

Lecture Notes: Reading 4: From *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*

I. Men

A. Harris

Townsend Harris (1804–78). New York merchant; first US consul general in Japan, a post established as a result of the Kanagawa Treaty. He arrived in Japan in August 1856 with instructions to secure a full commercial treaty with Japan.

In December 1857 the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867) reluctantly granted Harris an audience at Edo Castle. Harris secured a draft treaty the following February. When the senior councillor Hotta Masayoshi was unable to win prior approval from the imperial court in Kyoto, the wealthy and powerful *daimyo* Ii Naosuke arranged for the formal signing of the United States–Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce at Edo (now Tokyo) on 29 July 1858. Taking effect in July 1859, the treaty set the pattern for commercial agreements (Ansei commercial treaties) with other Western nations and helped intensify agitation against the shogunate.

Promoted to minister resident in June 1859, Harris remained in Japan until 1862; he encouraged the shogunate's plans to send an embassy to Washington and assisted local authorities in framing the regulations necessary for the establishment of foreign residence and facilitation of international trade. Harris resigned his post and left Japan in May 1862 for New York, where he retired from public life. (Encyclopedia of Japan, Kodansha)

B. Alcock

Rutherford Alcock (1809–97). First British minister to Japan. In 1858 Alcock was appointed British consul general in Japan. Arriving in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1859, he pressed for the opening of trade between Britain and Japan and for shogunal protection of Westerners from Japanese radicals eager to expel them. Later that year he was appointed minister to Japan. In 1862 he returned to London and wrote an account of his experiences in Japan, *The Capital of the Tycoon* (1863). Returning to Edo the following year, he arranged for British, American, French, and Dutch ships to bombard shore batteries of the Choshu domain (now Yamaguchi Prefecture) that had attacked Western ships passing through the Shimonoseki Strait. Differences with Foreign Secretary Lord Russell led to his recall to London in 1864. (Encyclopedia of Japan, Kodansha)

C. Elgin

James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th Earl of Kincardine (1811–63), British colonial administrator and diplomat.

1842–7 Governor of Jamaica

1847–54 Governor General of Canada

1857–9 Mission to China and Japan

December 1857 Occupation of Guangzhou

June 1858 Signed Treaty of Tianjin

August 1858 Signed Treaty of Amity and Commerce with Japan

November 1858– River Yang-tse expedition

1861–3 Viceroy of India

D. Oliphant

Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888). In 1857 Oliphant became private secretary to Lord Elgin on his visit to China. He accompanied Elgin to Hong Kong, was present at the bombardment of Canton (Guangzhou), and helped to storm Tientsin (Tianjin). He was employed in several minor missions, and visited Japan with the expedition barely eighteen months after the American Townsend Harris had been accredited as the first foreign diplomat to the shogun's government; he published *Narrative of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan* in 1859. ...

... In 1861 Oliphant ... accepted his first official appointment, as first secretary of legation in Japan, under Rutherford Alcock. He arrived at Yeddo at the end of June 1861. On the evening of 5 July a night attack was made on the embassy. Oliphant rushed out with a hunting-whip, and was attacked by a Japanese with a heavy two-handed sword. A beam, invisible in the darkness, interfered with the blows, but Oliphant was severely wounded, and sent on board ship to recover. He had to return to England after a visit to the island of Tsushima, strategically placed between Russia and Japan, where a Russian naval force was discovered, and persuaded to retreat.

From Leslie Stephen's entry on Oliphant in *Dictionary of National Biography*

II. Media

William Blackwood & Sons (1804-), leading Edinburgh book publishers

Blackwood's Magazine (1817-1980)

Long-running monthly literary review.

Conservative, heavy, masculine. (ct. *Bentley's Miscellany*)

Expensive, staid in format, circulation below 10,000.

Show-case for prestigious Blackwood's authors such as:

Edward Bulwer Lytton, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Margaret Oliphant

Blackwood's Magazine, VOLUME 91, APRIL, 1862 (from Wellesley Index)

4017 Caxtoniana (Part III), 391-401. Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton.

4018 The lives of two ladies [Mrs. Delany and Mrs. Thrale], 401-423. Margaret Oliphant.

4019 Political tragedies in Japan, 424-433. Laurence Oliphant.

4020 A box of books, 434-451. G. H. Lewes.

4021 Works of Charles Lever, 452-472. Robert B. Lytton.

4022 The International Exhibition: its purpose and prospects, 472-488. J. B. Atkinson.

4023 Salem Chapel (Part III), □489-513. Margaret Oliphant.

4024 Spence's American Union, 514-536. E. B. Hamley.

Publishers of:

Laurence Oliphant: *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, 1858, 1859, 1859*. Edinburgh, London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1860, 2 volumes, blue pictorial cloth gilt, 8vo. Illustrated with 5 folding maps, 20 colored or tinted lithographic plates, and 50 wood-engravings. Volume 1 - 492 pp, Volume 2 - 496 pp.

