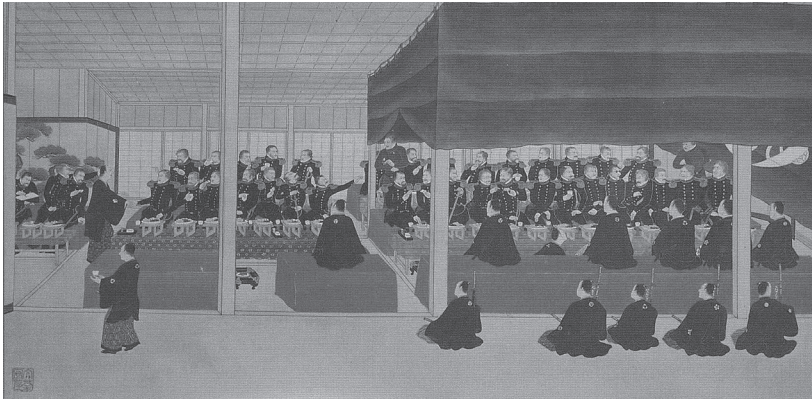


## S. Wells Williams' Contribution to the Opening of Japan: With Special Reference to the Perry's so-called White Flag Documents

Susumu Yabuki



### Forgotten Williams

Prof. Shin'ichi Miyazawa wrote a profile of S. Wells Williams in the preface of the translation of *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue*, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

'S. Wells Williams is not so famous in Japan, actually he has never been portrayed as main or central theme. His name appears only in connection with

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue*, 1889. Miyazawa's translation ---- *S. Wells Williams: Shogai to Shokan*, Kagoshima, Taki Shobo, 2008.

Morrison Incident<sup>2</sup>, or Perry's expedition in 1853 and 1854, or in the missionary activity of Hepburn and Brown<sup>3</sup>.

Prof. Miyazawa's comment is quite true, as I will show it later<sup>4</sup>, in case of the dispute of Perry's white flag question, Williams' name is seldom mentioned. We cannot find Williams' name at all in Ken'ichi Matsumoto's book *Shiro hata Densetsu* (Legend of White Flags)<sup>5</sup>. Matsumoto did not use English documents, narrowly using only Japanese language materials<sup>6</sup>.

In fact, in the Perry's expedition to Japan, the role of Williams is more important than Commodore Perry himself, because Williams acted not only as a translator but also as a mediator, as K. Asakawa once stressed in his book review of the *Journal*<sup>7</sup>. We should never forget his valuable contribution. K. Asakawa

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<sup>2</sup> The Morrison Incident of 1837 occurred when the American merchant ship, Morrison headed by Charles W. King, was driven away from "sakoku" (isolationist) Japan by cannon fire. This was carried out in accordance with the Japanese Edict to Repel Foreign Vessels of 1825. In addition to its commercial aims, the ship was attempting to repatriate seven shipwrecked Japanese citizens who had been picked up in Macau. It also carried Christian missionaries such as Samuel Wells Williams, Karl Friedrich Augustus Gützlaff (1803-1851) and Peter Parker (1804-1888, physician).

<sup>3</sup> Miyazawa, Preface, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Miyazawa does not mention S. Wells Williams and Edward Winter Syle (1816-1890) visited Nagasaki by American merchant ship Minnesota from Sep. 20 to Oct. 7, 1858. In Nagasaki they met the chaplain of the U. S. S. Powhatan Henry Wood. Lane R. Earns, *Westerners of the Nagasaki foreign settlement*, Nagasaki Bunken-sha, 2002, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Matsumoto's article first appeared in *Gunzo* magazine, April 1993. Later he wrote *Shiro hata Densetsu* Shinchosha, May, 1995. and *Shiro hata Densetsu* Kodansha, May 1998. Matsumoto criticized Kato's view. Yuzo Kato rebutted Matsumoto in *Baku matsu Gaikou to Kaikoku*, asserted as follows; some scholars (cf. Matsumoto) say that Perry delivered white flags to *Bakufu*, to hoist them in case of surrender. This assertion has no evidence both U.S. and Japan material. White flags mean only 'survey and messenger'. Matsumoto's stretch is not correct. *Baku matsu Gaikou to Kaikoku* Chikuma-shinsho, 2004, pp. 246-24.

<sup>6</sup> Matsumoto, Kodansha, pp. 169-170.

<sup>7</sup> Tsutomu Sugimoto's *Westerners Discovery of Japanese Language* (Seiyujin no Nihongo Hakken, Soutaku-sha, 1989) introduced S. Wells Williams short biography. Sugimoto mentioned Fredrick, but did not mention Asakawa even one words.

described the essence of U.S.-Japan negotiation<sup>8</sup>, as “a complex and still very obscure historical process”<sup>9</sup>. He compared the role of Perry and Williams as, both Perry and Williams were to a large extent blind actors”.

For example, on Feb. 22, 1854, Captain Adams succeeded in signing the Kanagawa treaty after three weeks of negotiation. On the other hand, US side gained neither the right to engage in foreign trade nor to be granted an audience with the *Shogun* or *Emperor* to receive the Emperor's letter to President Fillmore.

In short, Perry's success was limited. Perry's Expedition diary distorted some historical facts, so we can get the truth by comparing Perry's diary and Williams' diary<sup>10</sup>.

### **Williams' contribution as a mediator**

Asakawa's *Review* of Williams' *Journal* of his voyage, described his role as mediator. Asakawa understood his important role very clearly<sup>11</sup>. Asakawa wrote his doctoral dissertation under the guidance of Fredrick Wells Williams, who was a son of Wells Williams.

