



## 1872: WHEN SAMURAI CAME TO SALTAIRE

### The Iwakura Embassy's visit to Bradford and to Titus Salt's model village

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### Leaders of the Iwakura Embassy photographed in San Francisco in 1872 <sup>1</sup>

L-R: Kido Takayoshi, Yamaguchi Masuka aka Yamaguchi Naoyoshi, Iwakura Tomomi, Itō Hirobumi, Ōkubo Toshimichi

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.historyofjapaneseinny.org/blog/artifacts/iwakura-mission/>

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## PREFACE

This paper summarises what we know of a remarkable event that occurred in 1872, when Titus Salt's now universally-celebrated Saltaire played host to a group of Japanese dignitaries. <sup>2</sup>

However, Saltaire's 'remarkable event' was just one small episode in the extraordinary story of the Iwakura Embassy. Whilst I shall set out the details of the Embassy's visit to Bradford and Saltaire, it is essential that readers understand what the Embassy was and the context of its many visits, in order to appreciate the high significance of the Embassy, for Japan and for the world.

The original account of the Iwakura Embassy's global odyssey was compiled by Kume Kunitake (pictured), secretary to the Embassy's leader and chronicler of its travels. In 1878, it was published in Japanese in five volumes under the title *Tokumei Zenken Taishi Bei-O Kairan Jikki* 「特命全權大使米欧回覽実記」.



In this paper, Kume's account is often mentioned or quoted and this invariably refers to text from the full English translation, also in five volumes.

A full translation into English was published by The Japan Documents in 2002. It was edited by Graham Healey and Chushichi Tsuzuki and entitled *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73. A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europe* <sup>3</sup>. The translators were Andrew Cobbing, Martin Collcutt, Graham Healey, P F Kornicki, Eugene Sowiak and Chushichi Tsuzuki.

*Japan Rising*, Cambridge University Press 2009, is a one-volume abridgement of the English translation. It was prepared by Chushichi Tsuzuki with the assistance of R. Jules Young. It includes an introduction by Ian Nish. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> now universally-celebrated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

<sup>3</sup> I believe this to be a faithful translation of the original title.

<sup>4</sup> I acknowledge a heavy reliance on Nish's introduction in drafting *The Embassy's historical backstory*. I have not made multiple individual references to that work.

## What was the Iwakura Embassy?

'Iwakura Embassy' (or 'Iwakura Mission') refers both to a group of leading Japanese statesmen and their support staff, and also to their round-the-world diplomatic voyage that lasted for more than 20 months, from 23 December 1871 to 13 September 1873.

The aims of the Embassy were threefold:

- to gain recognition for the new Japanese imperial dynasty under the Emperor Meiji
- to begin preliminary renegotiation of unequal treaties with the dominant world powers and
- to make a comprehensive study of modern industrial, political, military and educational systems and structures in the United States and Europe.

'Iwakura' refers to Iwakura Tomomi, the Embassy's leader. He was Japan's Foreign Minister <sup>5</sup>. He was also Minister of the Right: in effect, the Deputy Prime Minister <sup>6</sup>.

For the purposes of the Embassy's journey, he was 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Europe and the United States'.

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<sup>5</sup> When the Embassy set out, Taneomi Soejima was made Japan's Foreign Minister. Thanks to Tomoe Murai for this information, and for that in the next footnote.

<sup>6</sup> At this point in history, the most senior ministerial post was the *Daijō-daijin* (Grand Minister) and his deputies were the Minister of the Left (*Sadaijin*) and Minister of the Right (*Udaijin*). The *Sadaijin* was the more senior of the two, but the post was vacant. As a result, Iwakura was second in command of Japan's government. His importance and qualities are made plain in the following, from <https://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-culture/sannomaru/zuroku-79.html> : *The young Emperor still in his teens, was to face many difficult situations, supported by [Grand Minister] Sanjo Sanetomi... and Iwakura Tomomi... [Iwakura] was from a family not so highly ranked [as the Grand Minister], but he stood out with his brilliance and became a close advisor of [the Emperor].*

## The Embassy's historical backstory

The Embassy's backstory is one of national revolution.<sup>7</sup>

Until 1867-1868 - and for 700 years!- Japan was governed by the shōgun<sup>8</sup> based at Edo, later called Tokyo. The shōgun was the representative of a warrior family which kept Japan under strict control. Not the same family: there were three distinct periods in which different families held sway. At the time of the revolution, the Tokugawa family was at the helm - as it had been since 1603.

The shōgun was the lord at the apex of a feudal system (the *han* system) of roughly 280 hereditary land holdings (domains or fiefdoms) throughout Japan<sup>9</sup>. Power was split between the shōgunate in Edo and the feudal lords. The lords had a degree of local sovereignty in exchange for loyalty to the shōgun who was responsible for foreign relations, national security, coinage, weights, and measures, and transportation.

The extent of Japan's revolutionary change can be gauged from the fact that the han system was abolished. Roughly 280 fiefdoms were turned into 72 prefectures, each under the control of a nationally-appointed governor, not a local lord.

The dramatic incident which precipitated upheaval in the years building to revolution was the visit, on 8 July 1853, of the US East India Squadron. The expedition was commanded by Commodore Matthew Perry, under orders from President Millard Fillmore. The USA's primary goal was to force an end to Japan's 220-year-old policy of isolation and to open Japanese ports to American trade - through the use of gunboat diplomacy if necessary.

Perry's 'Black Ships' sailed into a small port at the entrance to Tokyo Bay. The vessels were symbols of the technological progress being made in other nations. It scared the Japanese. The shōgun accepted a US presidential letter brought by Perry.

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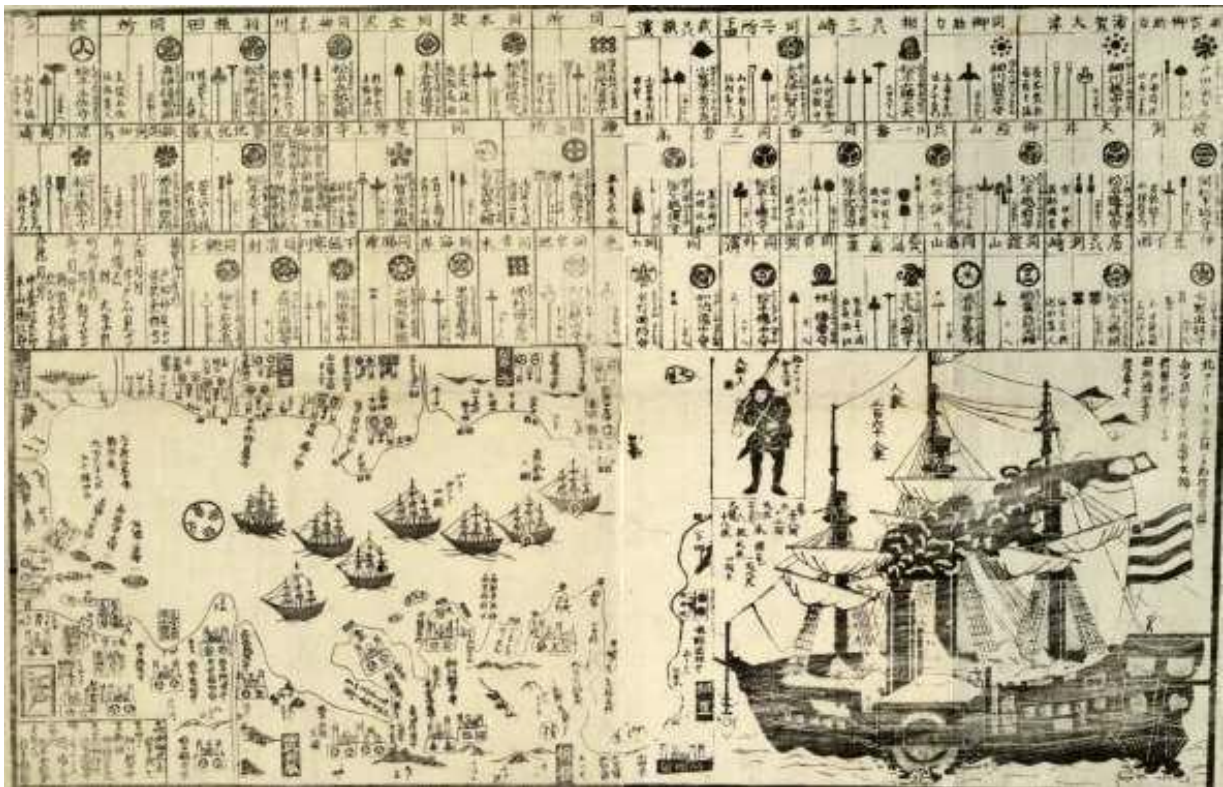
<sup>7</sup> Note that the Japanese do not use the term 'revolution' for this change - but looked at from a European standpoint, the scale of the changes were certainly 'revolutionary'.

