

The Mikado, Guranto Shōgun, and the Rhapsody of US-Japanese Relations in Early Meiji

By Daniel A. Métraux

Relations between the United States and Japan, relatively close compared to Japan's relations with European powers during the Meiji era (1868–1912), reached their pinnacle with the three-month visit of General Ulysses S. Grant (1822–85) to Tokyo and its environs during the summer of 1879. Although only a private mission, the Japanese accorded Grant an exuberant welcome and readily sought his advice on a variety of issues that impacted their modernization program. Grant played a key role in bringing Japan and China to the negotiating table rather than fighting a war over the Ryūkyū Islands in 1880, in persuading Tokyo not to assume burdensome foreign debts and to move cautiously toward popular participation in politics, and, inadvertently, in starting a revival of the Nōh theatre. The General's quiet unassuming manner, his warnings about the dangers of European imperialism, and his ability to portray the United States as the only non-imperialist power in the West brought a wave of positive feelings for the US amongst many Japanese.¹ Grant, whose presidency is often rated as an embarrassing failure, proved himself an outstanding goodwill ambassador to Japan as well as to many of the other countries he visited.

GRANT'S WORLD TOUR

Ten weeks after leaving the White House, General Grant, his wife Julia, and their son Jesse embarked on a twenty-eight month world tour. Leaving Philadelphia on the warship *Indiana* on May 17, 1877, the Grant family first visited Britain and then experienced Europe, the Mediterranean, Egypt and the Suez Canal, India, Southeast Asia, and finally China and Japan before receiving a hero's welcome in San Francisco on September 20, 1879. Grant met with an endless



Etching from the book, *Around the World with General Grant*. The illustration title is: Meeting the Emperor in the Summer House.

stream of kings and queens, political and societal leaders, and the intellectual elite of every nation visited, but he took special delight with the time spent meeting the thousands of common people who came out in droves to encounter him at every stage of his journey. Fortunately for posterity, John Russell Young (1840–99), a young reporter for the *New York Herald*, covered the entire trip and wrote a brilliant book, *Around the World with General Grant*.²

Grant's trip, while strictly private in nature, had important historical consequences. The General was the first former President to embark on a major world tour and the first major American political figure to visit Asia. He acted as a superb goodwill ambassador, greatly enhancing his young nation's popular image.

Everywhere he traveled he was greeted as General Grant, the savior of the Republic, rather than as a former two-term President. Grant's greatest welcome, however, came in Japan, where he became a temporary, but highly valued and honored advisor to the major Meiji leaders, who, while recognizing his status as a private citizen, greatly respected the General's experience in government and the military. Several Japanese leaders had also encountered Grant as President when they visited Washington in 1873.

After leaving China, the Grant party arrived in Nagasaki on June 21, 1879. After a lengthy series of welcoming ceremonies, a steamer took Grant to Tokyo where he remained throughout July and August except for a number of excursions out of the city to such places as Nikkō. While in Japan he met frequently with the Meiji Emperor and many government ministers, including his closest contact, future Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi.³

JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT BY 1879

Japan at the time of Grant's visit was still at the very start of a massive modernization project that began only eleven years earlier in 1868 with the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the installation of the new Meiji government. It was a "revolution from above" that would transform Japan into a major world power by the early 1900s, but in 1879, Japan was struggling to maintain her independence and to gain full equality with the West. The Japanese worked hard under their capable government to modernize and strengthen their country, but they were hampered by the economic disadvantages of the "unequal treaties" that Japan had concluded with various Western nations since 1858, as well as by the stigma of extraterritoriality, which in many instances immunized Westerners against the Japanese legal system while they were on Japanese soil. The major economic impact of the treaties was that they weakened the Japanese government's control of foreign trade and deprived it of revenues.⁴ The Tariff Convention (Kaizei Yakusho) of 1866 reduced import tariffs to a uniform five percent of declared value to be paid in silver, and abolished charges on foreign ships entering and leaving Japanese ports.