In 2009, Port Yokohama celebrated 150 anniversary of opening of the ports. We should not explain Perry's gunboat diplomacy by reading President Millard Fillmore's letter which is full of diplomatic courtesy and more than we should

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<sup>8</sup> K. Asakawa (1873-1948). Born in Nihonmatsu, educated in Tatsugoyama. Graduated Fukushima Jinjo Middle School and Tokyo Senmon Gakko. Later, graduated Dartmouth College and Yale Graduate School. Got degree in history by *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*. His life work is *The Documents of Iriki*. He taught at Yale from 1907 to 1942. In 2007, Asakawa Peace Garden was landscaped in the Saybrook yard. It reads his memory using three words; Historian, Curator, Peace Advocate.

<sup>9</sup> Asakawa's review for *A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853-1854)*. *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Oct., 1910), pp. 136- 137.

<sup>10</sup> *A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853-1854)*. By S. Wells Williams, Edited by F. W. Williams. Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol. XXXVII., part 2. (Yokohama: Kelly and Walsh. 1910. pp. ix, 259)

<sup>11</sup> Note 9.

understand Douglas MacArthur's occupation policy by his peaceful words only. When Asakawa wrote a letter to his close friends, he was afraid of the confusion shall be repeated again if General MacArthur is lack of carefulness. Actually Japanese historians have not yet achieved a clear understanding of the truth of Perry's negotiations process.

Why did Perry ask Williams to be an interpreter? Perry had read Williams' experience on the Morrison incident carried on *China Repository*<sup>12</sup>. Williams learned Japanese from drifting people, and he tried to translate the *Gospel of Matthew* to teach them<sup>13</sup>. He also edited a Japanese glossary.

Williams' translation of the *Gospel of Matthew* was in written Japanese style, which is different from Gützlaff's colloquial style translation<sup>14</sup>.

Prof. Masaji Kasuga, Kyushu Imperial University, analyzed the style of Williams' translation<sup>15</sup>. Williams recognized the difference not only of written and colloquial Chinese, but also the difference between written and colloquial Japanese<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Yoko Mochidzuki's "*Life and Japanese of Hepburn*" wrote as follows: Young missionary S. Wells Williams wrote the experience of bombing in monthly Chinese Repository (Sep. to Dec. 1837). Perry read the young Williams' report and asked him to be primary interpreter. Shincho Shinsho. pp. 33-34.

<sup>13</sup> Michio Takaya's *J. C. Hepburn* Yoshikawa Kobunkan, March 1961, pp. 136-137 wrote as follows; Hepburn is three years younger than Williams. Williams' translation of Matthew and book of genesis were burned by fire of S.R. Brown's printing office at Yokohama. But later, another copy was discovered at Kyushu. Of course this manuscript was discovered by Masaji Kasuga, of Kyushu Imperial University. cf. foot-note 15.

<sup>14</sup> First part of Gützlaff's translation as follows: *Hajimari ni kashikoi mono gozaru. Kono kashikoi mono gokuraku tomoni gozaru.* Here the God is translated to *kashikoi mono*, which means clever person. *Gokuraku* refers to Buddhist paradise.

<sup>15</sup> Prof. Masaji Kasuga's article 'Japanese translation of Matthew in 1850' *Bungaku Kenkyu*, No. 36, Kyushu Bungaku-kai eds., Fukuoka, 1948.

<sup>16</sup> Kong Chenyan analyzed the Williams' study of Chinese language in Chap. 4 of *Wei Sanwei yu Meiguo Hanxue Yanjiu*, Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, Sep. 2010. The conclusion of his study is shown in *A Syllabic Dictionary of the Chinese Language, Arranged According to the Wu-Fang Yuen Yon, with the Pronunciation of the Characters as Heard in Peking, Canton, Amoy, and Shanghai*, Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1874. in Chinese title "*Han Ying Yun Fu*"

In the context of political thought, Williams pondered about the best way to end Japan's national isolation *sakoku* from foreigners. The four black ships themselves were a demonstration of military powers, but they urgently needed coal and water, and other provisions. Perry could not open fire at distant areas from California<sup>17</sup>. Both Perry and Williams knew that the unarmed Morrison was dispelled by the order of expulsion of the foreigners in 1837. Therefore they must reconsider the best way to persuade bigoted *Bakufu* officials<sup>18</sup>. In the tactics of negotiation process, Williams performed not only as an interpreter, but also as a mediator<sup>19</sup>. Perry's negotiations include both persuasion and intimidation. The missing documents of white flags and white flags themselves are the symbol of intimidation factor.

### **President's letter dedication ceremony without any word**

Two boxes containing President Fillmore's letter and its explanation documents were delivered on July 14, 1853, at the temporary tent-house at Kurihama with no message.

Asakawa wrote a letter to Langdon Warner saying that 'diplomacy consists in gaining one's point through an understanding of the view of the other party'<sup>20</sup>.

Writing at the outbreak of the U.S. Japan war in 1942<sup>21</sup>, Asakawa was recalling the 1853-54 opening event.

Four years later, Asakawa wrote another letter to his close friend G. G. Clark, saying white flag diplomacy is not suitable for the beginning of the re-start of U.S.-Japan relations.

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<sup>17</sup> Actually, two steamers and two sailing ships.

<sup>18</sup> See Note 2.

<sup>19</sup> K. Asakawa's estimate.

<sup>20</sup> K. Asakawa's Letter to Langdon Warner, Dec. 10, 1941. *Letters of K. Asakawa*, Waseda University Press, 1990.