<sup>8</sup> Shōgun (= Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians) was the title of the military dictators of Japan during most of the period spanning from 1185 to 1868. Though nominally appointed by the Emperor, shōgun s were the *de facto* rulers of the country. Shōgun ate = government of the shōgun .

<sup>9</sup> Han = fiefdom or domain.

By this bold step, the USA broke the seclusion which had marked Japan for over two hundred years. Equally dramatically, the event lit the fuse for huge national, social and constitutional change in the country.<sup>10</sup>

Perry returned on 13 February 1854 with eight vessels and 1600 men. By the time of Perry's return, the Tokugawa shōgunate had decided to accept virtually all the demands in Fillmore's letter.<sup>11</sup>



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<sup>10</sup> Pulitzer prize-winning US historian John Dower has described the two Perry missions as *a moment when the world stood on the cusp of phenomenal change*. Note 'the world'. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Mission\\_of\\_Commodore\\_Perry\\_to\\_Japan\\_in\\_1854\\_%28BM\\_2013%2C3002.1\\_105%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Mission_of_Commodore_Perry_to_Japan_in_1854_%28BM_2013%2C3002.1_105%29.jpg)

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perry\\_Expedition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perry_Expedition)

<sup>12</sup> Perry's fleet. A contemporary image. Wikipedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ca.\\_1853\\_Kawaraban\\_-\\_Commodore\\_Perry%27s\\_Arrival\\_in\\_Edo\\_Bay.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ca._1853_Kawaraban_-_Commodore_Perry%27s_Arrival_in_Edo_Bay.jpg)



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Perry called for a response to US President Fillmore's letter and presented a draft treaty. Though impressed by the opulence and resources of the Americans, the shōgunate was not inclined to talk, and procrastinated. As a result, it took until 31 March 1854 to conclude the US-Japan Treaty of Peace and Amity (the Convention of Kanagawa). The main provisions were for two small ports to be opened, primarily for refuge, and for the opening of a US consulate in Japan. A further US-Japan treaty was concluded in 1858. It opened five more ports to international trade.

Within six months of the earlier treaty, the fears of the Japanese about yet more foreign intrusions were confirmed. The British Far East Squadron visited Tokyo Bay. Pursuing Russian ships in East Asian waters as part of the Crimean War of 1854, they asked for access to Japanese ports for the repair of their vessels and the shōgunate opened the ports of Nagasaki and Hakodate.

Within months, the Dutch, Russian and French governments sent their representatives to negotiate treaties.

<sup>13</sup> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Commodore-Perry-Visit-Kanagawa-1854.jpg>

But the shōgunate 's compliance with the foreigners ran into domestic opposition, especially from the emperor's court in Kyoto <sup>14</sup>. Attacks took place on foreigners and their Japanese associates. The samurai of the Chōshū and Satsuma fiefdoms in Japan's far southwest were heavily implicated in these attacks.

In 1863, following the killing of a British merchant in Satsuma, the British government authorised the bombardment of Kagoshima, Satsuma's capital.



Later, in retaliation for attacks on American and French ships off Shimonoseki, Western powers took punitive action against this Chōshū port too.

<sup>14</sup> Since the late C12th until this period, there were two ruling classes in Japan: the emperor who acted as 'chief priest' of Shinto, the official religion, and the shōgun, head of the army who also enjoyed civil, military, diplomatic and judicial authority. Although in theory the shōgun was the emperor's servant, the shōgun was the power behind the throne.



The response of the clans <sup>15</sup> was surprising: they changed their attitude. *Sonnō jōi* (尊王攘夷), 'Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians', was the rallying cry and slogan of a political movement in Japan in the 1850s and 1860s. But with the increasing number of incursions by foreign ships, the *sakoku* ('closed country') policy <sup>16</sup> came increasingly into question. <sup>17</sup>

The 'expel the barbarians' portion of *sonnō jōi*, changed into a reaction against the Convention of Kanagawa which opened Japan to foreign trade. Signed under duress, it was vehemently opposed, not least in the Imperial court. The Tokugawa shōgunate was seen to be powerless against the foreigners, and this was taken as evidence that 'revere the Emperor' was not being observed. The conclusion? That the shōgunate must be replaced by a government loyal to the Emperor.

This philosophy was thus adopted as the battle cry of the rebellious regions of Chōshū and Satsuma. And surprisingly, from being seclusionist and hostile to foreigners, they developed a desire to catch up with the West. They even started to send their ambitious young men overseas to learn foreign skills – and they sought help from Western experts.

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<sup>15</sup> I find confusing the use of the term 'clans' in the literature. There were "ancient clans" which appear to have faded into history by the C19th, a "royal clan", and four "noble clans" (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_clans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_clans)) – but in descriptions of the revolutionary period, 'clan' appears to be used to mean people from a particular fiefdom.

<sup>16</sup> The key points of the 1635 edict included:

- The Japanese were to be kept within Japan's own boundaries. Anyone trying to leave the country, or who managed to leave and then returned, was to be executed. Europeans who entered Japan illegally would face the death penalty too.
- Catholicism was strictly forbidden. Those found practising the Christian faith were subject to investigation. Prevention of missionary activity was also severely restricted.
- Trade restrictions and strict limitations on goods were set to limit the ports open to trade, and the merchants who would be allowed to trade.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakoku\\_Edict\\_of\\_1635](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakoku_Edict_of_1635)

<sup>17</sup> Japanese passports only became freely available in 1866 after the long-standing ban on leaving the country was removed. *The Iwakura Mission in Britain, 1872* John Breen, Oliver Checkland, Andrew Cobbing and Akiko Ohta 1998

In 1865, the Satsuma fiefdom sent a mission to England, one of the aims of which was to request assistance from Platt Brothers of Oldham to instal a modern cotton textile factory. Thus, the first mechanized cotton spinning and weaving mill in Japan started operating in Kagoshima in 1867.<sup>18</sup>



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In his introduction to the story of the Iwakura Embassy in *Japan Rising*, Nish sees this as “an essential ambiguity about the Embassy itself”:

*On the one hand, the Japanese leaders of the time were fearful and suspicious over the imperialist ambitions of the West. On the other, they admired the West and wanted to learn from it. So their fundamental object was to study the West in order to resist the West.*

<sup>18</sup> As the visit to Bradford/Saltaire shows, the Embassy was deeply interested in mechanised textile production. A very interesting reference is <https://galleryoldham.org.uk/oldhams-incredible-mark-on-japanese-industry/>. See also Andrew Cobbing *The Satsuma Students in Britain: Japan's Early Search for the essence of the West*, and Serguey Braguinsky and David A. Hounshell *Spinning Tales about Japanese Cotton Spinning: Saxonhouse (1974) Then and Now*

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platt\\_Brothers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platt_Brothers)

This action by Satsuma clearly challenged sakoku and this confrontation was typical of Japan in the late 1860s. The shōgun was losing control but still in power:

- in January 1868, the court proclaimed the restoration of imperial rule;
- agreements between the shōgunate and the rebels were made and then collapsed;
- the fiefdoms on the periphery of the country took up arms against the shōgun and civil war (the Boshin War) ensued;
- it was November 1868 before the shōgun resigned, but his followers resisted and were not defeated until late 1869.<sup>20</sup>



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The Tokugawa family handed power to a coalition of rebellious clans. Mutsuhito, the teenager occupying the national throne, was invited to become head of state. The court of the emperor had for centuries been in Kyoto. Mutsuhito moved his capital to Edo which was renamed Tokyo. He was given the title of *Meiji* ('enlightened rule').<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor\\_Meiji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Meiji)

<sup>21</sup> Image from the civil war aka the Boshin War.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Ueno](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ueno)

<sup>22</sup> For the non-Japanese observer, the use of *Meiji* is a little confusing. As well as being used as Mutsuhito's imperial name, it refers to a period and to the emperor Mutsuhito's 'posthumous name'. "On 23 October 1868 the era was changed from Keiō to Meiji, or "enlightened rule", which was later used for the Emperor's posthumous name".  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor\\_Meiji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Meiji)



This tumultuous change of government, after centuries of tranquility, was (and is) described in Japan as the 'Meiji Restoration'. It heralded a transformation, from the old to the new Japan <sup>24</sup>. But the impact of the Meiji Restoration would not be confined to the homeland. It was global: today, Japan has the fourth largest economy in the world <sup>25</sup>.

