands for an indemnity but had admitted that it was unable to bring Richardson’s assassins to justice. Even so, he felt that the British would be satisfied and happy to have got out of an ominous situation so easily and that the foreign community in Yokohama would also be pleased with a bit of a respite from political tensions. However, he still thought Yokohama was worse off than before when it came to matters of the personal safety of foreigners and trading opportunities. Moreover, any settlement between the British and the bakufu would not open Japan to the Gospel. In late June, Brown was expressing concern about the safety of Yokohama. He pointed out that Colonel George Fisher, the American consul, had arranged for the female members of his family to be taken on board the *Wyoming* and that plans were put in place to bring Mrs. Ballagh and the missionary wives aboard ship if needed. Brown had also learnt that Verbeck had moved to Shanghai because the Tokugawa authorities were building batteries around the port of Nagasaki and it was feared that foreign concession could be attacked. The British had decided

not to evacuate Yokohama in the event of war with Japan. Brown had learnt, probably from Lowder, his British consular son-in-law, that the Tokugawa authorities had repudiated their early agreement with the British regarding their demands. He reported that Colonel Neale, the acting British minister, had told him that "Japanese diplomacy was an abyss or Faustian bottom," a view Brown thought General Robert Pruyn, the American minister, shared with his British counterpart. Brown clearly believed Japanese diplomacy had been more than a match to that of the Western powers.²⁵¹

Despite the concerns over security and the possibility of war, there was still time for more mundane things to be recorded by missionaries. In mid-June, while Hepburn and Thompson stayed in Yokohama, Hepburn reported that he was now the only American doctor in the treaty port: Simmons had left in fright a few days before. This meant Hepburn would be able to earn a little money treating those Americans who fell sick and so help relieve the Presbyterian board of some of the cost of maintaining his work. Earning money to save the board's expenses was a common topic in Hepburn's letters home. In June 1863, he pointed out that Thompson was tutoring the fourteen-year-old son of an American merchant and also studying Japanese with the boy. For these services, Thompson was being paid \$200 a year, which also would be of help to the board. As well as his tutoring and his language study, Thompson had begun to conduct an English church service on Sundays for the benefit of the British soldiers who were in barracks close by. Attendance was initially low. This was perhaps because Thompson was having difficulties with his teeth, which prevented him from concentrating on this church work. Hepburn was annoyed that the Presbyterian board had not made sure Thompson's teeth were in good condition before he left the United States. In Hepburn's opinion, "A man might as well have no stomach, as no teeth."²⁵²

As well as expressing his annoyance over the state of Thompson's teeth, Hepburn inveighed against the Japanese: "The same carnal heart and aversion to Christ is seen here as everywhere else."²⁵³ Yet, despite the Japanese's lack of interest in Christianity, Hepburn realized that there was a keen interest among them to find out more about other things Western. His medical practice allowed him to have considerable contact with Japanese people. He had recently, for instance, had a long visit from a Japanese doctor attached to one of the Japanese military units stationed at Yokohama and had been asked questions about the treatment of leprosy, consumption, and rheumatism. The doctor had also shown great interest in Hepburn's medical instruments, going so far as to ask Hepburn to order

him some from the United States. However, deeply concerned about money as always, Hepburn had learnt to be cautious in complying with such requests, demanding cash in advance before going to the trouble. Further, the doctor had not been interested in the one thing that was of the utmost importance to Hepburn: Christianity. Occasionally, Hepburn did find Japanese who, if circumstances allowed, might be open to the Christian message. He had visited a farmer, a Confucianist who despised Buddhism, whom he found to be very intelligent. The man had expressed a desire to read books on Christianity but felt it was not safe to do so because of the government proscription. Indeed, Hepburn thought that the man was afraid even to be seen talking with him. From this encounter Hepburn could take heart that when Japan was opened to Christianity, some Japanese might be interested in it. The letter in which he wrote about this encounter harks back to that he wrote in January 1844 from China about his desire to enjoy open and free contact and conversation with ordinary people.²⁵⁴ In speaking to this farmer, he was meeting Japanese, but the prohibition of Christianity meant that the conversation was anything but free.

By the summer of 1863, the British response to the Namamugi Incident, although it would not be fully played out until that fall when the Royal Navy bombarded Kagoshima, had ensured that Western powers would not be driven out of Yokohama. Hepburn and his missionary colleagues had merely to wait for that time to come when it was possible to convert Japanese to Christianity. If missionaries were content to wait, American diplomats were frustrated by the slow progress of opening Japan to Western trade. The frustration American officials in Japan felt during the early 1860s is clearly seen in an important retrospective letter Colonel Fisher, the American consul in Kanagawa, wrote to Secretary of State W.A. Seward in early October 1865. Although written after the end of the Civil War, it reveals the important impact that the war had on the American position in Japan. Fisher noted that because the United States had been the first nation to make a treaty with Japan, "naturally we had prestige and immediately took a higher place if not supremacy as one of the great Powers. If not the greatest, of the world in the minds of all the Japanese who had any knowledge of Foreign Powers and Peoples."²⁵⁵ Fisher went on to argue that the United States retained this prestige until 1862-63, when the impact of the Civil War began to tell against them. He was clearly embittered that the British and the French had constantly threatened to recognize the Confederate States, something that had influenced Japan and the Japanese in their attitude toward the United States. The United States did not have the military presence in Japan, but the British and French garrisons in

Yokohama gave the two European great powers a very visible presence and potential influence. It was the French who were particularly the target of Fisher, as they had in their legation a Jesuit interpreter, l'abbé Mermet de Cachon, "the most thorough and accomplished foreign Japanese linguist in Japan" and a very cunning diplomat who would stop at nothing to get his way. Further, the French maintained their naval and military presence in order to enforce their demands, "if necessary at the point of their bayonets."²⁵⁶ This suspicion of the French, with their combination of things Jesuitical and diplomatic, was seen also in missionary writings. Fisher did not spare the British either but regarded them as a lesser threat than the French. He thought that it was British naval and military power that gave them the moral force in Japan that legitimately belonged to the United States. While Fisher thought that it was not in America's interest to break with Britain or any other European power at that time, E.E. Rice, the long-time US consul in Hakodate, relished the prospect of the outbreak of war between the United States and France or England so much that he asked to be granted a letter of marque to put out a ship, *The Once*, as a privateer.²⁵⁷

Although Fisher was not concerned about the possibility of war, he advocated a change in US policy toward Japan and the adoption of a new forward policy in order to sustain US prestige and position in East Asia. While he was aware that the United States on principle was opposed to colonization schemes and intervention in the affairs of other governments and did not maintain garrisons on foreign soil, he wanted an exception made for Japan. The United States was just entering on a new stage of national existence, greatness, and power and needed to demonstrate this to the Japanese. He emphasized that the United States had been the first Western power in Japan and were still first in the affections of the Japanese people. He believed that to maintain American prestige and supremacy, and to keep up an equal appearance in Japan with its rivals, Britain and France, it was necessary for the United States to keep a naval fleet in East Asian waters equal to that of Britain and France and to have a small marine garrison in Yokohama.²⁵⁸

The one area in which the United States was still the vanguard in Japan was the Protestant missionary movement. Nevertheless, the missionaries, as well as Colonel Fisher, regardless of what happened in metropolitan United States during the Civil War, had to depend on the military strength of Britain and France to protect them in the dangerous and rapidly changing circumstances that existed as Japan hurtled into its own civil war.