<sup>21</sup> See S. Yabuki *Asakawa Kan'ichi and his Days* Tokyo, Kadensha 2007, p. 102.

When Perry's ships were approaching off Uruga, their captains were mindful of the Morrison incident in 1837, a result of which *inter alia* was inability to repatriate the shipwrecked Japanese crew Otokichi<sup>22</sup>.

On June 4, 1853, Williams started dialogue with Yezaimon Kayama, who has the title of *yoriki kumi gashira* (ganger police rank) under Uruga *Bugyo* (magistrate).

At first Williams explained the purpose of the visit. Kayama wondered why it was necessary to come with four big ships just to deliver tiny letter. Williams explained it was because of the importance of the President's letter. Kayama did not accept this explanation.

Toshimitsu Kishi introduced historians' view on Williams' Japanese language ability in his book *Perry no Shiro hata* (Perry's White Flags):<sup>23</sup> Generally speaking, historians' view on Williams' Japanese ability is unanimously negative. Ken'ichi Matsumoto wrote in his book, *Nihon no Kindai I, Kaikoku Ishin* (Modern Japan, I, Opening and Restoration) Williams' role is 'explained as a Japanese interpreter, this description may be miswritten'<sup>24</sup>. Yuzo Kato wrote in his book *Kuro-fune Zengo* (Before and after *Kuro-fune*), wrote that Williams hesitated to accept Perry's proposal to be a Japanese language interpreter because of lack of confidence<sup>25</sup>. Here, we must observe Williams' honest and modest character. His humility and Perry's self-praise is quite opposite. We must read Williams' ability from other objective facts.

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<sup>22</sup> See Note 2. William reconsidered the failure of 1837 voyage. See also, Tao Demin, U.S. Human Right Diplomacy toward Japan, *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan*, Apr. 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Kishi, *Perry's Shiro hata* (Perry's White Flags) Mainichi Shimbun, 2002, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Kishi, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Yuzo Kato, *Kuro fune Zengo no Sekai*, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1994, pp. 133-135. and Kato, *Kuro fune Ihen: the Challenges of Perry*, Iwanami Shinsho, 1988.

## **Authoritative historian, Prof. Masato Miyaji denied the credibility of white flag documents**

‘Advocates of white flag documents authenticity must prove that Perry delivered a letter written in classic Japanese, as well as the existence of an interpreter on the *kuro fune* who can write the classic Japanese’<sup>26</sup>. When Miyaji pointed this out, he had no impression of Williams.

Following Miyaji, Prof. Hiroshi Mitani, University of Tokyo, wrote as follows:

‘Perry hired Williams in China as an interpreter of Japanese and Chinese. He was one of the members of American board of missionary in China. He once visited Uruga by Morrison and failed to deliver shipwrecked people to Japan. He learned some Japanese from fishermen but had almost forgotten’<sup>27</sup>.

Mitani continued, ‘direct communication between U.S. and Japan could not be realized. This fact disproves that the U.S. delivered Japan white flags as a symbol of surrender. At that time there was no one who could write such a high level Japanese letter on board the convoy ships’<sup>17</sup>.

Prof. Hirofumi Yamamoto, Institute of Historiography, University of Tokyo, wrote in his book on the Perry expedition, as follows:

‘Indeed Perry displayed white flags as symbol of negotiation and hoisted them, when they surveyed Edo bay. But this fact and the delivery of white flags is quite another irrelevant problem’.

Thus Miyaji, Mitani, Yamamoto and Kato all denied the authenticity of white flag documents.

Miyaji even asserted that the white flag documents were made up by delusional Japanese. To me these seem to be fanciful words. During the *Baku*

<sup>26</sup> Masato Miyaji, “Perry’s White Flags letter is a Fake document”, *Rekishu Hyoron*, Oct. 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Hiroshi Mitani, *Perry Raiko* (Perry expedition to Japan), Yoshikawa Kobunkan, Oct. 2003, pp. 110-111.

*matsu* period no notion of human rights existed that would lead people to think that failure to rescue shipwrecked persons would invoke punishment by Heaven. Miyaji should reflect whether Japanese people living in the *Baku matsu* period can have such kind of human rights notion. This thought definitely belongs to Williams or other missionary philosophy.

### **Amateur student historian Kenji Suzuki showed wisdom**

Mr. Kenji Suzuki, who is amateur historian proposed in unpublished paper a good opinion. According to Suzuki<sup>28</sup>, we should notice the key word to rescue shipwrecked people. This theme appears only white flag documents B version<sup>29</sup>. White flag documents B version clearly explained the primary purpose was not export-import business, but only to rescue shipwrecked persons both American and Japanese. Of course, Perry's purposes were various, particularly to break through the *sakoku* policy of Edo *bakufu*. In this context William selected only one proposal which *Bakufu* would be obliged to accept. This tactic is the very essence of Williams wisdom.

### **White flag documents are the last passage of Perry July 7 letter.**

So-called Perry's first letter dated July 7, 1853 is a most important letter. Because it carries Perry's real intention decorated by diplomatic courtesy.

*A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan, 1853-54*, was translated by Prof. Tomio Hora and published as *Perry Nihon Ensei Zuikoki* in 1970<sup>30</sup>. *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* was

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<sup>28</sup> According to Kishi, Kenji Suzuki is a Wako University student.

<sup>29</sup> Suzuki's unpublished manuscript--- *A hypothesis on so-called fake white flag letter* seems to me a very important one, because of his deep insight to Williams Japanese ability and human right consciousness.