One of the primary goals of Japanese foreign policy was the revision of the treaties so as to gain legal equality with the West, but the only truly sympathetic partner they found was the United States, which alone among the major powers was indicating a willingness to revise the treaties.⁵ Grant, who visited Japan as a private citizen without any agenda or connection to any organization or government, condemned as selfish the imperialism of the West.⁶ He reaffirmed America's traditional policy of strengthening Asia against Western encroachment through his support for Japan's search for equality with the West.⁷ His sympathetic approach won him the admiration and respect of the Japanese.⁸

GRANT AND THE OKINAWA QUESTION

While Grant was in Peking preparing for his voyage to Japan, Prince Gong, Li Hong-jang, and other Chinese leaders asked the General to use his influence while in Japan to help settle a dispute between Japan and China over the sovereignty of the Ryūkyū Islands. The Islands were then a nominally independent kingdom whose king had been paying tribute to both Japan and China for centuries.⁹

Japan's efforts to absorb the kingdom drew the ire of the Chinese, who feared that Japanese seizure of the islands would interfere with Chinese trade and give Japan a strategic position near China's main shipping lanes. The dispute became a major crisis in early 1879 when Japan incorporated the islands as Okinawa Prefecture and obliged the Ryūkyū's king to live in exile in Japan. Tokyo had accused Peking of meddling needlessly in the internal affairs of Japan and in the strongest terms urged the Chinese to stay away. Thus, when Grant arrived in China, Sino-Japanese relations were seriously strained, and since the Qing government wanted some degree of sovereignty over the islands,¹⁰ Qing officials beseeched Grant to use his influence as a respected world leader to bring the Japanese to the negotiating table in a spirit of peace and compromise.¹¹

China's leading political figure during the 1860s and 1870s, Prince Gong, sharply criticized Japan's attempt to "extinguish this kingdom, which has always paid tribute to China, which has always been friendly."¹² General Grant replied that any outcome short of national humiliation or destruction was better than war. "War," said Grant, "was so great a calamity that it should only be invoked when

there is no other way of avoiding a greater [crisis], and war, especially between two nations like Japan and China, would be a measureless misfortune."¹³ He readily agreed to take up this matter with the Japanese government.

Grant did his own careful research and learned that the Ryūkyūs were semi-independent since China had never exercised her sovereignty even though she accepted tribute. The islands' king and people were not Chinese, and although some Chinese did live there, there were no Chinese government officials present. The Ryūkyūans felt closer to China and deeply feared a Japanese takeover. The Chinese were content for the Ryūkyūans to retain their current autonomous state, but adamantly opposed foreign occupation of the islands because of their strategic role in the defense of China.

Grant felt that his intercession was vital because war seemed inevitable if the situation could not be resolved through negotiations. He also realized that "a well-appointed body of ten thousand Japanese troops could make their way through the length and breadth of China, against all odds that could be brought to confront them."¹⁴