On the domestic front, the new government made huge and fundamental social changes, abolishing the *han* system, ending feudalism and bringing an end to the role of the samurai <sup>26</sup>. It centralized national administration. Feudal lords, court nobles and government officials were pledged to support the Charter Oath which set out the programme of modernization. The Restoration government felt confident that its new progressive measures to abolish feudalism would be welcomed in Western countries. As early as February 1868, the head of Japan's Board of Foreign Affairs

<sup>23</sup> The palanquin and procession of Emperor Meiji, from Kyoto to Edo/Tokyo.  
<https://www.lesleydowner.com/jsnw-online-talk-on-17th-september/>

<sup>24</sup> *The New York Times* summarized this transformation at the emperor's funeral in 1912: "the contrast between that which preceded the funeral car and that which followed it was striking indeed. Before it went old Japan; after it came new Japan".  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor\\_Meiji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Meiji)

<sup>25</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Japan). The extent and speed of Japan's modernisation during this period is well described at  
[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1750\\_meiji.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1750_meiji.htm)

<sup>26</sup> Samurai were the hereditary military nobility and officer caste of medieval and early-modern Japan from the late 12th century. They were the well-paid retainers of the great feudal landholders. They had high prestige and special privileges. Many of the Iwakura Embassy had been samurai.

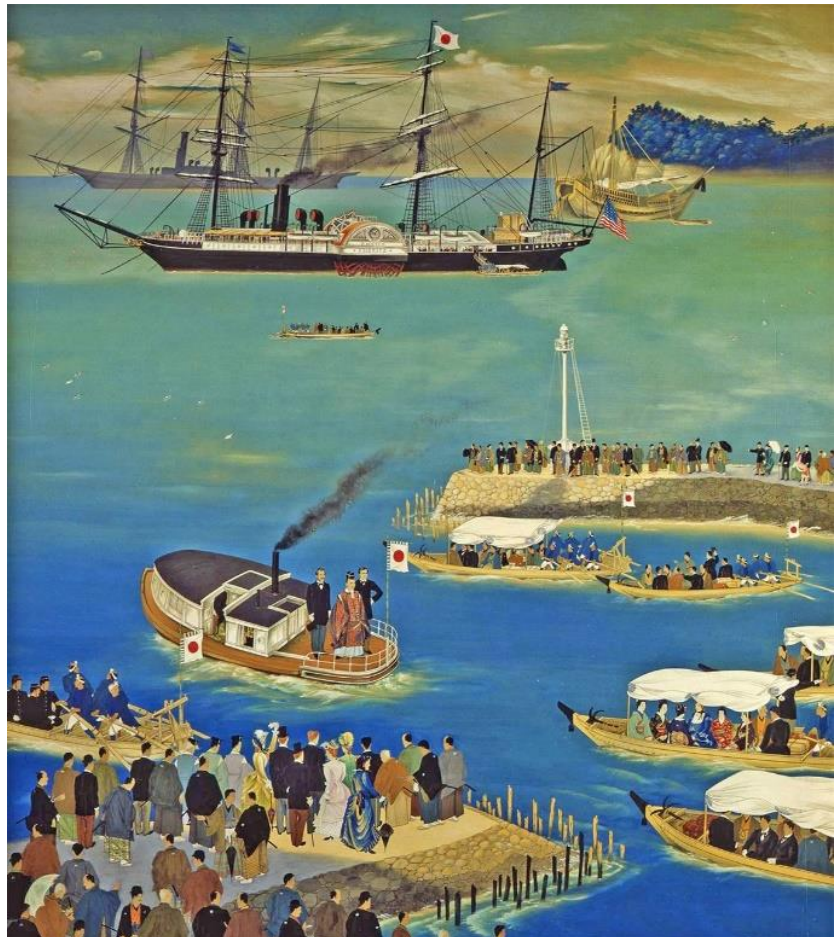
called together the diplomatic corps at the port of Kobe and informed them of the restoration of rule by the emperor. Foreign governments duly recognized the new administration.

The new government thought that the treaties of earlier years were humiliating and 'unequal'. It blamed the Tokugawa rulers for their weakness in agreeing to them and emphasized its desire to renegotiate them.

The idea had been maturing that an exploratory embassy from the new government to its treaty partners was necessary. On 29 August 1871, Iwakura Tomomi - an aristocrat and former court official who had come to accept the need to open Japan to trade - was appointed Foreign Minister. He announced that he would head a special mission to observe Western countries at first hand and exchange views on treaty revision.

The Embassy set off on 23 December 1871, carrying letters from the Emperor to heads of state. Iwakura was clearly charged with the task of discussing the treaties, but the authority he had was somewhat ambiguous. This led to complications, especially in the United States.

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<sup>27</sup> The ship in the background is the SS America which carried the Embassy to the USA.

## The members of the Embassy

The members of the Iwakura Embassy were young. Apart from Iwakura, their average age was 32 – but the revolution had given them government experience. Although Kume’s report refers to these members as ‘we’ and tends to omit mention of individuals by name, they were significant statesmen and strong-minded individualists. They were not always in agreement over policy, and they squabbled.

Ambassador Extraordinary Iwakura was supported by Vice-Ambassadors:

- Kido Takayoshi and Ōkubo Toshimichi represented the Restoration government. They were the most prominent politicians from Chōshū and Satsuma respectively;
- Itō Hirobumi of Chōshū was from the Ministry of Public Works. The most Westernised of his senior colleagues, Itō had already spent time as a student in London <sup>28</sup>, and six months in Washington in 1870 as a finance official. As a result, he was able to speak passable English and was the deputy ambassador often called upon to deliver formal addresses at receptions; and
- Yamaguchi Masuka aka Yamaguchi Naoyoshi of the Hizen clan was assistant vice minister of foreign affairs.

Itō Hirobumi’s participation in the Embassy indicates its heft and the longevity of its impact on Japan. As a young man, he was the samurai we see here <sup>29</sup>, but by the early days of the Meiji era, he was leading the writing of a constitution for the newly-formed Empire of Japan. He has been described as “the most powerful figure in the Meiji government”. Little wonder: he was Japan’s first Prime Minister and went on to become Prime Minister, a further three times! <sup>30</sup>



In addition to these leaders, there were staff charged with writing specialist reports, and junior officials and students who ran errands. The retinue of councillors and officials from various ministries totalled forty-eight in all <sup>31</sup>. In total, 108 people left Japan's shores – but it would be inaccurate to say that the Embassy consisted of that number. For

<sup>28</sup> See the UCL references listed in SOURCES AND FURTHER READING below.

<sup>29</sup> In the 1860s, when in his early 20s?

<sup>30</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It%C5%8D\\_Hirobumi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It%C5%8D_Hirobumi)

<sup>31</sup> This figure is somewhat flexible!

example, 6 year old Tsuda Ume (later, Tsuda Umeko) was on board, destined to be schooled in the USA.<sup>32</sup>



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It was remarkable that, in a country like Japan which had recently come through civil war and revolution, so many important leaders could be spared for such a lengthy journey.

