

**KINSE SHIRIAKU. A HISTORY OF
JAPAN, FROM THE FIRST VISIT OF
COMMODORE PERRY IN 1853 TO
THE CAPTURE OF HAKODATE BY
THE MIKADO'S FORCES IN 1869**

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Kinse shiriaku. A history of Japan, from the first visit of Commodore Perry in 1853 to the capture of Hakodate by the Mikado's forces in 1869 by Ken Yamaguchi & Sir E. M. Satow

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KEN YAMAGUCHI & SIR E. M. SATOW

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Yamaguchi, Ken.

KINSÉ SHIRIAKU.
A
HISTORY OF JAPAN
FROM
THE FIRST VISIT OF COMMODORE PERRY
IN
1853
TO
THE CAPTURE OF HAKODATE BY THE
MIKADO'S FORCES.

IN
1869.

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE

BY E. M. SATOW,

Japanese Secretary to H. B. M. Legation.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

This compilation commences with the arrival of the American squadron in 1853 and ends with the taking of Hakodaté in 1869. I have found slight discrepancies in the various accounts of this period which I have seen, and have endeavoured to arrive at the truth by consulting them impartially. I have no doubt, however, that more learned persons than myself will be able to discover mistakes and obscurities in what I have put together in this way, and I shall be grateful for their suggestions.

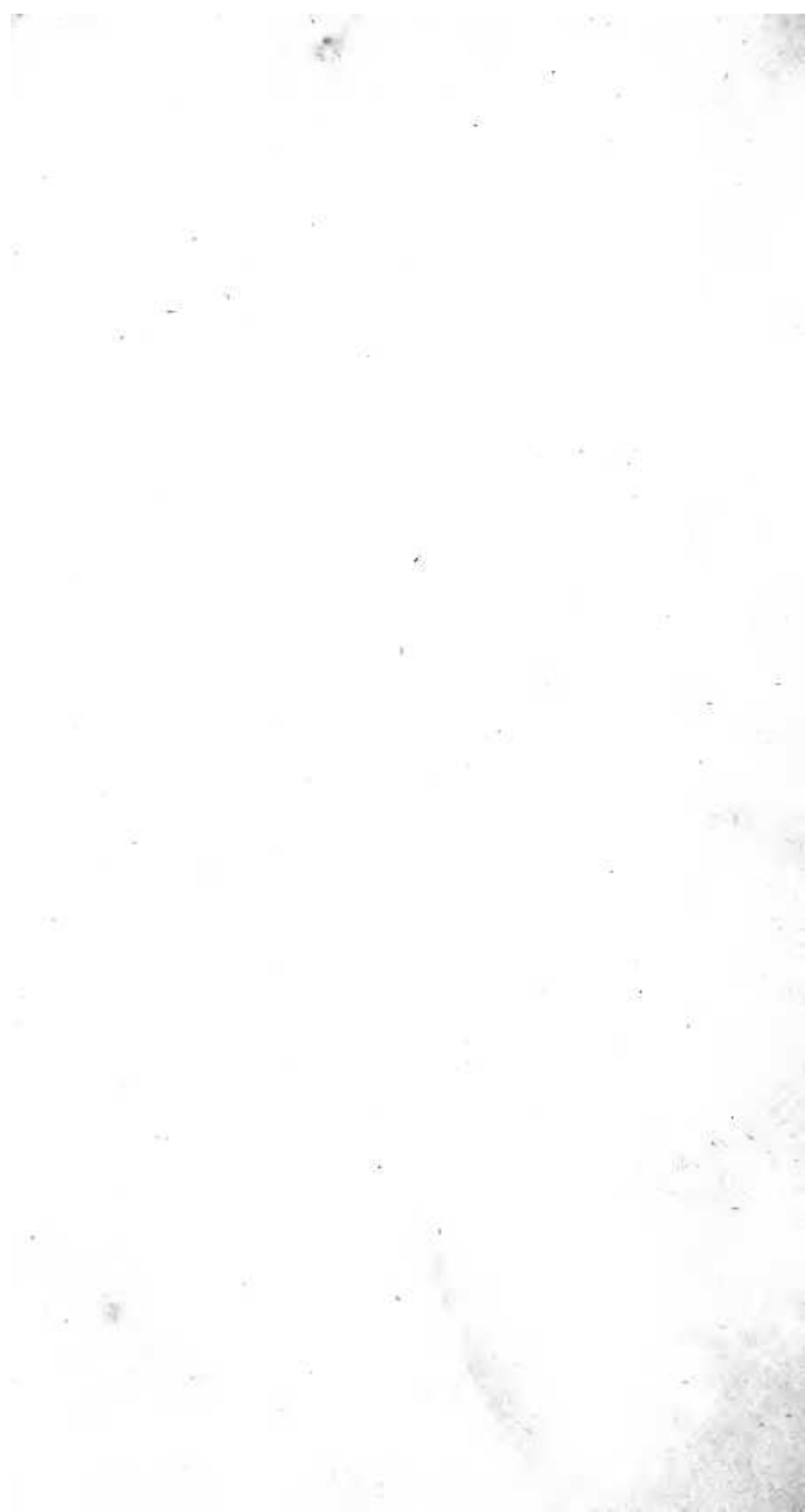
Public documents and memorials are often of unnecessary length. I have therefore been careful to abridge them as much as possible, so as not to fatigue my reader.