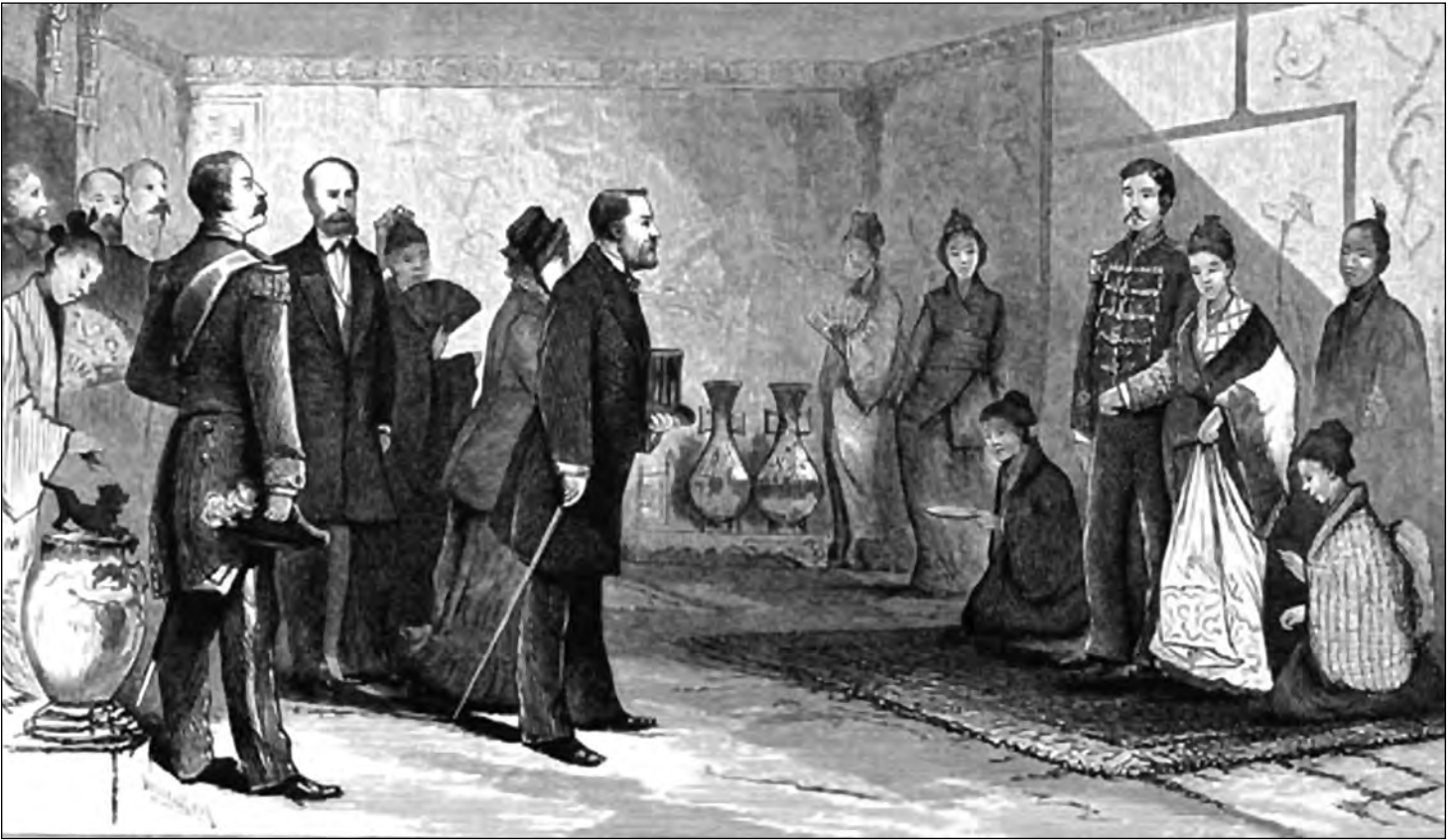
General Grant met with several high-ranking officials, including Prime Minister Itō when visiting Nikkō and with the Emperor, upon his return to Tokyo, in an attempt to resolve the impasse between Japan and China. The General strongly urged an amicable settlement be reached at the negotiating table rather than an all-out war between China and Japan that Japan would easily win. That being the case, Japan should take the high ground and lead the discussions to a mutually favorable resolution.