At the point of departure, of course, it could not be foreseen that the Embassy would encounter the very lengthy delays that occurred in both the United States and Britain. But the sheer size of the group was amazing, and created many administrative problems. It goes without saying that there were acute jealousies between those who were able to join the deputation and those who were left behind in Tokyo.

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<sup>32</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuda\\_Umeko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuda_Umeko)

<sup>33</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuda\\_Umeko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuda_Umeko)

## The Embassy in the USA <sup>34</sup>

On the morning of 15 January 1872, the SS America, a US-owned mail steamer, arrived at San Francisco with its 108 Japanese passengers. That the Embassy could start in the USA was facilitated by the fact that its advancing frontier had by this time reached California, a neighbour of Japan on the coastline of the Pacific Ocean and one that was, from 1869, linked by a trans-continental railroad to the States' eastern seaboard. This spectacular railroad gave the ambassadors their first major experience of the advanced technology of the outside world.

Unfortunately, the Union Pacific railroad on which they embarked in February could not cope with the heavy snowfalls in the Rocky Mountains and beyond. The ambassadors were snowed up in Salt Lake City for eighteen days, visiting the famous Mormon Tabernacle and meeting Brigham Young. Despite the snow and the floods that followed, Kume reported enthusiastically that

*Thanks to the admirable engineering achievement of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, we were able to cross much of this vast territory in a train, comfortably relaxing or sleeping.*

Japan was not industrialised and had only small-scale agriculture. The delegates were astonished at the agricultural states they passed through. But they were equally amazed at the smoke rising from chimneys of factories in the urban centres. They unquestionably suffered culture shock.

The delegation arrived in Washington DC at the end of February. On 4 March, ten of its principal members met US President Ulysses S. Grant.

When they had arrived in San Francisco, the Embassy had received a warm and generous welcome: Kume wrote that

*The citizens of San Francisco had learnt of the Embassy's visit from newspaper reports, and the news of our actual arrival was telegraphed from the Golden Gate to City Hall and to our consul. As a result, when we passed Alcatraz Island we were greeted with a fifteen-gun salute from the battery on its cliffs.*

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<sup>34</sup> The main focuses of this paper are on the Embassy, its historical context, and the visits to Bradford and Saltaire, so the Embassy's journey through the USA is not described in detail.



Now, they were in the US capital and the doors of the White House were open to them. Their status and importance had been recognised from the start – and was now confirmed, at the pinnacle of US power.

But there was a problem. Whilst there appeared to be a distinct possibility that the State Department might be responsive to the idea of revising the 1858 treaty, the Embassy had not been given a specific mandate to negotiate and had not brought adequate powers of accreditation. The crucial decision was made that two senior members, Okubo and Itō, should return to Japan in order to procure the necessary documents. They left Washington on 20 March for their daunting journey of 8,000 miles by land and sea.

This meant a significant hiatus which Mission members filled by taking what Kume entitled 'The Journey Through the Northern States'. On their return to Washington on 22 June, they found that diplomatic business was almost at a standstill.

Such a lengthy stay for such an enormous retinue was a burden for the Americans. However, Congress had made an appropriation of \$50,000 for the purpose and so part of the Embassy's expenses was paid by American leaders who clearly saw great potential in looking after a delegation which was likely to include the next generation of Japanese leaders.

Okubo and Itō did not return until 20 July. They brought better credentials but were given instructions not to conclude a new treaty solely with the United States, and to propose convening an international conference on the subject. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish would not agree to negotiations alongside other powers, especially if they were to be held in Europe.

The result was that the Embassy did not pursue re-negotiation during the rest of its world tour: its members ventilated the issue but merely explored the views of the countries they were visiting.

Two days later Iwakura went to the White House and announced that his party would soon be leaving the country. On 6 August, after short visits to Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, the ambassadors left from Boston for Liverpool.

## Four months in Britain <sup>35</sup>

The Mission landed in Liverpool on 17 August 1872. It had travelled from a pioneering society moving rapidly towards industrialisation to a country which had already experienced an industrial revolution - and its dire consequences. No sooner had Kume reached the south bank of the Mersey than he records:

*[T]he smoke of coal fires billowed up in dense clouds [over Liverpool] to a height of two or three hundred feet, permanently darkening the blue sky. Our escorts pointed to this and said, 'The people of the city have to breathe in the midst of that black haze.'*

Between September and early November the delegates travelled over 2,000 miles and visited twenty British cities - either individually or in groups. It is important to note this last point, because whilst Kume might record that 'we' visited a particular place, it might have indicated that only a handful of ambassadors and/or junior staff did so.

Young-Suk Lee of South Korea's Gwangju University has written an overview of the Embassy's itinerary in Britain - and perhaps most importantly, has set out solid information on how this itinerary was devised <sup>36</sup>. Lee tells us that

*it was immediately after their arrival in Liverpool that the Iwakura Embassy left for London by special train. On August 20, Iwakura visited Lord Granville, the British Foreign Minister, and requested a formal audience with Queen Victoria. At the time, the Queen was at Balmoral Castle, her Summer residence. The mission decided to stay in Britain until the Queen's return... and, with a different timetable in mind, began to amend the existing itinerary.*

*The new itinerary would reflect the Embassy's latest priorities. As a result of their frustrating experience of treaty revision in the USA, many had almost given up on revision of the UK-Japan trade treaty. Their interests were pivoting towards the collection of information on industry, technology, or commerce in the major industrial cities of Britain.*

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<sup>35</sup> Much of this section of the paper relies on Kume's account. This is supplemented by local newspaper reports when we get to Bradford and Saltaire.

<sup>36</sup> Young-Suk Lee 'The Iwakura Embassy and British Industrial Cities...Gwangju University, South Korea ...Downloaded from Brill.com 12/07/2022 09:49:41PM via free access. I have drawn extensively from the work, and what follows in this section, in italics, is an edited version.'

*The re-planning of their itinerary was largely the work of Sir Harry Parkes, the British envoy to Japan, and William Aston, a diplomat who had been translator to the British legation in Japan since 1865...<sup>37</sup>*

*On June 3, before the Mission arrived in Britain, there had been an exchange in the House of Commons. Arthur Kinnaird MP asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Byng, "whether the Government are preparing to take steps to receive the eminent Japanese statesman Iwakura and the other distinguished persons composing the Japanese Embassy". Byng's reply was that "Sir Harry Parkes and Mr. Aston, interpreter to the Legation in Japan, have been appointed to attend to the Japanese Embassy on their arrival and during their stay in this country"...<sup>38</sup>*

*Meanwhile, Parkes was selecting the cities and factories that the Mission could visit, and organising a schedule of all the events that they would attend. This cannot have been easy for him because his personal life was demanding. His health was very poor and his wife was pregnant. His elder son hung between life and death, suffering from a fever during his return home, and his elder daughter died of diphtheria immediately after her mother's delivery. In spite of this misery, he continued the planning and then accompanied the Mission throughout their round-Britain journey.*

*After they had stayed in London from August 17 to September 28, the Mission started out. Between September 29 and November 9 they visited Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the Highlands<sup>39</sup>, Newcastle, Bradford, Sheffield, Staffordshire, Coventry, Birmingham, and Cheshire, and returned to London.<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> On May 22, 1871, writes Lee, Parkes left Japan by steamship for America and he only reached Britain on 8 August. He emphasized to the Foreign Office that, in Japan, Britain's trade rival would not be European countries but the United States. The National Archives (Kew), Foreign Office 391/15, Hammond Papers, June 15, 1871. 'Parkes to Hammond'. William George Aston (9 April 1841 – 22 November 1911) was a British diplomat, author and scholar-expert in the language and history of Japan and Korea. He wrote *Shinto* ("the way of the gods"). Shinto is the indigenous faith of the Japanese people and as old as Japan itself. It remains Japan's major religion alongside Buddhism.

<sup>38</sup> In addition to Parkes and Aston, the Foreign Office asked G G Alexander, Major-General of the Royal Marines, to act as escort to the Mission. However, he does not appear to be travelling with them when the Mission arrived in Bradford.