In *Blackwood's Magazine*:

[James White], "Elgin's Mission to China and Japan"—Mar 1860 [Review of Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission*]

[Laurence Oliphant], "Political tragedies in Japan"—Apr 1862

[Laurence Oliphant], "Sensation diplomacy in Japan"—Apr 1863 [Review of Alcock, *Capital of the Tycoon*]

[Laurence Oliphant], "Moral and political revolution in Japan"—Apr 1867

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Compare: Longmans (1724-), leading London publishers

London publisher/agent of *Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929), prestigious Whig quarterly.

Publishers of:

Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three Years' Residence in Japan* (London: Longmans, 1863).

In *Edinburgh Review*:

[Rutherford Alcock], "Japan and the Japanese"—Jan 1861

[Rutherford Alcock], "China and Japan"—Jul 1865

[Rutherford Alcock], "Reform in Japan"—Jul 1872

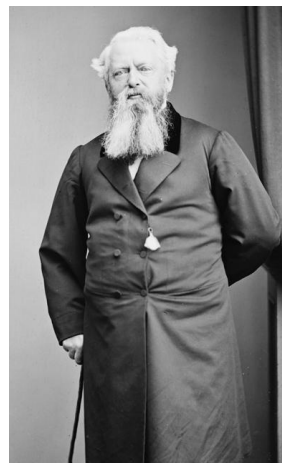
1) Mug shots



Oliphant



Alcock



Harris



Elgin

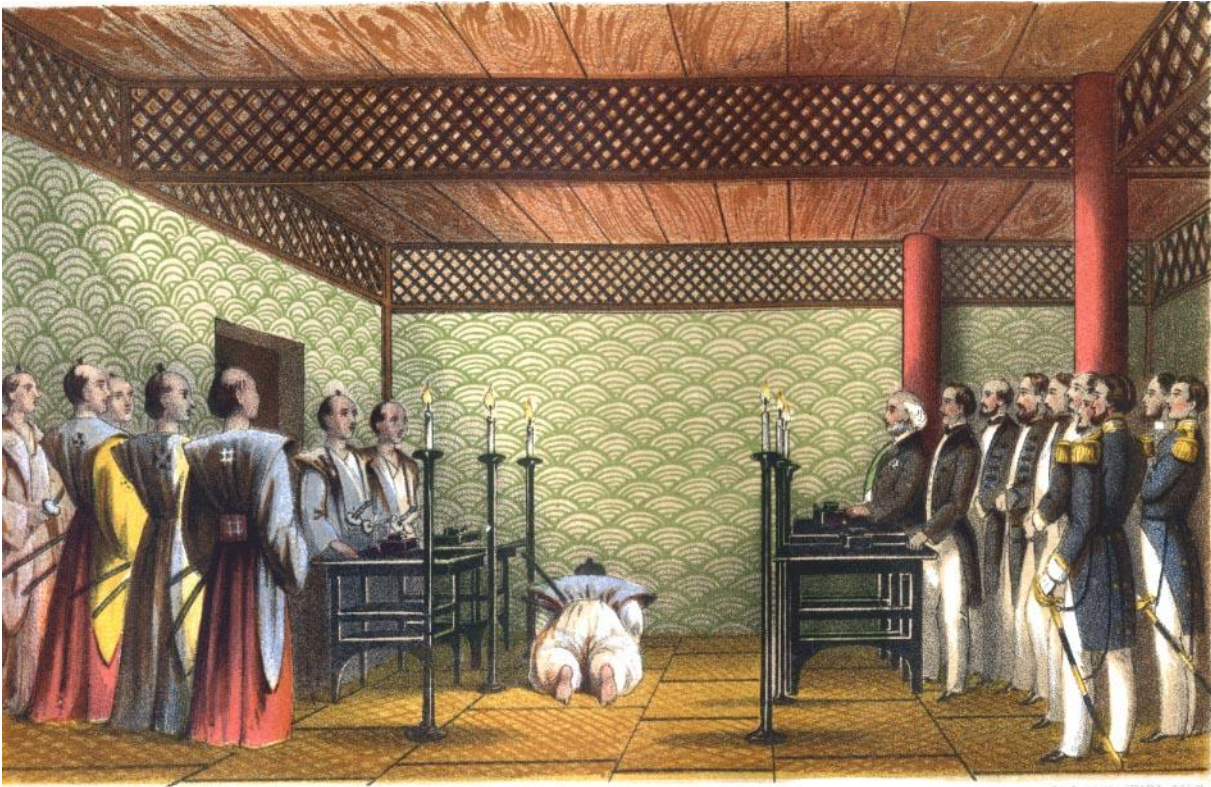
2) Illustrations from Oliphant: *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan*



F. C. SEDWELL, DEL.

M. G. H. HANBART, PIN.

RESIDENCE OF THE BRITISH MISSION AT YEDO.
(Japan)



W. B. BURNETT DEL.

M. S. G. RAUENHART SCULPT.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE EARL OF ELGIN & THE PRIME MINISTERS OF JAPAN.



W. B. BURNETT DEL.

M. S. G. RAUENHART SCULPT.

EXCHANGE OF FULL POWERS BETWEEN THE EARL OF ELGIN & THE JAPANESE COMMISSIONERS.