Opening Legations: Japan’s First Resident Minister

and the Diplomatic Corps in Europe

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Abstract. This analysis shows how Japanese legations, first established in Europe during the 1870s, were not just symbolic gestures but played a key role in the Meiji government’s quest for international recognition. The concept of resident ambassador was unfamiliar beyond the European world, so the transition from sending visiting envoys to establishing permanent missions was a pivotal stage. Here a comparative framework gauges the importance of Japan’s new strategy within the context of similar experiments by states such as the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and subsequently China and Siam. The case of Sameshima Naonobu, Japan’s first resident minister in Europe, highlights the cultural barriers the Japanese faced. Assisted by Frederick Marshall, an Englishman at the Japanese Legation in Paris, Sameshima’s research on the mysteries encoded in this particular social universe offers some insight on the nature of the diplomatic corps in Europe.

During the 1870s, the most striking addition to the diplomatic corps in Europe was the arrival of the Japanese resident minister. At the start of the decade there was no such post, but soon permanent missions had opened in several capitals, all housing accredited diplomats from
Tokyo. It was a remarkable change for an Empire that had resisted engaging with European states for hundreds of years. Commercial treaties had only been signed in the 1850s, and even then with reluctance. Western diplomats were promptly sent off to staff legations and consulates in Japan’s new treaty ports, but there seemed no immediate prospect of Japan establishing such bases in the West. Then, suddenly in 1871, Japanese diplomats appeared in London, Paris, and Washington, presented their credentials, and moved in.

Some non-European states had already set up offices in Britain and on the continent: Ottoman embassies first opened in the 1790s and on a sounder footing in the 1830s; Persian legations had also appeared recently in Paris and London. Shortly after resident ministers arrived from Japan, moreover, others would follow from China and Siam. Yet although the resident ambassador had been a regular feature of diplomacy in Europe since the Renaissance, the idea was culturally unfamiliar elsewhere. So what impelled these states to take this quantum leap from sending visiting envoys to opening permanent missions? The dynamics of this transition have only been charted in general terms, so here a comparative framework places Japan’s new strategy in context by first exploring some of the key features and logistical hurdles involved.

Opening legations was one step, gaining recognition another. Besides the formalities of protocol, invisible rules raised cultural barriers for any aspiring non-European diplomat, especially one from a non-Christian state. When Sameshima Naonobu was appointed Meiji Japan’s first chargé d’affaires in Europe, his immediate challenge was to win the acceptance of the diplomatic corps. In his struggle to understand the idiosyncrasies of this select club, he turned for support to Frederick Marshall, an Englishman hired at the Japanese Legation in Paris, to help him navigate the challenges of life in his new post. The result was a collaborative project to articulate some of the mysteries encoded in this particular social universe. As this analysis
highlights, it could also shed light on a subtle dialogue between different cultural worlds, offering insight on the nature of the diplomatic corps itself.

Diplomats on parade would become an increasingly familiar sight by the nineteenth century, but it was still a major undertaking to send an embassy to the far-off courts of Europe. Motives usually included some combination of trade and war, often seeking allies in a regional conflict. Ottoman envoys had begun making this journey early in the sixteenth century, first to Paris and then London, and soon they were followed by ambassadors from Morocco and Persia. In the seventeenth century, embassies came from Siam, first to The Hague and later to Versailles, although diplomatic relations with Europe then lapsed until the mid-nineteenth century. Political tensions over corsair attacks also brought North African envoys to Britain and France from as far as Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.

Growing commercial networks in the Mediterranean prompted early attempts to set up consulates in Europe. In 1715, an Armenian merchant became the Persian consul in Marseilles, although this outpost closed down on his death in 1726 and would not reopen until 1894. In the meantime, Moroccan consulates appeared at Gibraltar in 1796 and Marseilles by the mid-nineteenth century.

If sending visiting envoys was expensive, only pressing security concerns could justify the cost of opening permanent missions. It was a step often preceded by an incubation period of exploration in search of models for internal reform. The most elaborate attempt yet had been the Grand Embassy of Peter the Great in 1697-1698, as Russia, in James Der Derian’s phrase, “countered its estrangement from Western Europe” by selectively assimilating its technology, culture and also diplomacy. It was no coincidence when legations opened over the following decade. Starved of financial support, however, this first generation of Russian ambassadors
struggled to gather intelligence. They also met with a cool reception in the courts of Europe, where their “treatment ranged from indifference to ridicule and contempt”.7

Similarly, the appearance of Ottoman embassies reflected growing security concerns after new treaties with the Austrian Empire and Russia. A key motive was to gather intelligence, building on the work of “ambassadors” who for several decades already had been adding inspection tours to their itineraries when visiting European capitals.8 The first such missions opened in London in 1793, and four years later in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin.9 Whilst they coped with ceremonial duties, however, the new ambassadors were unversed in diplomatic practice and failed to command respect. Dependent on Greek “dragoman” interpreters, they also relied on the diplomatic bags of other states as they had no courier system of their own, and with no Ottoman foreign ministry to supervise, poor archiving led to confusion.10 This landmark venture was “a false start”, and these missions closed down altogether by 1821.11

The Ottoman embassies that began reopening from 1835, however, were better organised, and this time staffed by professional diplomats. The language training they received from the recently formed “Translation Chamber” enabled them to study European models in more detail, often with a focus on legal reform. A foreign ministry was also created in 1836, though it would not boast its own archive until after the Crimean War.12