An old axiom says that a historian is worthless unless he possesses native talent, learning and wisdom. As I cannot lay claim to any one of these qualifications, there is no doubt that in thus rashly taking up my pen, I expose myself to the accusation of having attempted what is beyond my powers. But there are few complete and authentic histories of modern events. In the one or two works which do exist, the authors have either omitted everything which they thought likely to give offence, or have made their relation so obscure as to render it impossible to understand clearly what the real course of events has been. For this reason I have disregarded my own unfitness for the task, and have recorded summarily what has taken place for the use of those who may hereafter wish to write upon this subject.

1871.

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SHÔZAN YASHI.



INTRODUCTION.

It is almost impossible that any person whose attention has been drawn to the extraordinary efforts which the leaders of the Japanese nation are daily making to raise their country to a level in point of moral and material civilization with the Occidental World should remain content with noting merely what is passing around him at the present moment. An analysis of the causes of this desire for progress, which seems to be peculiar to Japan alone among Eastern Nations, would require a far greater knowledge of its past political history and habits of thought than any foreigner yet possesses ; but at the same time some light may evidently be obtained from the study of the most recent events. It is a fortunate thing, therefore, that a native writer should have undertaken to compile a work which presents so compact a summary as this does of what has passed since the sudden arrival of the American squadron in 1853 awoke Japan from the almost undisturbed slumber of the last two and a half centuries. To any future foreign historian of the relations between it and the outer world, such a work, compiled from the most trustworthy sources, cannot fail to be of the greatest use, and it is chiefly with the object of facilitating such labours that the task of putting it into an English dress has been undertaken.

The author, for what other reason than a dislike to notoriety does not appear, has chosen to conceal his iden-

II.

tity in the preface under the fictitious name of 'the rustic annalist of the pepper mountain,' but as he has half revealed it on the title-page, which announces that the work is printed for YAMAGUCHI UJI, there can be no indiscretion in stating that he is an ancient official of the Foreign Department as it was constituted under the administration of the Shōguns, and now an official of the *Mombushō* or Education Department. These two facts are presumptive evidence of impartiality, since to favour the one side too much might be stigmatized as ingratitude for past benefits, while too great leniency to the other would indicate an indifference to present emoluments somewhat rare.

For the literary merits of the work there is little to be said. It is composed in imitation of the terse style of the Chinese annalists, and is therefore almost incapable of being rendered at once literally and into idiomatic English. Freedom of translation, where the object does not happen to be the illustration of native modes of expression, is always advisable, especially if the idea of the original is thereby more correctly conveyed, and it may be as well to warn students of the language that they must not expect to find here an instrument to aid them in the dissection of Japanese (or rather Chinese) syntax.

Dates on which events occurred are often stated vaguely in the original, the month only being usually given. As the Japanese months seldom coincide with those of the Gregorian calendar (which has only been adopted since the commencement of the current year) it has seemed preferable to translate literally in this instance and to give in brackets the Gregorian dates which correspond to the beginning and end of each month. The precise day, where possible, has been supplied in footnotes from the *Genji Yume-monogatari* (G.Y.M.), Parliamentary Papers and other sources.

THE TRANSLATOR.

KINSÉ SHIRIAKU,
OR
SHORT HISTORY OF RECENT TIMES.

VOLUME I.

1853.—In the sixth month (July 5th—August 3rd, 1853. July 7th. G. Y. M.) of the sixth year of Kaei, in the reign of the Emperor Kōmei Tennō, the American Envoy Perry arrived at Uraga in Sagami with four ships, and, handing in a letter, asked for a treaty of amity and commerce. In those days all classes of the nation were so accustomed to a peaceful and enjoyable existence that the suddenness of the event caused great excitement. It was an ancient custom not to allow foreign vessels to enter any port but that of Nagasaki, and this old law was fully explained to the Envoy, who, however, would not listen. The Bakufu¹ eventually received the letter at Shimoda, and ordered the *daimiōs*² to guard the most important strategical positions in Musashi. The object of the American mission was then reported to Kiōto, and orders

(1) *Bakufu* is the term by which the Shōgunate was usually spoken of by its political opponents. It is derived from *baku*, a curtain (in allusion to the fact of its head being a general, whose camp in Japan was usually surrounded by a curtain) and *fu*, a government office.

(2) Territorial nobles. Although it is somewhat of a barbarism to make the plural of a Japanese word with an English suffix, it is better to do so for the sake of clearness.