<sup>30</sup> I used Tomio Hora's translation of fifth printing in 1986. I found many mis-translation in this book.



translated by Prof. Miyazawa in 2008. When we survey the authenticity of white flag documents, we must first of all check above mentioned two books by Williams and his son Frederick. Unfortunately, most of Japanese historians did not study basic materials, therefore they had made serious mistakes.

Needless to say, the first step of U.S.-Japan relation was marked by Perry expedition. Reviewing the history, we should study the records from both sides. Actually narrow-sighted Japanese historians failed to read Williams' records.

As for myself, I started Asakawa study after retiring from Yokohama City University in the spring of 2004. I found the truth of white flag documents through the *book review of Williams' Journal* by K. Asakawa.

### **Dutch as common language between Perry and *Bakufu***

On July 9 and July 12, 1853, there were two dialogues between Williams and Kagawa on board his ship. This dialogue was started by U.S. side. English expressions were translated into Dutch by U.S. translator; then Dutch translator of *Bakufu*, Tatsunosuke Hori, Tokujuro Tate'ishi translated into Japanese. Thus Dutch was common language between U.S. and Japan. The best illustration is a chart drawn by Tokujuro Tate'ishi on the July 14 dedication ceremony. The President's letter brought by Perry was dedicated to Ido Iwami-no-kami and Toda Idzu-no-kami of *Uraga-Bugyo*.

As this illustration shows, U.S.-Japan basic communication was carried through Dutch language. Regarding this point, Williams wrote: 'I am not sorry that one of them knows Dutch so much better than I do Japanese, for I think intercommunication is likely to be more satisfactory'<sup>31</sup>.

Although this style was kept, Williams understood Kayama's words before Portman translate it into English. Williams wrote: 'Yezaimon spoke in a clear

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<sup>31</sup> I am not sorry that one of them knows Dutch so much better than I do Japanese, for I think intercommunication is likely to be more satisfactory.

voice and, through Tatsnoski, who put it into Dutch for Mr. Portman, I could make out almost all they said; but it would require considerable practice to speak that style’.

### **Another common language Kanbun and *Kocho-kotai-bun* (Japanese classic style)**

Although basic proceedings were carried out in Dutch, another common language was necessary for the understanding of the political thought of both countries. For example President Fillmore’s letter was translated into Dutch and Chinese on board beforehand<sup>32</sup>.

*Bakufu* side translated both Dutch and Chinese translation into *Ran-go wage* and *Kan-go wage*<sup>33</sup> which means Japanese translation from Dutch text and Japanese translation from Chinese text. Comparing two texts, the latter were easier to understand than the former text, because the similarity of key words of Japanese text which involves Chinese characters imported from China. In short, on the colloquial conversation level, Dutch was primary language, and on written letters dialogue, *Kanbun* was primary, common language<sup>34</sup>.

### **The formation process of white flag documents**

#### **TEXT ONE**

The last passage of Perry’s July 7 letter which was delivered on July 14, include following two sentences. 1. Many of the large ships-of-war destined to visit Japan have not yet arrived in these seas, though they are hourly expected; and the undersigned, as an evidence of his friendly intentions, has brought but four of the smaller ones, designing, should it become necessary, to return to Yedo in the

<sup>32</sup> This translation was carried by old *dushuren* Xue, he was dead before arriving Uraga by opium addiction.

<sup>33</sup> 蘭語和解, 漢語和解

<sup>34</sup> My old classmate at University of Tokyo, Masaru Kawanishi helped my analysis.

ensuing spring with a much larger force. 2. But it is expected that the government of your imperial majesty will render such return unnecessary, by acceding at once to the very reasonable and pacific overtures contained in the President's letter, and which will be further explained by the undersigned on the first fitting occasion<sup>35</sup>.

## TEXT TWO

Prof. Yuzo Kato's translation is so bad, it looks like some kind of love letter, not a threatening letter<sup>36</sup>.

## TEXT THREE

Williams' translation into Chinese as follows: 1. 順此誠寔立定和約、則兩國免起衅端、故先坐領四小船、來近貴京、而達知其和意、本國尚有數號大帥船、特命馳來、未到日、盼陛下允準、如若不和、來年大幫兵船必要馳來、2. 現望、大皇帝議定各條約之後、別無緊要事務、大帥船亦不來<sup>37</sup>。

## TEXT FOUR

*Bakufu* translated text three by Williams into *Kan-bun wage* (Japanese text from Kan-bun).

1. この理に従い、真実に和約を取極め候えば、両国兵端を引き起し候ことこれなきと存じ候 (in case of peace agreement signed, both countries can

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<sup>35</sup> *Baku matsu Gaikoku kankei Monjo* (Documents of Baku matsu period on Foreign Relations), English appendices, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> '1. 日本を訪問するために派遣された多くの大艦は、まだこの海域に到着したことはありません。しかし、それは常に予期されているのです。本書状の署名者は友好的な意図を証明するため、比較的小さな四隻の軍艦のみを率いてきましたが、必要とあれば、来春にははるかに大きな艦隊を率いて、江戸に帰航するつもりです。2. しかし、大統領の親書に記載され、本書状の署名者が近く適当な機会にさらに説明することになる、非常に合理的かつ平和的な申し入れを陛下の政府がただちに受け入れることにより、このような帰航を不必要にすることを期待しています' *Eikou Kyoiku Bunka Kenkyusho*, Oct. 1997, Vol. 1, p. 259.