Envoys from Indian states had also been appearing since the late eighteenth century, usually travelling to London, although Versailles welcomed three ambassadors from Mysore in 1788.13 They were often undermined by their ambivalent status, however, as the lands they represented were fast becoming client states of the East India Company. Costly enterprises, moreover, the longest stayed in Britain for 15 years, but they never led to permanent missions.14
Whilst new treaties and security issues soon prompted a fresh wave of resident diplomats from the East, this was rarely an immediate response. A British Legation opened in Tehran in 1809, but it was not until the end of the Anglo-Persian War in 1857 that Persian legations appeared, first in Paris and then in London. Amongst the duties of the first resident minister in France was to supervise more than 40 Persian students who had arrived there already from the recently-founded Dār al-Fonun school of modern sciences in Tehran.15

Britain’s treaties with China (1842), Siam (1855), and Japan (1858) also took some time to translate into permanent diplomatic missions. Visiting envoys from Siam reached Britain in 1857 and France in 1861. The Japanese appetite for travel became apparent as large retinues, reminiscent of daimyō processions in their ostentatious scale, reached Washington in 1860 and toured across Europe in 1862.16 They were also Japan’s first overseas envoys since two missions reached Rome in 1585 and 1615, sent there by daimyō lords who had converted to Christianity during the sengoku era of “warring states”.17 Further delegations were despatched abroad by the now ailing Tokugawa regime, besides groups of students to the Netherlands, Britain, and Russia. Some domains even broke the official ban on unauthorised travel and sent student groups of their own.18

China, on the other hand, was only induced to send diplomatic missions to Europe by “the prodding of helpful foreigners”.19 The single precedent had been in 1733, when envoys visiting the neighbouring Kalmyk Khanate were redirected to St. Petersburg on learning that their hosts had become vassals of Russia.20 It was not until 1866, however, that Robert Hart, in his post as Inspector General of China’s Maritime Customs Service, persuaded his employers to let him take a low-ranking Mandarin official and some students on an inspection tour of Europe. Two years later, he also helped plan a diplomatic mission to America and Europe led by Anson
Burlingame, the recently retired American minister to China. Missions of apology followed in the wake of attacks on French and British diplomats: to Paris after the Tianjin Massacre in 1870; and London after the murder of Augustus Margary in Yunnan Province in 1874.

The new Meiji state responded faster and was now already sending its first resident ministers to Europe. Japanese legations opened in Paris in 1871, London, Vienna, and Berlin in 1873, and Rome and St. Petersburg in 1874. Consulates were also established at The Hague in 1873, briefly in Milan, then in Marseilles in 1874, and London in 1876. China’s first legation in London did not open until 1877, again with Hart involved, and over the next two years others appeared in Paris, Berlin, and Madrid. Next was the turn of Siam, as legations opened in London in 1882 and Paris two years later. Varying levels of cultural adaptation were on show amongst these latest members of the diplomatic corps. Tokugawa envoys had travelled in samurai dress, but Meiji diplomats were accustomed to wearing European clothes. Educated in Singapore and at King’s College London, Siam’s first resident minister, Prince Prisdang Chumsai, was also familiar with English life. By contrast, the staff at the Chinese Legation clung to their native attire, attracting the notice of curious onlookers on their walks around London.

Established in 1869, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Gaimushō – set out to establish permanent missions from the start. To some extent this reflected the new Meiji regime’s declared intention of seeking knowledge throughout the world, announced in the Charter Oath the previous year. It also complemented the leaders’ desire to change Western perceptions of Japan. Together with the high-profile Iwakura Embassy that toured the world in the early 1870s, the opening of legations symbolised a progressive new order, in contrast to the isolationist policies of the old Tokugawa state.
Early in 1870, the *Gaimushō* submitted a proposal to send resident ministers to Europe, and a few months later this was approved.\(^{28}\) Diplomats were needed abroad, it pointed out, to counteract the high-handed treatment that Meiji officials felt they received from foreign representatives in Japan. In this respect, an appearance of parity under international law “promised a measure at least of empowerment to those who conformed to its practice”.\(^{29}\) In sentiment it was not dissimilar to the Indian envoys, who appealed to a higher authority in London against the perceived injustices inflicted by “the Resident”, the quasi-diplomatic East India Company official posted to each main Indian court.\(^{30}\) In Japan as well, there was a thin line between constructive help and interference. Townsend Harris, the first American resident minister, had often coached his Tokugawa counterparts on the rudiments of international law. Now the mantle of informal tutor had passed to the British minister, Sir Harry Parkes, who, as something of an oracle to statesmen like Iwakura Tomomi, never hesitated to proffer advice. At an imperial audience on 15 April 1869, he even gave the Emperor Meiji a dressing-down for not showing due respect when referring to Queen Victoria and then walked out.\(^{31}\)

It was thus imperative, the proposal stressed, that Japan should have a regular platform for gathering intelligence in the capitals of Europe. At this stage the *Gaimushō* faced a daunting task, however, for “the new Meiji leaders had no distinct diplomatic culture of their own.”\(^{32}\) Nevertheless, it could draw on records compiled under the foreign ministry that had been formed by Tokugawa officials in 1858.\(^{33}\) The previous regime had also created a translation bureau in Edo, the “Institute for the Investigation of Barbarian Books” – *Bansho Shirabesho* – which trained many of the language experts who had served in recent missions to America and Europe.