<sup>39</sup> *When they reached Edinburgh, they were so exhausted by the daily round of receptions, factories and offices that their escort urged them to visit the Scottish Highlands and relax* says Lee op cit

<sup>40</sup> Kume reported that *The view of the flat English landscape and of the Scottish lowlands was one of unrelieved monotony. The hills of Edinburgh were pretty enough, but there was more than this to the beauties of the Scottish landscape.*

## The visit to Bradford and Saltaire

### DAY 1: Thursday 24 October 1872 <sup>41</sup>

Kume tells us that, at 10 in the morning, the Embassy left Newcastle and travelled ninety miles south through County Durham to West Yorkshire, arriving in Bradford at 2.30 in the afternoon.

In the C19th, Bradford became 'Worstedopolis' <sup>42</sup>, the worsted capital of the world. Its global pre-eminence in woollen textiles made it a required place for an Embassy visit.

Kume described Bradford thus:

*The city of Bradford... lies in Yorkshire... [and] is rich in coal and iron... manufacturing is carried on there on a very large scale... In prosperity it rivals Lancashire, which lies on the other side of the mountain range... [It is] possible to transport goods by water all the way to the sea... Bradford is noted in Britain for the spinning and weaving of wool and the production of sheepskins... We saw that all round the city, on the hills and in the valleys, were great heaps of spoil from the mines, staining all the earth black, and that a forest of factory chimneys darkened the sky with black smoke.*

Bradford's much smaller but very close neighbour, Saltaire, is today a World Heritage Site, but in 1872 it was not even complete!

However, it was gaining a reputation for the innovative approach of its capitalist founder, the recently-ennobled Sir Titus Salt. Alongside a colossal factory, he was only 4 years away from completing the construction of an entire village, primarily for his workers. Saltaire had good quality services and a remarkable range of splendid public facilities. That Parkes chose to include Saltaire in the itinerary surely indicates he regarded it as amongst the best of Britain.

The Embassy was welcomed at Bradford's station by the town's leading citizen, the Mayor, Matthew William Thompson - indicating the importance Bradford accorded this encounter.

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<sup>41</sup> The Bradford Daily Telegraph 25 October 1872 is a significant source of the text that follows.

<sup>42</sup> A word coined by Bradford historian William Cudworth in 1888

The visitors then went by carriage to the Victoria Hotel <sup>43</sup>.



Bills had been posted in the streets announcing *Japanese Ambassadors Will Arrive On Thursday, Escorted By The Mayor* and, both inside the station itself and lining the street leading to the hotel, was what Kume describes as an

*uninterrupted throng of onlookers. Crowds turned out to see us in every other city we visited, both before and after, but this was the largest such reception we received.*

When they arrived at the hotel, the ambassadors found lunch had been prepared for them at the Mayor's behest and, after the meal, he came in person to present an address of welcome. "His hospitality knew no bounds", Kume reports.

In the evening, the Mayor hosted a formal dinner at the hotel and there were speeches. In reply to addresses by Bradford Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce, the "Chief Ambassador" responded in Japanese. He expressed gratitude for the cordial welcome the Embassy had received and said he realised that one nation cannot maintain the highest prosperity without the co-operation and sympathy of others.

He said that the Embassy was charged with searching out the sources of the wealth and prosperity now enjoyed to so great a degree by "our brethren of a Western Civilisation". The Japanese had made their journey in order to select, from amongst the various institutions in "enlightened nations", which of them are best suited to Japan's present condition. They planned to adopt them through gradual reforms and improvement. But they were not there just to examine factories, mines and shipbuilding.

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<sup>43</sup> Almost certainly the present Great Victoria Hotel in Bridge Street (pictured). According to the hotel's current administration, the building dates from 1867 and is the oldest in Bradford. Its first name was The Great Northern Victoria Hotel.

They wanted to make personal contact with the people in order to establish relations of peace and friendship and a feeling of lasting brotherhood between the two countries.

## **DAY 2: Friday 25 October 1872**

Kume records that *At ten o'clock in the morning we travelled about [three] miles by train to the village of Saltaire, and his co-traveller Kido Takayoshi tells us in his diary that The scenery is superb [and the] most famous woollens [sic] factory in England is here.*<sup>44</sup>

Introducing Saltaire, Kume noted that

*Until twenty years ago this had been open moor-land, used only for the pasturing of sheep and cattle. But since Sir Titus Salt had built a mill for weaving the wool of the animal called the 'alpaca', industrial and commercial enterprises had flocked there from all quarters, eventually creating a village. It was now a considerable town with a population of 5,000.*

Kume explains what an alpaca is before recounting the story, popularised by Dickens<sup>45</sup>, of how Titus came across “useless” alpaca wool in a warehouse in Liverpool and went on to work out how it could be used to make cloth. This innovation was to make him immensely rich. Kume explains the building of Salt’s Mill and the village, and Salt’s elevation to the baronetcy.

The Bradford Daily Telegraph<sup>46</sup> reported that

*The members of the Embassy left the Midland Station at twenty minutes to ten and travelled by special train to Saltaire.*

*Considerable preparations had been made for their reception but the number of people who assembled was not large. The station platforms were kept clear, and the crowd was therefore confined to the lodge and Albert Terrace. Comparatively few men were present, they being mostly*

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<sup>44</sup> Kido Takayoshi The Diary of Kido Takayoshi. For more on ambassador Kido, see <https://alchetron.com/Kido-Takayoshi#Early-life>

<sup>45</sup> A footnote in the translation of Kume’s *A True Account...* says this: “The story of how Salt, having examined a handful or two of alpaca from bales which he had found abandoned and rotting on the Liverpool docks, bought up the whole consignment - to the gratified astonishment of the owner - for eightpence a pound, first gained wide currency in a version by Charles Dickens, embellished with characteristic comic effects, published in *Household Words*”.

<sup>46</sup> Bradford Daily Telegraph 25 October 1872. The report has been lightly edited.

*at work in the mill, which was kept running all day. Titus Salt's son Edward, and Charles Stead, partner and senior director of Sir Titus Salt and Co, received the Embassy on the platform. Their Excellencies were accompanied by Matthew Thompson, the Mayor of Bradford, and Alderman Law, president of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce.*

*After the formal introductions, the Mayor and his Excellency the Chief of the Embassy, took the lead and proceeded to view the village and then repaired to the schools. They first visited the boys' school, where they found all the scholars at work - some ciphering, some reading, some writing, but all clean and orderly. Mayor Thompson, who was with Iwakura, drew His Excellency's attention to a map of Asia that hung on the wall, and pointed out Japan with his umbrella. His Excellency was evidently pleased with the compliment the Mayor had paid him.*

*The Ambassadors were delighted with the orderly and intelligent appearance of the children, and asked several questions of Messrs. Edward and George Salt, who accompanied the party, answers to which were given by the interpreter. Before leaving the room, the lads gave three hearty cheers.*

*The party then went to the infant school in which they seemed particularly interested. Some of the children are fine looking. When a question had been asked by the Ambassador and answered by the schoolmistress, one little girl was called out, and the whole of the children lifted their hands as she did, clapped, cheered, and were silent at her command.*

*The girls' school was then visited, and here as in the other departments considerable interest was taken by the Ambassadors in the occupations of the children.*

*After leaving the school the party repaired to the almshouses, and visited the domicile of Elizabeth Gill, No. 26.*

*Her sitting room, bedroom, &c., were each viewed, and some surprise was felt when it was explained to the Ambassador and his associates that these buildings were endowed for ever by the munificence of Sir Titus Salt, and that the only thing required to fit for entrance [sic] was good moral character.<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>47</sup> Colin Coates informs me that number 26 Almshouses in 1872 is 30 Victoria Road today. In this photo, it is through the left arch of the facing pair of cottages in the very middle of the photo.