<sup>37</sup> *Baku matsu Gaikoku-kankei Monjo* I , p. 257.

avoid war)。これに依りて、四艘の小船を率い、御府内近海に渡来致し、和約の趣意御達し申し候。本国このほかに数艘の大軍船これあり候間、早速渡来いたすべく候間(before great navy arrive, *Bakufu* had better decide peace)、2.右着船これなき以前に、陛下御許容下され候様仕りたく候。もし和約の儀御承知なくござ候わば、来年大軍船を取り揃え、早速渡来いたすべく候。右につき、ただいま大皇帝の御評議相願ひ申し候。御承知下され候いて、右条約取極め候えば、ほかに大切の用事これなく、大軍船渡来いたさず候。かつまたわが国主和約規定の書翰持参いたし候<sup>38</sup>。

#### TEXT FIVE

*Bakufu's* translation from *Ran-go* version by U.S. into the Japanese translation from Dutch is as follows:

1.日本へ存問せんがための大軍艦数隻、未だこの海に到着せず、某らいたずらにこれを待つのみ。某今いささかその友愛の情けを表せんがために、四小船をもって貴国に至れり。明春まさに事体に応じて、尚数船を増加し、再び航し来るべし。2.しかりといえども、日本国帝殿下の政廷、願わくば、某が再び来るを待たず、伯理璽天徳が書中に載せたる公平和好の策を採用あらんことを。ただし、その書中の本旨は、近日便宜を得るを待ちて、某まさに自ら詳しく悉くすべし<sup>39</sup>。

#### TEXT SIX

So-called white flag documents (*Kocho-kotai-bun* style): In the boxes brought from America, there are one letter, two flags, and one short letter as follows:

(亜墨利加国より贈り来る箱の中に、書簡一通、白旗二流、外に左之通短文一通).

One letter in *Kocho-kotai-bun* style, Natsukage Maeda, deciphering. Chinese

<sup>38</sup> *Baku matsu Gaikoku-kankei Monjo* I , p. 260.

<sup>39</sup> *Baku matsu Gaikoku-kankei Monjo* I , p. 264.

part, Hizzen-no-kami Maeda, deciphering. English letter, no one reads. (皇朝古体文辞一通、前田夏蔭読之。漢文一通、前田肥前守読之。英吉利文字一通、不分明).

The contents of the parts include following messages (右各章句の子細は),

1. For many years, America requested commerce, but our country rule prohibit foreign commerce (先年以来、彼国より通商願有之候処、国法之趣に違背に及).
2. Especially, your country does not rescue your own shipwrecked people, this is an extreme crime to Heaven (殊に漂流之族を、自国之族を、自国之民といへ共撫恤せざる事天理に背き、至罪莫大に候).
3. We do not necessarily hope commerce with your country (通商是非々々希ふに阿ら寿、不承知に候べしや、此度ハ時宜に寄).
4. We rectify your crime against Heaven, using military powers, you will engage in war, but finally you will fail (干戈を以て、天理に背きし罪を糺す).
5. When we attack, you should defend yourself according to your own rules. You will definitely fail (其時ニ、又国法を以て、防戦致されよ、必勝ハ我にあり、敵対兼可申か).
6. At that moment, if you hoist white flags to surrender, we will stop bombardment (其節に至りて、和降願度候ハハ、予め贈る所の白旗を押立示すべし。即時砲を止め、艦を退く).
7. I have shown our will (此方の趣意如此).

This short letter seems to me, the essence of Perry's intention without diplomatic courtesy. This may be a memorandum for Williams' interpretation. Only Williams can write such kind of memorandum and speak to *Bakufu* officials.

## TEXT SEVEN

White flag documents A version. This text is added some modification to

original B version, but more popular than B version, so I call it A version.

## **Two dialogues on board and dedicating ceremony at Kurihama**

Williams wrote from the end of July 8<sup>th</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup> in his diary as follows: and they agreed to come for the letter to-morrow, as they went over the side. Before leaving, the sharp faced commandant went aft to look at the big gun, asked if it was a Paixhan, took its range to the shore, and then examined the locks of the guns near the gangway, he had evidently a commission to this effect, but we gave him no chance to see much, for we have an object highly desirable to effect as peaceably as possible---that our letter be received without force, so that there be no collision before the government is fully aware of our designs. I pray God to order these combustibles now brought together so that they shall warm each other rather than mutually consume one another.

Friday, July 9<sup>th</sup>---Watches were kept during the night on board as if expecting an enemy, and on shore the tinkle of a bell or gong was distinctly heard during the whole night. Several boats full of men were lying off shore at daylight, so that it is not unlikely that watch and ward were maintained by both sides while darkness reigned, and the sight of something like black screens along the shore strengthen this idea. About 7 o'clock, the highest officer at Uraga, named Yezaimon, attended by two interpreters and four or five others, came off, a parley took place off the gangway, as to the object of the visit, rank of the officer, and person they could not see. At last Captain Buchanan was ready to receive them in his room, three only coming up. When seated, Yezaimon stated that he had come aboard to express his official inability to receive the letter, and though he himself was willing to take it, the laws of the land forbade it. It was replied that the ships would remain here till the letter was received, and that we wished to have a suitable person come aboard to take it; that we had been sent by the President to the Emperor, and must execute our commission, which weighed upon us as strictly

as their laws did on them. Reference being made again to Nagasaki, they were told that we were sent here, and because it was near the palace. The originals of the letter & credence were then shown them, and also the package containing the translations; they showed little or no admiration at them, but wished to know the reason for sending for ships to carry such a box & letter to the emperor; yet whether the reason assigned, "to show respect to him," fully met their doubts as to the reason for such a force could not be inferred from their looks. A courteous offer of water and supplies was made, which was declined, and Yezaimon added then that he would not come off again before the termination of the four days allowed to send to Yedo, a period they themselves set as to the time required to send up and deliberate upon the matter. They were clearly informed of the meaning of a white flag, and also that visits were out of season till after the flags were hoisted in the morning.