An unusual feature in Japan’s case, moreover, was the emergence of a distinctive research culture on the alien world of Europe, long before opportunities to explore Europe itself.
As the only port open to Chinese and Dutch ships, Nagasaki had been a key source of intelligence on the outside world under Tokugawa rule. Subsequently it was also the focus of “Dutch Studies” – *rangaku* – as interest grew in European science, initially confined to medicine and astronomy, but in the last decades of the regime featuring military studies and navigation as well. Dutch was increasingly taught at domainal schools, and promising young specialists were sent away to centres of learning like Nagasaki and Osaka. After the new treaty ports opened in 1859, their training within Japan soon shifted to study abroad.

This embedded research culture partly explains the surge in numbers of Japanese students in Europe after the Tokugawa ban on overseas travel was finally lifted in 1866. It also led to a wave of publications following their return. Some were particularly useful to the Gaimushō, such as an 1868 treatise on international law, based on lecture notes taken by Nishi Amane in Leiden, and an 1869 Japanese version of Charles de Martens’ *Guide Diplomatique*, translated by Fukuchi Gen’ichirō, who had served as an interpreter on two Tokugawa overseas missions. Meiji Japan mastered international law far more rapidly than is commonly assumed.

Besides the diplomatic requirements in Tokyo, plans to open legations abroad were partly a response to this growing Japanese presence abroad. Like their Persian counterparts before them, the first resident diplomats had a duty of care for students already in Europe. In 1871, for example, there were 107 Japanese students recorded in Britain alone. The initiative would also build, in a more structured way, on the *ad hoc* appointment of foreign consuls and overseas commissioners that had been developing over the last decade.

The treaties signed in 1858 had suggested reciprocity by providing that Japanese officials could be posted abroad, just like the Western representatives in Japan. If pressed on this point, however, the ambassadors on the first Tokugawa mission to the United States in 1860 were
instructed to explain that legations were not required, since there were no Japanese merchants and ships trading overseas. Nevertheless, they agreed to engage a San Francisco merchant, Charles Wolcott Brooks, as an unpaid commercial agent. Grateful for his assistance and then for finding some reputable mining engineers, the Tokugawa authorities recognised him in 1867 as their consul, just as the new trans-Pacific mail route promised a substantial increase in traffic. In 1870 he was confirmed as honorary consul by the Meiji government when a Japanese Consulate opened at San Francisco and, before retiring, he joined the Iwakura Embassy on its travels around the world. Brooks was one of the trading consuls now so prevalent in the field of commerce, trusted merchants with some influence, but not necessarily from the country they served. In Paris, the preparations for the Tokugawa delegation to the 1867 Exposition Universelle led French officials to suggest a similar arrangement. In 1865, Baron Jules de Lesseps – the brother of Ferdinand of Suez Canal fame – was made Japan’s commissioner at the exhibition. A banker, Paul Fleury-Hérard, was also enlisted as his advisor and later recognised as consul general. In 1864, meanwhile, a Tokugawa mission returning from France had recommended the creation of permanent diplomatic missions. Japanese resident ministers were even appointed in 1867, with instructions to set up legations in Paris and London, but the regime collapsed before these plans could materialise. Fleury-Hérard was now replaced by Count Charles de Montblanc, a Belgian noble who had represented the Satsuma delegation at the recent exhibition. For a few months in 1870, Montblanc even ran a consulate in Paris near the Gare Saint-Lazare, although a scheme to promote him to the rank of chargé d’affaires foundered when Maxime Outrey, the French resident minister in Japan, insisted that it was against international law for a Frenchman to serve as the diplomatic representative of a foreign government in Paris.
Initially, the new Gaimushō’s operations in Europe were thus largely confined to sending special missions. As Japanese students in Britain still had no consular representation, a commissioner was sent in 1870 to supervise. The appointment fell to Alexander von Siebold, a German noble with ten years’ experience in Japan who had accompanied the Tokugawa delegation to the Paris Exposition; however, he stayed only briefly before moving on to Frankfurt.\(^{43}\) Similarly, Ueno Kagenori was despatched to London later that year on a commission to settle the repayment of a loan raised by a British entrepreneur, the extravagantly named Horatio Nelson Lay, for the construction of the Yokohama-Tokyo Railway.

Whilst plans to send resident diplomats were now in train, a glaring problem for the Gaimushō as a start-up organisation was the shortage of trained personnel to staff its legations.\(^{44}\) The new vice-minister, Terashima Munenori, was a veteran of the Satsuma party that had travelled covertly to Britain in 1865 and so recruited heavily from the young compatriots who had accompanied him. One of these, Sameshima Naonobu, was appointed Japan’s first diplomatic agent in Europe. Reflecting the need to utilise the previous regime’s expertise, he was joined in a supporting role by Shioda Saburō, who had served as a Tokugawa interpreter during the Paris Exposition. Sameshima’s credentials covered three countries: Britain, France, and North Germany. It was an ambitious portfolio, although not an isolated case. In 1882, the resident minister of Siam was appointed to no less than 12 countries when the first legation opened in London.