48

*The Infirmary was the next place of interest that was visited. There are only two patients present, and both of these were seen.*

*The party afterwards went through the Saltaire Institute [now Victoria Hall], beginning with the reading room. They appeared to take great interest in the Gymnasium, and a remark from Sir Harry Parkes to one of the members of the Embassy, that if he had been brought up to exercise his muscles he would have been twice as big, seemed to be relished extremely. The gentleman addressed was the most diminutive of the party.* <sup>49</sup>

*The visitors afterwards went to the Dining Hall adjoining the station, over the entrance of which the Japanese flag was hoisted, and then the whole party went to the works where they were shown the whole process, from carding up to finishing.* <sup>50</sup>



<sup>48</sup> Some of the almshouses at Saltaire today. Author's photograph.

<sup>49</sup> !!!

<sup>50</sup> Not an image from 1872 of course, but a playful view of what the Dining Hall might have looked like. Author's photograph, photoshopped by Judy Robinson.



Note that Sir Harry Parkes was with the Embassy on this visit, and actively participating. Earlier, this paper mentioned him as a key player in developing the British itinerary which the Embassy adopted, and it will be remembered that *Sir Harry Parkes and Mr. Aston, interpreter to the Legation in Japan, have been appointed [by the British government] to attend to the Japanese Embassy on their arrival and during their stay in this country.* We now have evidence that he was doing just that in late October 1872 in West Yorkshire.



The party then lunched with Sir Titus Salt, reports the Bradford Daily Telegraph. But maybe it didn't!? Kume tells us that

*on the day of our visit he was away from Bradford and we were not able to meet him. [However] we were conducted round [the mill] by Sir Titus's sons.*

And Kume's record is supported by fellow ambassador Kido: *Salt was absent today.* <sup>51</sup>

Kume adds details the Bradford Daily Telegraph omits. Lunch was in the boardroom<sup>52</sup>, and afterwards they walked to

*a park on the edge of the village [Saltaire Park, now Roberts Park]. This, too, had been provided by Sir Titus as a gift to the workers. It occupied a sloping site on the banks of the river Aire, backed by rolling hills, and presented a very fine prospect.*

Kume is full of admiration for what Salt has done: "At none of the factories we saw before or after [my emphasis] were there such provisions as these" he writes, in a lengthy eulogy:

*Sir Titus had built a primary school in the village and arranged that the villagers' children, both boys and girls, went to the factory to work at their trades for half of each day and for the rest of the day attended school to receive an education. By this excellent method, practical skills and theoretical understanding progressed side by*

<sup>51</sup> Kido Takayoshi op cit

<sup>52</sup> Like so many of the Saltaire locations visited by the Embassy, the Mill's boardroom still exists. The fact that the C19th village is largely intact was one of the reasons it was awarded World Heritage status by UNESCO.

*side. Moreover, not only did the children benefit by receiving a wage from the mill, but their work there was, in return, of benefit to the enterprise. The British regard it as a point of honour to look after their employees and to do their utmost to succour the poor [sic]. The provisions made by this factory-owner are to be admired...*

*In front of the school were the almshouses. Those among the workers who were no longer able to work because of old age were placed there to be cared for. There were [sic] also a hospital, which treated those in the village who were ill, and a church, which the residents of the village attended in order to hear sermons and thus rectify their moral natures<sup>53</sup>. At none of the factories we saw before or after were there such provisions as these. Every one of the five thousand inhabitants of the village looked up to the Salt family. This way of organising the town in which the mill-hands were housed was of great significance as a way of encouraging work.*

At the end of their visit to Saltaire, the ambassadors boarded a train which took them to Manningham station in north Bradford, and then a carriage to Manningham Mills (better known today as Lister, or Lister's, Mill)<sup>54</sup>. Kume notes that the mill, which had stood on this site for 27 years, had been destroyed by fire in the previous year and there were plans to re-build it on a larger scale.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, whilst the Embassy was visiting, building work must have been continuing and well advanced. The fire took place in February 1871 and building was completed two and a half years later<sup>56</sup>. The new mill was opened, complete with a magnificent coat of arms and the completion year.

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<sup>53</sup> The positioning of this reference to a church suggests Kume is referring to the small chapel that was in one of the almshouses. Indeed, it was next door to Elizabeth Gill at No. 26 and was for almshouse residents' use.

<sup>54</sup> This, and most of what follows, is from an article headlined The Ambassadors at Manningham Mills in the Bradford Daily Telegraph, 26 October 1872

<sup>55</sup> The resulting factory was colossal, and along with its huge chimney, dominated and still dominates the skyline in the north of Bradford.

<sup>56</sup> The original was called Lilycroft Mill. A very good newspaper article tells the story of the 1871 fire and the re-build:

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/19891658.look-back-lilycroft-mill-fire/>



Notwithstanding the building work, it is clear from Kume's account that the Mission was able to see a factory which was in production. Moreover, this visit must have been particularly interesting because Lister's was a silk mill.

Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 played a key role in taking Japan's silk market on to the international stage. At the same moment that Japan was opening its ports, the demand for its raw silk greatly increased. In 1855, French silkworm nurseries became infested with disease which eventually spread across Europe. In addition, China was experiencing the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) in which the sericulture regions were greatly damaged. Thus, at this time, Japan had hardly any competition in the silk markets and profited tremendously.<sup>57</sup>

The Bradford Daily Telegraph<sup>58</sup> tells us that

*The Embassy was welcomed by several partners of the firm - but not by [the firm's founder and owner] Mr Lister who was confined to his office with a sprained ankle. The party went to his office to meet him.*

<sup>57</sup> <https://samurairevolution.omeka.net/exhibits/show/vtj/section2/cmo>

<sup>58</sup> Bradford Daily Telegraph 26 October 1872

*They then visited the store-house where the raw materials were kept, as they are received from the East Indies, China and Japan. The Ambassadors had in this department the pleasure of seeing several bagfulls [sic] of cocoons, which had been exported from their own country.*

This must have been of special interest to the visitors! The tour lasted 2.5 hours and encompassed every stage of silk/velvet production – and included inspection and explanation of the very latest machinery.<sup>59</sup>

Kume's description of the use of silk to make textiles is typically technical and detailed. Little wonder that, as the Bradford Daily Telegraph reports,

*One of the [Japanese] party took voluminous notes during the walk through the works, and he seemed to write with considerable rapidity.*

This description starts with a link to a Salt innovation:

*This mill wove velvet in particularly large quantities. The ingenuity of the process exceeded even that of the process used to weave alpaca...<sup>60</sup>*

and continues with an epic, 1,000 word description of spinning waste cocoons and waste silk yarn...

... wool into yarn which most taxed Sir Titus's inventiveness. Briefly, the technology was as follows. After being carded on the carding machines, the wool was twisted into thick ropes which were then combed by means of combs mounted on a revolving drum so that the fibres were gradually aligned and drawn out. The combs on the drum were made of steel. Between thirty and fifty of these combs were fitted together side by side. This set of combs was then curved into a cylinder. Each end of this drum was then set so as to engage with a toothed wheel. A lever was then operated so that the machinery began to rotate, and the individual combs began to move round at a speed governed by the speed of rotation of the cogwheels. The teeth of each comb passed through the wool, combing it out, and moved on. As one comb came round to the front [of the roller], another emerged from the wool and rotated away downwards. Thus, the wool gradually

<sup>59</sup> I have deliberately included some long passages, in part to indicate what accurate observers and note-takers Kume and his team were, but also to demonstrate just how much detail was reported. Goodness knows how much was actually recorded! For example, *There were several kinds [of raw wool]...First, the hair of the 'angora' goat, which is also called 'mohair'. This is produced in 'Asia Minor' (a region which belongs to Turkey...). Its price was from three to four shillings a pound. It has a long staple and a high gloss. Second, 'alpaca' wool, which comes from South America. Its value was three shillings and sixpence a pound. It resembles mohair, but its lustre is somewhat inferior..... and so on, and so on...*

<sup>60</sup> Titus Salt solved the problem of how to use alpaca wool in the production of textiles.

... concluding with the revelation that, currently, Lister's eldest son had gone to Yokohama in Japan to acquire silk raw material!