During the whole of this interview, the bearing of these Japanese was dignified and possessed. Yezaimon spoke in a clear voice, and through Tatsnoski, who put it into Dutch for Mr. Portman, I could make out almost all they said; but it would require considerable practice to speak that style, & I am not sorry that one of them knows Dutch so much better than I do Japanese, for I think intercommunication is likely to be more satisfactory. At the close of the interview, the interpreter said the officer present was the highest in Uruga, and his name Yezaimon; "What is the name of the captain of this ship?" He was told, and nothing could be politer than the whole manner of this incident. While I was on the gangway before they came up, one said, "Are you an American?" --- "Yes, to be sure I am," I replied in a tone to intimate some surprise at the question, whereat there was a general laugh. Tatsnoski then asked my name and I his; Yezaimon had a brocade pattern of drawers, but a beautiful black gauze jacket, a *kami-shimo*, I suppose they call it. His crest was on his lacquered hat also; the boatman had a blue and white striped livery coat, and looked more decent than the naked fellows

yesterday. A flag with 三 marked on it was explained to denote his being of the third rank. Among his attendants was one red-cheeked, girlish looking young man of prepossessing features. A large buccina was taken out of a box, adorned with tassels, and having a brass at the vertex, but I could not make out its use. How curious one becomes when allowed to see things and people by glimpses in this way, and unable to ask and explain fully<sup>40</sup>!

On the other hand, Williams counterpart Yezaimon's records read as follows:

In the early morning on July 9, accompanied by interpreters Tatsunosuke and Tokujuro Tate'ishi, Yezaimon visited on board Susquehanna. Circumstances and faces of people on the ship showed strong will to deliver the important letter. Unless we (*Bakufu*) do not receive the letter, they will not return. Unless we do not receive it at Uruga, they dared to go into Edo bay and approach Edo office. Unless *Bakufu* does not receive the president letter, we cannot fulfill our duty ordered from President, therefore war will happen (*yogi naki baai-ni itaru beshi*). In that situation, if you would have any message to surrender, you should hoist white flags. We shall order stopping the guns immediately. All of the foreigners displayed blood-thirstiness in their faces.

Although Williams wrote simply that "they were clearly informed of the meaning of a white flag," but *Bakufu* officials knew clearly the real meaning of cease-fire and surrender.

Now we read the on-board dialogue on July 12, 1853. Williams wrote as follows: About 10 o'clock. Yezaimon, (whose full name is Kayamarin Yezaimon), with an addition of Naga-nori, and the two interpreters, came in a large boat, to say that the letter would be received, but that he could not tell exactly the day. This led to explanation, and I was not surprised to see that in their minds the copies had been confounded with the originals, and that they referred to the latter

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<sup>40</sup> pp. 50-52, Williams, *Journal*.



and we to the former; that they had made an appointment of an envoy to take these, while we supposed them to be hesitating about the transmission of these. The copies were shown them, and Yezaimon refused to take them, preferring to make further application to his superiors, to learn their will. The conference was very long from the apprehensions of our visitors, and their constant reference to law, so that at last the Commodore sent in his note, that he would never go to Nagasaki nor receive aught through the Dutch or Chinese, that he would deliver the originals only to an officer of equal rank or to the emperor, and that he must see his credentials. It was assured us that the envoy was a high officer, and I suggested that he was the prince of Sagami, in whose jurisdiction Uruga lies. A proper place was now preparing for receiving the letter, for there was no public hall suitable in such a place. The need of first receiving the copies was insisted on, and that it was indispensable to meet an equal; so, after three hours' talk, and receiving a paper in Dutch with these points stated clearly, they went ashore to inquire about forwarding the copies, promising to return in an hour or so. During this long confabulation, I tried to get some information of a general nature, but they were rather skittish, refusing to tell by pleading ignorance even of the town worth of the point, of the name of the opposite town across the bay, and such like matters.

It was four o'clock before the trio came aboard, and then to declare decidedly that they had all along understood that the originals were to be received, and that an envoy had come, whose credentials should be presented as evidence of his true character beforehand. The principal points were then stated in writing--that the Commodore would deliver the originals and copies together at any designated place on shore, that he would return for an answer, that he must see the credentials of his host, that he should come ashore with a suitable escort, and that no conference respecting the contents of the papers was expected when they were presented, but merely a ceremonial visit. The constant fear on their part evidently

was that we meant more than we said, and had designs *sub rosa*; they were referred to the letters as containing all we came for, and told that these must be answered or consulted, hints were also given of our going up the bay.

At our request, Tatsnoski showed his swords to the company. The scabbard of one was covered with a white-brown speckled fish skin, which he said was brought from China; perhaps it is from Manchuria, it was smooth and nicely covered the wooden sheath. The other was covered with hair beautifully lacquered and wound around. The blade was rather sharp, quite plain, and bright, but not superior to ours, at least judging by the looks; two gold dragons ornamented the end of the hilt, which was long, for two hands, and covered with knotted silk. These swords are worn in a most inconvenient way for our custom of sitting in chairs, but not for their usage of squatting. The prices were twenty and thirty taels for the small and large ones.

After all points were explained, they requested to see the engine, and were taken through the ship. The size of the machinery seemed to gratify and amaze them, and every principle of propulsion was explained as well as the time allowed. Yezaimon on seeing coal, said that Japan produced it in many places as Firado Island, Awa in Sikokf, and Yamatto, besides others; its uses he knew, and was far from making himself foolish as the man did who got a piece from the “Preble” at Nagasaki. The size of the furnaces and the complicated nature of the machinery, drew their wondering gaze. The guns, muskets and all the arrangements of the ship, the small proportion of the sick out of the 300 souls in her, were all informed them, and they observed everything. A daguerreotype pleased them much, they having previously heard of the name. The survey of such a steamer evidently gratified a reasonable curiosity.