The son of a doctor, Sameshima was still only 25 and, like many early Meiji diplomats, very young for such a senior post abroad. Nevertheless, he had shown some aptitude for language as the only member of the Satsuma group to specialise in literature rather than a technical field.\(^{45}\) In 1867, after two years in London at University College, he and five other
students had followed a former British diplomat and itinerant journalist, Laurence Oliphant, across the Atlantic to live in a Christian colony in New York State. He then returned to Japan after the fall of the Tokugawa regime, together with Mori Arinori, who at age 23 was appointed Japan’s first *chargé d’affaires* to the United States.46

Mori was readily accepted when he reached Washington early in 1871, but Sameshima met with a cool reception from the British. Parkes objected to the way he had been appointed “without any reference to myself although this was the first diplomatic officer being sent by the mikado’s government to England”. Given Sameshima’s “inexperience in diplomatic business” and “the inferior rank he held in his own country”, Parkes was also sceptical of his ability to represent Japan’s interests “in no less than three countries at once”. The timing was unfortunate, moreover, as Parkes was away on business when Sameshima was “suddenly despatched” from Yokohama in November 1870. Above all, there was conflicting information over his status, for as Parkes observed, “they [the Gaimushō] scarcely knew their own minds as to the position he was to fill”.47 Initially described as *benmushi*, a title with no Western equivalent, this post was subsequently divided into three grades corresponding to the ranks of minister plenipotentiary, resident minister, and *chargé d’affaires* as designated at the 1815 Congress of Vienna.48 Sameshima and Mori presented themselves in the lowest of these tiers, but the term *benmushi*, never widely accepted, was scrapped altogether in 1872.

Meiji Japan’s first attempt to set up a legation in Europe thus ended in failure. Sameshima was told that he could not be recognised as *chargé d’affaires* when he presented his credentials to the foreign secretary, Lord Granville, in February 1871. Instead, the description of his duties “to look after the Japanese students in England, France and Prussia” suggested to Parkes that “the title of ‘Commissioner’ [without diplomatic rank] will probably be found to
serve all the purposes of his mission. Clearly, the British saw him as a straight replacement for von Siebold and Ueno, the two commissioners who had been to London the previous year. Also from Satsuma, Ueno held the same rank in Japan.

After languishing for several weeks in the Langham Hotel, Sameshima travelled to Berlin, capital of the newly unified German Empire, where his credentials were accepted by the chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. He then made his way to Paris, just as life there was settling down after the recent Commune, and announced his arrival in July from the Hotel Chatham, where Oliphant was also staying as a correspondent for The Times. Fortunately, Jules Favre, the French foreign minister, had already accepted his credentials at a previous meeting in January when, to avoid the Siege of Paris, Sameshima called on him in Bordeaux en route to London.

France usually followed Britain’s lead on Japanese matters, and Outrey, perhaps influenced by Parkes, had expressed reservations when he saw Sameshima in Yokohama two months before. Sameshima offered a semblance of continuity, however, presenting himself as a replacement for Montblanc, and Favre must also have been impressed by Bismarck’s subsequent approval. Japan’s first legation in Europe thus opened in Paris in August 1871; and on Oliphant’s recommendation, Sameshima hired Marshall, a long-term English resident, as Conseiller Européen. A man “of sound character and fluent in both English and French”, Marshall became his right-hand man.

Parkes now took a gentler stance, convincing Granville that “it would be well” to recognize Sameshima as chargé d’affaires in London after all, “as he appears to have been received in that capacity at Paris and at Berlin”. In the event, however, Terashima was appointed Japan’s first resident minister in London. Arriving with the Iwakura Embassy in August 1872, he presented his credentials to Queen Victoria in December, but stayed for just a
year before returning to take up the post of foreign minister in Tokyo. Terashima’s successor in London was Ueno, who served there until the arrival of Mori Arinori in 1880. Japan’s first four resident diplomats in Britain were thus all men from Satsuma.

Sameshima, meanwhile, concentrated on redeeming his career in France. In 1872, he was promoted to the rank of resident minister, and the following year to extraordinary envoy and minister plenipotentiary. In 1874, he was awarded the Legion d’honneur, amongst other decorations. He then spent several years in Tokyo assisting Terashima as vice-minister, but returned to Paris in 1878, where he supervised the expansion of Japan’s diplomatic presence in Europe to include the Iberian Peninsula and Benelux countries. Often plagued by ill health, however, overwork took its toll, and he died in 1880 at the age of just 35. In an unusual break with convention, his funeral, held at Montparnasse Cemetery with Buddhist rites, was attended by the entire diplomatic corps.54

Whilst the opening of Japanese legations may have looked quite methodical overall, Sameshima’s ordeal shows how haphazardly it all began. Nevertheless, there were soon encouraging signs. On one level, the experiment apparently complied with the counsel of foreign advisers like Parkes to follow Western modes of diplomatic practice.55 At the same time, Japan’s new resident diplomats provided a counterweight to the influence of ministers like Parkes in Japan. In 1876, for example, an article in the Japan Gazette, an English newspaper in Yokohama, pointed out a recent change in attitudes towards these foreign officials:

The fact of there being Japanese Ministers Plenipotentiary, who are recognized as on an equality with those of other nations, the Government, and it may be added, the more educated people generally, have come to consider ministers much as other men,
and not as formerly in the light of ministering or destructive angels sustained by heaven-like power.\textsuperscript{56}

Gathering overseas intelligence was also instrumental in shaping perceptions in Japan. Public dissemination of such material helped, and between 1880 and 1889, for example, the Gaimushō Records Office issued a monthly magazine entitled \textit{Gaiji shisatsu zasshi} [\textit{Observations on Foreign Affairs}]. On sale for three \textit{sen} per copy, it included numbered reports from Japan’s legations in Britain, France, the United States, and Russia.\textsuperscript{57} Henri de Blowitz, the celebrated Paris correspondent of \textit{The Times}, captured an impression of this network in 1894:

\begin{quote}
from all their numerous active and vigilant Legations has gone forth, and goes forth still, an incessant stream of monthly or bi-monthly reports, condensing in concise and vivid terms the events of the month or the two weeks that have passed, and drawing from the events described deductions which serve more and more to complete the education of the country.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