The party returned to central Bradford and in the evening,<sup>61</sup>

*Alderman Law, President of the Chamber of Commerce and the members of the Council entertained their Excellencies the Japanese Ambassadors. the Mayor and Corporation of Bradford and a select party of gentlemen, to dinner in the Victoria Hotel.*<sup>62</sup>

*The President of the Chamber of Commerce occupied the chair, supported on the right by his Excellency the Chief Ambassador, and on the left by his Worship the Mayor of Bradford, Matthew William Thompson, Esq. Among the guests at the dinner table were Sir Harry Parkes KCB, Gen Henderson, Major Aston...*<sup>63</sup>

Amongst the "select party of gentlemen" was one of Bradford's most famous, Jacob Behrens<sup>64</sup>, plus the German Consul, the President of the Halifax Chamber – and Titus Salt... but not 'Sir Titus' so I assume it was Titus Jr.

It appears that the meal itself was very special: "The dinner was of the most *recherché* description" according to the local news report.

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<sup>61</sup> What follows (in italics) is a lightly-edited version of the report headed *The Banquet at the Victoria Hotel* in the Bradford Daily Telegraph of the 26 October 1872.

<sup>62</sup> James Law was the President of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce according to ambassador Kido Takayoshi in his diary, referenced above. I assume that 'Alderman Law' indicates that he was also a Bradford Council alderman, but the 'Council' referred to here was the Council of the Chamber.

<sup>63</sup> I cannot identify Gen[eral] Henderson but he could be a soldier assigned by the British Government to support/protect the Embassy. Major Aston must be William Aston mentioned earlier.

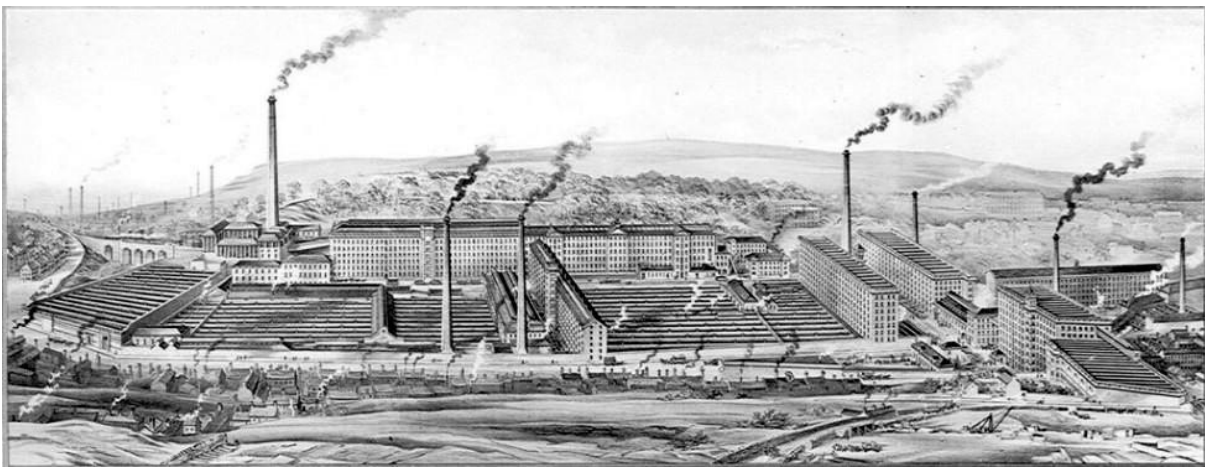
<sup>64</sup> <https://behrens.co.uk/our-story/biography-of-sir-jacob-behrens/>

**DAY 3: Saturday 26 October 1872**

*At five to ten in the morning we boarded a train near our hotel to travel 8 miles to Halifax...*

*Law [James Law?] took us to Halifax at 9.30... [We] returned to the [Bradford] hotel at 3...<sup>65</sup>*

The Embassy's target was Dean Clough, the famous and huge carpet factory of John Crossley and Sons. It sits in the very centre of Halifax.



66

They returned to Bradford in the afternoon and then three of the ambassadors - Yamaguchi Masuka aka Yamaguchi Naoyoshi and Hayashi Tadasu aka Hayashi Touzaburō, together with scribe Kume Kunitake – took themselves off to Bolton Abbey, a local beauty spot. Kume says that it was Parkes who “invited us to have a short excursion” and they left at 4pm by train, and stayed in the Bolton Bridge Hotel <sup>67</sup>, now the Devonshire Arms.

That Parkes recommended Bolton Abbey is unsurprising: it is a beautiful and very interesting spot. But it is also the property of the Duke of Devonshire. Only a few days later, the Embassy would visit Chatsworth in Derbyshire, one of Britain's most famous ‘stately homes’ - and the home of the Duke of Devonshire! A coincidence perhaps, but it is not improbable that, when Parkes was in London and planning the Embassy's itinerary, the Duke (or one of his household) had shown an interest in the Iwakura Embassy and had offered hospitality at two of his properties.

<sup>65</sup> The first quotation is from Kume. The second, from Kido Takayoshi op cit

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.visitcalderdale.com/attachment/david-glover-crossley-sons-1200x800/>

<sup>67</sup> This excursion is confirmed by The Times, October 28, 1872, quoted by Lee op cit

**DAY 4: Sunday 27 October 1872**

From 10 am, 'Team Bolton' visited the (then) 700 year old Bolton Abbey <sup>68</sup> (where they attended a service), then walked upstream along the River Wharfe and its "fall" (probably the Strid <sup>69</sup>).

**ボルトンアベニー泊旅行**

9/25 久米博士90年回顧録より

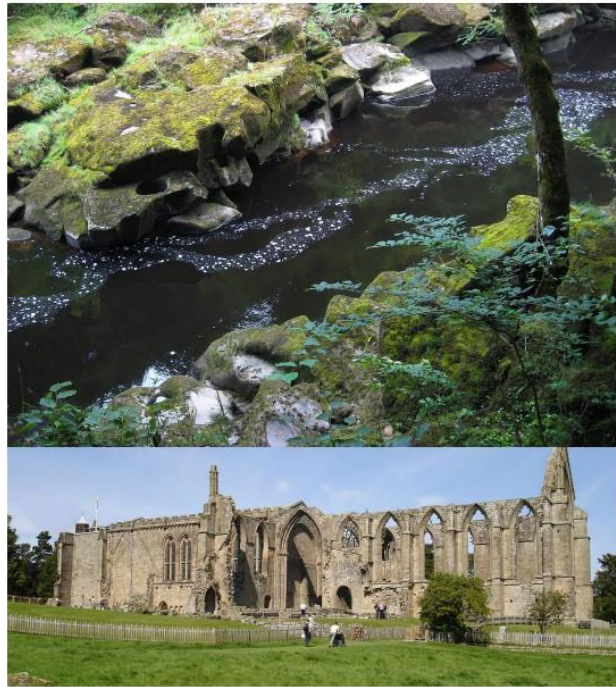
- 山口、久米、林の三人
- 日曜なので、ということでパークスとアストンに誘われて近郊に出かけた
- 土曜午後四時に汽車で出かけてボルトン橋ホテルに宿泊
- パークスと土族の禄について話す  
パークスは日本に土地を持ちたがっているのよろしく、とアストンの談



山口

久米

林



70

Further upstream,

*we rounded a bend in the river where the banks rose to a considerable height above the stream, and here we came upon an old ivy-clad bridge across the river. Before us was revealed a high hill. Midway up it stood an old castle, a thread of smoke rising from it. This was also an entrancing view... [The Duke of Devonshire] had planted trees and laid out paths so that they were in harmony with nature, and had thus created by human artifice a landscape of great natural beauty.*

<sup>68</sup> Bolton Abbey takes its name from the ruins of the 12th-century Augustinian monastery now known as Bolton Priory. The monastery was founded close by at Embsay in 1120. Led by a prior, Bolton Abbey was technically a priory. It was founded in 1154 by the Augustinian order. The priory was closed during the 1539 Dissolution of the Monasteries.

<sup>69</sup> Where the River Wharfe is dramatically, and very dangerously, funnelled into a very narrow, 2m wide, set of rocks, pictured on the screenshot.