From the interpreter Tokoshiuro, I learned that the *nengo* of the present *cubo* is Kayei, and this his sixth year, his predecessor was Choka and before him was Tempo, who ruled when we were here in 1837. These monarchs do not reign so

long as their brother emperors at Peking, and I suspect have less power and influence in the state, if the story be true that they are required to resign whenever they are in the minority with the state council on public questions, it is no wonder their reigns are brief. He also gave me the official title of Yezaimon which is literary, the "Uraga riding elder scholar," but what this means I do not know; his subordinate, who came aboard the ship first, named Nagazhima Saboroske is styled the "Uraga Rider of a battalion," which is alike obscure; his duties seemed to include those of port warden among others<sup>41</sup>.

When we read Williams' diary carefully, we can easily find that his knowledge on Japanese people and society developed day by day, with very quick speed. Thus he has already succeeded in primary purpose to deliver President's letter through July 12 dialogues in the morning and in the evening.

Now we must read the documents of Japanese side. We can find *Records of Dialogue on U.S. ship* (Uraga-omote Beisen Taiwa-sho), dated July 7<sup>th</sup>, Kaei 6<sup>th</sup> year, Material No.62, in the *Baku matsu Gaikou Monjo*. This document No. 62 does not contain the dialogue in the morning, it contain only evening conversation. At four o'clock in the evening, Yezaimon Kayama, accompanying interpreters Tatsunosuke Hori and Tokujuro Tate'ishi, visited flagship, and interviewed as follows:

- Yezaimon said: Regarding the President's letter, after we asked Edo-omote, they allowed me to receive the letter at Uraga, therefore you must prepare.
- Captain said: Besides the President's letter, we brought a memorandum. We wish to deliver this memorandum immediately, right now. We hope this memorandum will reach Edo-omote as soon as possible. We wish deliver the President's letter to higher rank official from Edo-omote, and deliver the memorandum now, separately.
- Yezaimon replied: If you have such a request, you must tell me beforehand.

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<sup>41</sup> Williams' *Journal*, pp. 55-57.

I cannot receive your memorandum now. We will receive it when we receive President letter together on July 14. Why not on the day after tomorrow?

- Captain replied: It is inconvenient to read the memorandum after reading the President letter. So, we hope deliver it right now.
- Yezaimon replied: If you had mentioned the topic before I can ask Edo-omote, and ask for permission. Now that high rank officials are coming to Uraga, sending the memorandum to Edo-omote is quite inconvenient. It is unreasonable.

Hearing the strong refusal of Yezaimon, Williams and other members are quite perplexed, Yezaimon wrote this topic curiously. (.....Captain, after considering sometime)

- Captain said: Now that it is inconvenient for you to receive beforehand, we will deliver it together at same time. Actually, this codicil is my own memorandum, not same as President's letter. By the way, how highly ranked are the officials coming to Uraga? Because Admiral Perry is high rank officer, so we wish deliver it to the same level high rank officials. Otherwise we must go to Edo-omote to deliver directly.
- Yezaimon replied: I guess the officer will definitely be a high ranking officer who are in charge of diplomatic matters. Please do not be anxious. Regarding the place where we shall receive the letters, we will arrange tent-camp near beach at Kurihama. So, Admiral a board and join the ceremony.
- Captain asked: How far is Kurihama from Uraga?
- Yezaimon replied: Kurihama is located North-west one Japanese *li* from Uraga Gobansho. (Tatsnosuke explained Japanese one *li* equals how many British mile)

Reading this dialogue, we can understand the preparation of July 14 dedication ceremony and also some trouble regarding the memorandum problem. Then, what kind of memorandum? Considering the importance of the contents, I believe, this is the Perry's July 7 letter and the abridged memorandum of the last two sentences written by Williams including the key word white flags<sup>42</sup>. Japanese historians could not specify the date when Perry delivered the white flags. Actually, Asakawa wrote to his Dartmouth friend on May 13, 1945, as follows:<sup>43</sup> The American attitudes can go a long way toward absurdity when indulged at weak moments. Some busy-bodies have said that it should be proposed at the S.F. conference<sup>44</sup> that May 30 be made an international holiday<sup>45</sup>. In 1853, Commodore Perry wrote to the *shogun's* government that, since the latter's traditional policy of prohibiting trade was 'extreme crime' in violation of 'Heavenly reason', a vast American fleet would come to demand an accounting for it; its victory was certain; on that occasion, if you would wish to capitulate, you should hoist the two white flags he was sending therewith; bombarding would then cease at once. (This was said to officials on June 4, and was sent about five days later<sup>46</sup> in three letters of this exact import, English, Chinese, and Japanese, which arrived together with the flags in a box<sup>47</sup>. There exist two diaries by two officials<sup>48</sup> who took part in the interview of the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the letters except the

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<sup>42</sup> *Nihon Enseki-ki* (Journal of Japan expedition), Iwanami Bunko, vol. 2, p. 200.

<sup>43</sup> *Letters Written by Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa*, Waseda University Press, 1990, p. 154.

<sup>44</sup> At that time San Francisco Conference was going to prepare the establishment of United Nations.

<sup>45</sup> The date of Asakawa letter is May 13, 1945. US Newspapers reported the final victory of Okinawa battle. Large Captain Richard P. Ross of First Marine Division hoisted battalion flag on May 30 at Ishigaki island.