The advent of the telegraph, moreover, was transforming diplomatic communications.\textsuperscript{59} Cables with connexions to European capitals stretched as far east as Constantinople (1855), Tehran (1865), Singapore (1870), and Hong Kong, Shanghai and Nagasaki (1871).\textsuperscript{60} From a British perspective, Japan was so remote that correspondence had previously taken months to reach London from Tokyo. The submarine cable between Shanghai and Nagasaki was a start, but not until 1873, when a cable was completed – mostly – overland to Tokyo, could diplomats send telegrams direct from Europe.\textsuperscript{61} This new technology has been linked to the declining influence of Parkes, but it did not immediately curtail the independence of the “man on the spot”. Simply too expensive and bureaucratic at first, most correspondence was still handwritten and despatched by mail. Only later did reductions in cost have the impact on diplomacy that Lord
Salisbury, the British prime minister, proclaimed in 1889 when he told the Institution of Electrical Engineers, “we positively exist by virtue of the telegraph.”

In the meantime, Japanese rather than Western use of the telegraph had a greater effect on the standing of foreign diplomats in Japan. As early as September 1874, telegrams written in English were exchanged between Enomoto Takeaki, the new resident minister in St. Petersburg, and Terashima, the foreign minister in Tokyo. The effect was soon felt in the treaty ports, for as a report in the Japan Gazette noted in 1876, Japanese resident diplomats now “obtain the desired information from the fountainhead”. The article pointed out, “this being communicated by telegraph, the [Japanese] Government is frequently posted as to the views held by the heads of foreign states, before the ministers of those states resident in Japan, are aware of such themselves.” In May 1878, for example, Parkes informed the Foreign Office that he had just learned from Terashima about the postponement of a conference due to be held shortly in London. The theme of the conference was, ironically, on the telegraph.

From the outset, telegraphic communications ensured regular oversight of Japan’s legations by the Gaimushō. It also allowed them to take a more active diplomatic role than conveyed by the prevailing impression that, perhaps due to the high-profile conferences on treaty revision in the 1880s, key talks were conducted mainly in Tokyo. Already in 1876, Parkes had noticed how the Japanese were going over his head in an “attempt to gain their point directly through their ministers at the various foreign capitals”. In 1877, a fresh initiative sought to negotiate on treaty revision through Japan’s legations in Europe and America, rather than in Tokyo where the foreign representatives were seen as acting in concert. Subsequently, a multi-lateral conference was even due to assemble in London, only to be switched to Tokyo after Terashima intervened, to the chagrin of his successor, Inoue Kaoru. The crucial negotiations
that sealed the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1894, moreover, were held in London, leading to the end of extraterritoriality in the treaty ports in 1899.

The new legations also created a suitable environment for the cultivation of a new, Japanese perspective on the diplomatic corps. “It was curious to see how completely, as far as we could judge, he adapted himself to his European surroundings, talking the jargon of the men of the world, and entirely at one with them in the interests of the diplomatic circle.” This was how Nakano Takeaki, the Japanese chargé d’affaires, appeared in 1877 to Mary Blackwood, daughter of the publisher John Blackwood, when they met over dinner at the Marshalls' home in Paris. Previous incarnations of Japanese envoys had arrived in samurai dress, so perhaps she expected a more obvious cultural gap. Deputising for Sameshima who was away in Tokyo, Nakano already had some experience of overseas travel, but this was a very particular social universe. The diplomatic corps could easily expose a new arrival, even a European, to the discomfort of feeling like “a fish out of water”, and especially if they were from Japan.

To outward appearances this process of acculturation could appear almost seamless, a visible sign of the “emulative learning” that Shogo Suzuki describes as the highest stage of socialisation. In some respects there was a clear template to follow, everyday customs being so much part of diplomatic practice that they were enshrined in etiquette. In Paris, there was even an entire government department devoted to protocol. As de Blowitz described the Japanese Legation staff in 1894:

They live an official life, keep to themselves, give receptions extremely well arranged, and correct dinners, where the guests are very well chosen; they never commit a blunder in etiquette; they are themselves scrupulously punctilious in their social duties, irreproachable in their dress and bearing at State functions; and they display as
much amiability towards the official set as courtesy towards the persons whose acquaintance they may have made in the world.\textsuperscript{73}

Observance of outward forms, however, was taken as read in the diplomatic corps. More daunting was the panoply of unwritten norms subconsciously embedded in this cultural world. François de Callières once broached this subject in 1716 when compiling the character traits of an ideal envoy in \textit{The Practice of Diplomacy}. By operating at a pre-conscious level, Bourdieu's concept of “habitus” also helps to probe this field, identifying beneath the surface an ingrained, inculcated set of social differences and hierarchies that, although not innate, seem “inherent in the nature of things”, as if by “second nature”.\textsuperscript{74} Diplomatic manuals, for example, would still assume a degree of cultural familiarity beyond the experience of most new arrivals from Japan. Such were the hurdles that perplexed the Russian and Ottoman ambassadors of the 1790s and confronted Japanese resident ministers in the 1870s.