<sup>70</sup> This screenshot is from the Iwakura Mission Society's online exhibition celebrating the Embassy's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. <https://youtu.be/sAzaqEzo7Rs?t=4373>

Kume's description is suitably lyrical for such a lovely corner of the Yorkshire Dales. Sadly, the three visitors were not told that the "old castle" was actually the (remarkably large and ancient) hunting lodge called Barden Tower.

### **DAY 5: Monday 28 October 1872**

Kume reports that

*The next morning [ie on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup>] at half past ten we left the village of Bolton Abbey by the eleven o'clock train, arriving back in Bradford at one o'clock in the afternoon.*

Just in time! At 1:30pm, the Embassy left Bradford, arriving in Sheffield at 4pm.

### **From Yorkshire to London**

The Embassy proceeded onwards to London, but by a very lengthy and roundabout route. They took in Chatsworth in rural Derbyshire and major industrial locations in Cheshire and the English West Midlands.

In London,

*Iwakura met Foreign Secretary Lord Granville on 22 November and again five days later, making it clear that Japan's ultimate objective was to negotiate certain modifications to the existing treaties in order to bring them into line with the political transformations that had taken place in Japan since 1868. He also asked for the British troops stationed in Yokohama to be withdrawn. For his part, Granville complained about the lack of religious toleration in Japan and the inability of foreigners to go upcountry... The delegation, which had waited long for Queen Victoria's return from Balmoral, eventually had an audience with her at Windsor Castle on 5 December and presented a letter from the Emperor Meiji.*<sup>71 72</sup>

The Embassy also met the Prince of Wales at Sandringham on 9 December. A week later, on 16 December, they left for France.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Japan Rising* op cit

<sup>72</sup> These Glanville/Iwakura meetings are also addressed in John Breen, Oliver Checkland, Andrew Cobbing and Akiko Ohta *The Iwakura Mission in Britain, 1872* March 1998 <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/is/IS349.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iwakura\\_Mission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iwakura_Mission)



## The Embassy in continental Europe, and beyond

Although the major purposes of this paper are to indicate the significance of the Iwakura Embassy and to document in detail its time in Bradford/Saltaire, it would be remiss not to complete the story of the Embassy's circumnavigation of the globe.

The introduction to *Japan Rising* offers a masterly summary of the post-Britain part of their journey. So good that I make no apology for copying much of it below <sup>74</sup>:

*The Embassy arrived in Calais from Dover on 16 December at the start of its tour of Europe. Rather than deal with its visit to continental Europe country by country, let us examine in particular the general map of their travels and try to analyse what aspects interested them. The timing of their arrival in France over the Christmas period was not ideal. The initial of their activities was on Paris; and the visitors took part in talks with officials on treaty revision and on religious freedom for Japanese Christians. This was followed by shorter visits to Belgium and Holland, which naturally had a special link with Japan because of the existence of a Dutch settlement at Deshima in Kyushu island over the previous centuries.*

*The Embassy allocated three weeks for its initial stay in Germany but it in fact returned to tour the north and south of the country later in its schedule. The delegates' stay included influential interviews with Otto von Bismarck who gave them a memorable speech which was transcribed by one of the commissioners and reproduced in full in Kume's report... The impact of the German Chancellor certainly had a considerable effect on the thinking of politicians of the Meiji period on military, constitutional and other matters. By late spring the domestic situation in Japan was causing the government that remained there some alarm. It was sufficient for them to call for the return of the deputy leaders, first Okubo and then Kido. The latter, the intellectual of the Embassy, did not want to miss visiting Russia and delayed his departure accordingly.*

*The main party continued its circuit to Russia, which was only allocated two weeks because it was not thought to have much relevance to the problems of the emergent Japan. After this Iwakura led his members to Sweden, while Kido's group travelled round Austria-Hungary, Italy, Switzerland and France at a leisurely pace before arriving at Marseilles to board the ship for home. Iwakura with Kume went to Italy and Austria-Hungary where they*

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<sup>74</sup> *Japan Rising* op cit

*paid several visits to the Vienna Universal Exposition. This was the first exhibition in which Japan had taken part, albeit in a modest way, and was to have a great influence on its attitudes towards exhibitions later in the century. Kume expresses pride in the Japanese artifacts on view.*

*The full Mission received instructions to return to Japan on 9 June so it could not complete its coverage of Europe by visiting Spain and Portugal. After spending a few weeks in Switzerland and southern France, it joined its ship on 20 July at Marseilles.*

*As representatives of a new nation born out of a civil war, the Japanese were anxious to visit countries with similar experiences. While in the United States they had seen changes brought about by the civil war of 1861-5, they were the witnesses of more dramatic changes in Europe. As Kume observed, they arrived in Paris in 'France's hour of deepest mis-fortune'... It was its defeat by Prussia which brought about the fall of the empire of Napoleon III. When President Thiers received his guests, he was beset by the problem of pushing through a republican constitution which would address the concerns of the Paris Commune and the urgent issue of raising the indemnity payable to Germany in order to secure the evacuation of German troops from French soil. Meanwhile Prussia used her victory over France to declare the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. This German unification brought together the various divergent principalities which made up the German Confederation. But, if German unification had been the result of a short, sharp shock, that of Italy had been created slowly over the previous decade. It reached its culmination when the Papal territories, the last link in the chain, were brought within the fold of a new Italy and Rome became the new national capital. These radical changes were very relevant to Japan where the problems of creating a nation out of a congeries of clans and the centralization of government in a new national capital at Tokyo were very much in the minds of Iwakura's delegates. Although European countries approached these issues differently, the members of the Iwakura team took pains to study their common problems...*

*On its return journey the party travelled through the Suez Canal. They paused at Aden and the port of Galle in Sri Lanka (then British Ceylon). After they were forced to pass by Singapore because of an outbreak of typhoid, they did manage to visit hotels in Saigon, Hong Kong and Shanghai. This afforded them the opportunity to see*

*colonialism and the spread of the great European empires at first hand.*

*By 13 September 1873 when the main body reached Yokohama, most of the other delegates had already returned. They found Japan in a dangerous state and not very welcoming. They made it clear that they favoured the cause of reform but found that Japan had to establish peace and stability before they could deal with the implementation of the findings reached during their travels. Kido, the deputy leader of the group, prepared an important memorandum in October advocating constitutional government, perhaps the single most significant outcome of the Mission. But reforms took time, and the leaders were determined not to rush them. In any case, Kido, who returned home as a sick man, retired from politics in 1874 and died three years later. His colleague, Okubo, died at the hands of an assassin in 1878. Prince Iwakura, who survived an attempt on his life in 1874, died in 1883. It was, therefore, the youngest of the leaders, Itō Hirobumi, who became an imperial councillor and steered through the developments in Japanese politics and industrialization for the rest of the century. Itō had had a large hand in the preparation of the Mission and was able through his public-works connections to make significant appointments of foreign nationals to posts in Japan. After four decades of public service, his life eventually ended in assassination in 1909 by a Korean. Japan itself remained a dangerous place to be a politician...*

*Kume's report had an impact on a Meiji Japan which was ambitious for change. The lessons he drew came not from any one country but from the cumulative impression of the countries which the Embassy had visited. These formed the database for the remarkable grassroots transformation that took place in Japan as the reign of the Emperor Meiji progressed. Apart from Kume's work, but associated with it, were the many specialized reports compiled by the junior officials who accompanied the Mission. It seems to have targeted certain countries on its itinerary as special areas for study, e.g. Britain for information on the industrial revolution, and Germany for military information. In the United States it would appear that the officials were particularly trying to understand its forms of government, local, state and national, and its educational methods. They painstakingly studied the basic laws of the American constitution with the help of Japanese scholars already at US universities and paid many visits to legislatures. These comparative studies, ranging over the northern hemisphere, were to lead in time*

*to far-reaching constitutional amendments and to the introduction of universal education which was vital to nation-building in Japan...*

*Kume himself merits a final word. His report was an outstanding piece of work, containing shrewd analysis and compelling observations. This was recognized by the Japanese government; and he was appointed to various official posts connected with compiling Japan's national history.*

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