<sup>46</sup> was sent about five days later in three letters of this exact import, English, Chinese, and Japanese

<sup>47</sup> arrived together with the flags in a box

<sup>48</sup> two diaries by two officials who took part in the interview of the 4<sup>th</sup>

<sup>49</sup> the letters except the English

English<sup>49</sup>. The letters were shown to no one at the time<sup>50</sup> but to the inner councillors<sup>51</sup>. )

### **Publication of Williams' *Journal* and Asakawa's immediate book review**

When Williams' *Journal* was published, Asakawa wrote *book review*. This sequence suggests that Asakawa knew Frederick's publication plan beforehand. It seems to me that Asakawa introduced Fredrick to the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*. For when Asakawa wrote his dissertation, he used frequently the Aston's English translation of *Nihongi* and Chamberlain's English translation of *Kojiki*, both were carried on the *Transactions* which were published at Yokohama. And one of the members of the council, Prof. M. Anezaki was Asakawa's close friend. Therefore, he knew clearly the activity of the Asiatic Society. Besides Asakawa made a public speech on Japanese feudalism in 1918 for the Society.

Here I must point out Prof. Kimitada Miwa's view. His book *Kakusareta Perry no Shiro hata* (Hidden Perry's White Flags)<sup>52</sup> wrote as follows:

Asakawa mentioned this material as a critic of American absurd action only in a letter to G. G. Clark, President of Yale, dated Aug. 19, 1945<sup>53</sup>.

It is good for Prof. Miwa to notice Asakawa's letter to G. G. Clark, but why he did not mention Asakawa's most important book review? Although a minor mistake, Clark is not the President of Yale, but class 99 friend of Dartmouth college, Asakawa's the first and life time close friend. Clark wrote even obituary<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> no one at the time but to the inner councilors

<sup>51</sup> *Letters Written by Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa*, p. 675.

<sup>52</sup> Kimitada Miwa, *Kakusareta Perry no Shiro hata* (Hidden Perry's White Flags), Sophia Univ. Press, May 1999.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. 5, Hidden white flags and its usages.

<sup>54</sup> Obituary of Dartmouth University, pp. 234-242 Kan'ichi Asakawa (December 20, 1873--August 10 [11], 1948)

for Asakawa, and the date of this letter is not August 19, 1945 but May 13, 1945, three months earlier than the Japanese surrender<sup>55</sup>.

The editorial committee of the book, *Letters Written by Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa*, added letter No. 226, footnote 253, p. 836, an explanation that G. G. Clark is a Dartmouth classmate. And on p. 834, No. 210, footnote 176, we explained Clark's farm in Plymouth, where Asakawa stayed during vacation season<sup>56</sup>.

Then, when did Asakawa learn of Perry's white flags? Miwa guessed<sup>57</sup> it was when Asakawa visited the Historiography Institute, University of Tokyo<sup>58</sup>. Unfortunately, Prof. Miwa does not know the relation between Williams and Frederick, and relation the between Frederick and his student Asakawa. When Asakawa wrote his dissertation on *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*, Fredrick guided him how to write it. And when Asakawa wrote *The Russo-Japanese Conflict* in 1905, Frederick wrote a preface for the book<sup>59</sup>. It is strange that Princeton Dr. Miwa does not know the basic facts.

Finally, I will write of the aftermath comedy of white flag dispute.

First stage: Matsumoto wrote *White Flag Legend* in 1995 and revised it in 1998.

Second stage: Rightist *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* (New History textbook) introduced a column titled 'Perry's White Flags' in 2001.

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<sup>55</sup> *Letters Written by Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa*, p. 675.

<sup>56</sup> *Letters Written by Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa* contains many letters addressed to G. G. Clark. No. 226 (Dec. 1, 1940), 231 (March 16, 1941), 233 (June 29, 1941), 234 (July 27, 1941), 235 (Sep. 20, 1941), 256 (Sep. 27, 1942), 263 (Nov. 5, 1944), 266 (Feb. 18, 1945), 269 (May 6, 1945), 270 (May 13, 1945), 272 (Sep. 23, 1945), 280 (Sep. 29, 1946), total 12 letters.

<sup>57</sup> 1906-07 and 1917-19.

<sup>58</sup> Miwa, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick Wells Williams (1857-1928), lecturer of Far East history at Yale (1893-1900), associate professor at Yale (1900-1925). He wrote a preface to the Asakawa's *Russo-Japanese Conflict*.

Third stage: Leftist Prof. Miyaji criticized the white flag documents as ‘fake documents’, and other of his fellow professors followed Miyaji’s theory.

Fourth stage: Accepting the leftist critic, rightist *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* revised 2001 version, and deleted the white flag column in 2005 version text.

Fifth stage: Rightist classical book by Shumei Okawa’s *Nihon 2600 nen-shi* (Japanese 2600-year History from Emperor Jinmu) also, deleted the passage of the Perry white flag documents. (Mainichi Wanzu Press, Oct. 2008).

About 150 years ago, both Perry and Williams, and *Bakufu* officials had a dialogue to open several ports of Japan. Ninety years later, when General MacArthur occupied Japan, he hoisted the old flags which Commodore Perry used many decades before. On the eve of the occupying U.S. army march into Okinawa, Asakawa warned that U.S. powers should not repeat gunfire diplomacy again. Unfortunately, we Japanese people have not yet reviewed thoroughly the lessons of Perry’s white flag diplomacy, therefore, we cannot establish yet U.S.-China- Japan’s good neighborly relations.