On one level, their diplomatic rank commanded respect as the accredited representatives of sovereign states. On another, there were implicit rules, including a notional “standard of civilization”, even if this was simply rhetoric “to gate-keep membership of international society”, or just an illusion since “no stable standard emerged.”\textsuperscript{75} Yet although the concept has been exposed as Eurocentric and flawed by a narrow view of modernisation, this outlook certainly featured in the foreign ministries of Europe, and Meiji diplomats were confronted with the obstacles it implied.\textsuperscript{76} Such informal structures, called \textit{doxa} by Bourdieu, were also elusive in that they consisted of “the silent experience of the world”.\textsuperscript{77} James Joll identified a similar pattern, or “what goes without saying”, in the unspoken assumptions “taken for granted” by European diplomats.\textsuperscript{78} For a Japanese resident minister, these obscure rules could be hard to pin down, let alone devise effective strategies to overcome the handicaps they imposed.
Following the untimely death of Sameshima in December 1880, Marshall was instructed by Suzuki Kan'ichi, first secretary at the Japanese Legation in Paris, to compile a report on the views of their former chief. In Marshall’s estimation, Sameshima believed “that not only [treaty] revision but the whole future of Japan's relations with Europe depended almost entirely upon the degree of confidence that Japan could inspire”.79 Similarly, de Callières had once identified the need for diplomatists to establish credit, a practice the British diplomat, Harold Nicolson, described as “akin to good banking”.80 In Bourdieu’s terms it meant enhancing prestige by accumulating the capital – social, cultural, and symbolic – that formed “the currency of power within a given field”.81

One strategy the Japanese used was to emphasise a sense of shared values through the observance of diplomatic custom and ritual. Another was to cultivate social and professional networks. As de Blowitz pointed out in 1894, “everywhere as much as possible they have frequented diplomatic circles and developed their knowledge of international questions.”82 Essential to this endeavour, although not cheap, was the physical space of the legation building, which set the stage for hosting social events. Situated close to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the hotel in the Avenue Marceau that Sameshima rented in 1873 proved conducive, and the Legation remained there for 33 years until its conversion to embassy status. In London, however, Ueno often complained to Terashima about the building chosen for the Legation in 1874. Located in Kensington Park Gardens, it seemed too remote from the other missions in town, notably the more impressive Chinese legation established in Portland Place in 1877.83 Subsequently, grander premises were found in Cavendish Square in 1880, at more than double the cost.84

Highly paid foreign employees also played key roles as cultural brokers in fostering these networks. The personnel enlisted by Ottoman, Chinese, and Japanese missions suggest a range of
styles. For much of the Victorian period, the men appointed to London as Ottoman ambassadors were Greek and Italian Christians, culturally distinguishable from other Europeans only by the red fez they “always wore in common with all Turkish officials”.85 Another high-profile figure was Sir Halliday Macartney, for 30 years secretary to the Chinese Legation in London. Knighted for his services in promoting Anglo-Chinese relations, he could seem indispensable when serving ministers who had no command of English, a “not disagreeable” arrangement he found, as “he liked to hold the strings in his own hands”.86

The appointment of Marshall as secretary to the Japanese Legation in Paris reflected his experience and contacts in France.87 When Sameshima arrived in 1871, Marshall had been serving on a charity committee, co-ordinating relief supplies after the Franco-Prussian War together with, amongst others, Baron Alphonse de Rothschild.88 de Blowitz, who also owed his post at The Times to an introduction from Marshall, described him as “an Englishman widely known in Paris and well acquainted with men and things”.89 When Mary Blackwood visited in 1877, she observed that “his position . . . in the midst of the diplomatic circle made him thoroughly au courant with foreign politics and gossips of the different Embassies – a world of itself apart, and yet in touch at its different points with all the great centres of the world.”90 Marshall played a central role as master of ceremonies until his retirement in 1888.91 A hint of this activity appears in the report on Sameshima’s funeral in The Times: “Many residents in the Faubourg St. Germain were also present, for the late Minister had repeatedly entertained on the neutral ground of the Legation the most aristocratic families in France, together with the official world, two classes meeting scarcely anywhere else.”92

Another key development was the professionalisation of the Japanese diplomatic service. On Sameshima’s recommendation, apprentice secretaries were despatched abroad from 1876
onwards, recalling the British practice of sending student interpreters to Japan, amongst them a young Ernest Satow in 1862. Sameshima also tried to demystify the field by articulating some of the unwritten rules of diplomacy. Working in collaboration with Marshall, he compiled a short manual for Gaimushō staff, the Diplomatic Guide, which Blackwood’s published in 1874. Drawing on selected quotes from prominent legalists, it spelt out “golden rules” for Japanese students to “understand the complex diplomatic customs of Europe, and teach them a basic knowledge of diplomatic practice”. Whilst this drew on de Martens’ Guide Diplomatique – first published in 1832 – in its coverage of even mundane clerical details, the Diplomatic Guide was possibly the first work of its kind in English, more than 40 years before Satow famously wrote his more extensive, standard work in the field.

In the course of formulating these ideas, Marshall’s own eyes were opened to a “mysterious” new Europe. This hidden world is described in “International Vanities”, a series of articles he wrote for Blackwood’s Magazine in 1874 and 1875. These outlined taxonomies of ceremonial, titles, decorations, emblems, and other paraphernalia of diplomatic life. Assorted trinkets of symbolic capital were weighed in turn to measure their currency in the field. Titles found division into categories of possession, relationship, religion, and courtesy. Emblems ranged from flags and standards to coats of arms and badges, a group including liveries, uniforms, state seals, mottoes, and crowns. Decorations were also sorted into ribbons, stars, and crosses, as Marshall traced the evolution of orders from religious roots to aristocratic and modern forms. Notable examples included the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, the British Garter, and the French Legion d’honneur. In sum, he explained, “orders began with charity, piety, and battle; they terminate in a button-hole!”
Drawing on Sameshima’s experience in the field, “International Vanities” became an ethnographical study of the European diplomat in his natural habitat. Marshall’s stated purpose sounds trivial enough, “to draw attention to some half-unperceived yet not unamusing forms of vanity”. Obliquely referring to his vantage point within the Japanese Legation, he explained, “if some strange necessity should forcibly direct attention to them, they shine out like a lantern in the fog.” Seen in this light, the hallowed practices of European diplomacy might not seem like second nature or inherent standards at all. Marshall compared them rather to ephemeral whims of fashion, observing that “ceremonial, forms, and titles are diminishing, but stars are multiplying; the shapes of vanity, like the shapes of bonnets, change as time goes by.” Lampooning iconic symbols was a device to expose the parochial nature of diplomatic culture in Europe. This more subversive agenda surfaced on occasion, as when Marshall described the “law of nations” as “an empty phrase” with no mechanism for enforcement. And so elastic were the criteria for awarding decorations, he noted, “there is no common rule to guide us – no standard to invoke.”

In September 1894, Japan’s standing in Europe rose overnight with news of its stunning military success against China. Reporting for The Times, de Blowitz commented, “incontestably during the last two days, since their startling victory, the Japanese have grown considerably in the opinion of the French public.” Several months had passed already, however, since the Aoki-Kimberley Treaty was signed in London, making Japan the first eastern state to shake off the system of extraterritorial jurisdiction. Even now, the French seemed apprehensive over the prospect, but according to de Blowitz, “they forget that it was here in Paris that Japan made its first attempt to have the treaties altered.” This, he recalled, was the work of Marshall, operating “under the direction of his chief, M. Sameshima”. Whilst overstating the role of an old friend, it underlines the cumulative efforts made by the new legations over the past 20 years.
Conventionally, the end of the treaty ports in 1899 is seen as marking Japan’s “entry into international society” or “accession to the Comity of Nations”. Howland argues instead that since Japan was recognised as a sovereign state, this had been emerging for decades already, as shown by the activities of resident ministers in Europe. In 1874, for example, Ueno in London joined the International Law Association and, the following year, Aoki Shūzō in Berlin initiated negotiations for Japan’s entry into the Universal Postal Union. Less apparent from this critique, however, is the process of opening legations, the most visible symbol yet of Japan’s participation, and the essential platform for such activities. Neither does it feature in Auslin’s appraisal of the Iwakura Embassy “as a first step to remaking Japan’s place in the world”, even though, by this stage in 1871, Sameshima and Mori were already in situ in Paris and Washington To send one-half the government abroad on a global tour was a landmark event, but the new legations created a more durable structure for Japan’s engagement with the Western world.

Like the Ottomans and Persians before them, security concerns framed the decision to establish permanent missions in Europe. A critical mass of overseas research also helped these legations to have an immediate, tangible impact on diplomacy in Japan. Not only did they contribute to key negotiations but, assisted by the telegraph, their intelligence networks helped provide a counterweight to the influence of Western ministers in Tokyo. At times the process of accumulating social and cultural capital seemed tortuously slow. Meiji dignitaries, for example, returned from visits to Europe “festooned with decorations”, but the Emperor Meiji did not receive the Order of the Garter until after Queen Victoria’s death. Nevertheless, there were encouraging signs, notably a newfound prestige in 1906 when Japan’s legations in London and Paris were upgraded to embassy status, just 13 years after the United States. Military victory in
the Russo-Japanese war helped, but Japan’s was one of only nine embassies in London on the outbreak of the First World War.\textsuperscript{105}

Japanese participation in this established club has been seen as helping to sustain the rules of an international society created in Europe long ago.\textsuperscript{106} It can also be viewed as contributing, if incrementally, to modifying existing norms and shaping a more global order that would follow.\textsuperscript{107} For early Meiji officials posted to Europe, the diplomatic corps presented a mysterious field that had previously defied attempts by other states to enhance their standing abroad. Barred from the Court of St. James in 1871, Sameshima, like others, initially struggled to win acceptance, but his experience exemplifies a rapid learning curve in deconstructing the world of the diplomatic corps. By articulating some of its unwritten conventions, his collaboration with Marshall also subjected this field to new angles of enquiry, exposing hidden layers not fully realised by European diplomats themselves.

Notes

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\textsuperscript{2} There were Turkish envoys in France in 1571, 1581, 1601, and 1607, and in England in 1580, 1583, 1607, 1611, and 1628. See Fatma Müge Göçek, \textit{East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century} (Oxford, 1987), 9; Nabil Matar, \textit{Turks, Moors &
Englishmen in the Age of Discovery (NY, 1999), 32, 34; Guy Le Strange, ed., Don Juan of Persia: A Shi’ah Catholic 1560-1604 (London, 1926), 1-10.


4 These missions often involved the exchange of captives. See Matar, Turks, Moors & Englishmen, 35, 38; Gillian Weiss, Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean (Stanford, CA, 2011), 85.


8 Göçek, East Encounters West, 11.


12 Ibid., 149-50; Faroqhi, Travel and Artisans, 6, 8.
13 Meredith Martin, “Tipu Sultan’s Ambassadors at Saint-Cloud: Indomania and Anglophobia in Pre-Revolutionary Paris”, *West 86th*, 21/1(2014), 56.


15 Established in 1851, this was the forerunner of the University of Tehran. See Hormoz Ebrahimnejad, *Medicine in Iran: Profession, Practice and Politics, 1800-1925* (Basingstoke, 2014), 97-98.


19 Hurewitz, “Ottoman Diplomacy”, 144.


22 Gaimushō, ed., *Gaimushō enkaku ruijū* (Tokyo, 1876), 653-54.


27 In his banquet reception speech at the Grand Hotel in San Francisco on 18 January 1872, Vice-Ambassador Itō Hirobumi praised the “wondrous results [that] have been accomplished by the united action of Government and people, now pressing forward in the peaceful paths of progress”: Charles Lanman, The Japanese in America (London, 1872), 14.


33 Other states also established foreign ministries some time before setting up permanent missions: in Persia (1821), Siam (1840), and China (1861).

34 On intelligence received by the Tsushima and Satsuma domains through their trade with Korea and Ryūkyū, see Robert Hellyer, Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868 (Cambridge MA, 2009).


39 In 1876, Yanagiya Kentarō became the first Japanese official to hold the post of consul in San Francisco. See Payson J. Treat, *Japan and the United States, 1853-1921* (Stanford, CA, 1928), 106.


41 Parkes to Stanley, 27 June 1867, FO [Foreign Office Archives, National Archives, Kew] 46/81; “Memo of Mr. von Siebold on the Japanese mission to the French Exhibition”, 25 February 1867, FO 46/82.

42 Montblanc’s Belgian nationality did not stop Outrey from giving this advice. See Inuzuka Takaaki, *Meiji gaikōkan monogatari* (Tokyo, 2009), 46. Similarly, France had recognised Charles Vidal only as Hawaiian consul general but, in 1864, his successor, William Martin, was accepted as chargé d’affaires and was still in Paris when the Japanese sought this title for Montblanc. The British recognised Manley Hopkins only as consul general, even though the Hawaiian foreign office roster listed him as chargé d’affaires in London for 28 years. In 1886, his successor, Abraham Hoffnung, was accepted as chargé d’affaires, but only after taking Hawaiian nationality. See Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1874-1893. The Kalakaua Dynasty* (Honolulu, HI, 1967), 294.

43 Sawa and Terashima to Parkes, 18 August 1870, FO 46/126.


46 Andrew Cobbing, The Satsuma Students in Britain: Japan’s Search for the Essence of the West (Folkestone, 2000), 145-46. Studies on Mori include Ivan P. Hall, Mori Arinori (Cambridge MA, 1973).

47 “Memorandum. Appointment of Sameshima as Chargé d’Affaires”, FO 46/143.

48 Inuzuka, Meiji gaikōkan monogatari, 49.

49 Parkes to Granville, 22 December 1870, FO 46/127.


51 Inuzuka, Meiji gaikōkan monogatari, 50.


53 “Memorandum. Appointment of Sameshima as Chargé d’Affaires”, FO 46/143; Granville to Adams, 29 December 1871, FO 46/136.

54 “Obituary”, Times (6 December 1880); “Latest Intelligence by Telegraph (from our correspondent)”, Ibid. (7 December 1880).


56 “Treaty Revision”, Japan Gazette (18 February 1876).


61 The Nagasaki-Tokyo line included one submarine section of cable laid across the Kanmon Strait.


64 *Japan Gazette* (18 February 1876).

65 Parkes to Salisbury, 6 May 1878, FO 46/229.

66 Nish, “Japan”, 329.

67 Parkes to Derby, 7 February 1876, FO 46/203.


69 Kennedy to Granville, 1 December 1880, FO 46/268.


71 Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays toward a Reflective Sociology* (Stanford, CA, 1990), 108.


77 Bourdieu cited in Peter Jackson, “Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘Cultural Turn’ and the Practice of International History”, *Review of International Studies*, 34/1(2008), 167.


79 Frederick Marshall to Ida Yuzuru, 21 December 1882. MOFA 6/1/6/3.


81 Jackson, “Pierre Bourdieu”, 168.


83 Housed in Bryanston Square during the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Embassy also relocated to Portland Place in 1901.
84 Inuzuka, *Meiji gaikōkan monogatari*, 82-83, 92-93.


87 Marshall was involved in recommending Richard Stuart Lane to the post of secretary to the Japanese Legation in London in 1875. Fred [Marshall] to Stuart [Lane], 5 December 1875, MOFA 3/9/3/12/3. His equivalent in Washington, Charles Lanman, was recommended to the Japanese Legation there by Joseph Henry, the first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. See Inuzuka, *Meiji gaikōkan monogatari*, 56.


90 Porter, *Blackwood*, 305.

91 After retiring to Brighton, Marshall regularly sent reports on international affairs to Tokyo until 1903. Most of them are held in three volumes. See MOFA 6/1/6/0/3.

92 “Obituary”, *Times* (8 December 1880). The guest lists for dinners held at the Japanese Legation during the 1880s include a wide range of French government officials, including President Jules Ferry. MOFA 6/4/4/0/10.

93 Inuzuka, “Reimeiki nihon gaikō”, 580.

94 Inuzuka, *Meiji gaikōkan monogatari*, 86.


Ibid., 150.

Ibid., 178-79, 188.


Best, “Diplomatic Practice”, 247-49.