Grant warned that the only beneficiaries of a Sino-Japanese war would be the European powers who would swoop in to pick up the pieces once Japan and China had destroyed each other. According to Young, Grant told the Japanese that the only powers that would derive any benefit from a war would be the foreign powers. The policy of some of the European powers was to reduce Japan and China into the dependence which had been forced upon other nations. If war should ensue between China and Japan, European powers would end it their own way and to their own advantage, and to the disadvantage of the two nations. Grant best described Japan's situation by asserting, "Your weakness and your quarrels are their opportunity."¹⁵

General Grant was always eager to depict America's goals in the East more favorably than those of the British. The British, and the other Europeans as well, would take advantage of the Japanese and other Asians even if it meant their destruction and shame.¹⁶ In contrast, Grant told the Emperor, "None, except His Majesty's own subjects, can feel more warmly interested for Japan's welfare than I do. In this regard, however, I am a fair representative of most of the American people."¹⁷

Grant devised a plan that he hoped would lead to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. On August 18, 1879, he issued identical letters to Prince Gong and to Prime Minister Iwakura Tomomi recommending that: a) China withdraw certain offensive correspondence; b) China and Japan each appoint commissioners to investigate the problem and to meet with each other in a friendly manner; c) no foreigners were to be allowed to be a party to the dispute or involved in any negotiations except perhaps as translators. Grant also urged China to follow Japan along the road of westernization and "independence."¹⁸

Grant's intercession produced some initially promising results. A conference was held in Peking between mid-August and late



Etching from the book, *Around the World with General Grant*. The illustration title is: Audience with the Emperor of Japan.

October 1880. The conference ended with a tangible solution confirming Japan's sovereignty over Okinawa and the northern islands of the chain with the southern islands of Yaeyama and Miyako going to China. The Japanese representative, Tamaki Shishido, was ready to sign the treaty immediately, but the Chinese asked for a delay so that other officials might examine the document. It is apparent that some Chinese officials felt that the settlement was too much to the advantage of Japan and were hesitant to agree. After the delay continued into January 1881, the Japanese delegation lost patience and returned to Tokyo. Since the Japanese already held the Ryūkyūs, they certainly had the advantage.¹⁹

The Ryūkyū crisis was never fully settled outright. The Japanese already held the islands and that was that. Other larger problems such as the fate of Korea, the growth of Russian power in Northeast Asia, and the continued imperialism of the West in the region grabbed the headlines and the attention of all the governments involved. Finally, Japan's decisive victory in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) forced the Chinese to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki which, among other things, gave Japan undisputed control of the islands.

GRANT AND JAPANESE FINANCES

For Grant, the clearest example of Western bullying of China and Japan came in the clauses in the "Unequal Treaties" a decade earlier wherein these nations were forced to accept the practice of levying import and export duties at a mere five percent.²⁰ Grant felt that the regressive and very heavy land tax both impoverished and exhausted Japan's farmers. If Japan could greatly increase its revenues from commerce, it could reduce this intolerable burden on the farmers,

thus freeing them to increase their agricultural output and personal incomes, which in turn would lead to greater growth of the Japanese economy.²¹

Despite the burdens of the treaties and the regressive tax system, Grant urged Tokyo to follow a policy of complete independence from the West, avoiding especially bank loans from the British. When the Japanese informed Grant that they were considering a massive loan from London, Grant told the Emperor:

There is nothing a nation should avoid as much as owing money abroad. You are doubtless aware that some nations are very desirous to loan money to weaker nations whereby they might establish their supremacy and exercise their influence over them. They lend money to gain political power. They are ever seeking the opportunity to loan. They would be glad, therefore, to see Japan and China, which are the only nations in Asia that are even partially free from foreign rule or dictation, at war with each other so that they might loan them on their own terms and dictate to them the internal policy which they should pursue.²²

Grant reminded the Japanese of the tragic case of Egypt. In recent years the Egyptian government had incurred an enormous debt to the British and other European powers and as a result had been made a dependency of her creditors. The Japanese subsequently withdrew their loan request.

CREATING A LEGISLATIVE BODY

Japan's early Meiji era reformers often spoke of the need for some form of legislative body to broaden the base of government. There was a consensus that Japan would have to write its own constitution

as a key step in creating a civil society based on the rule of law. Meiji leaders believed that Japan's having a constitution and a national legislative body would convince foreign powers that Japan was becoming a mature modern nation worthy of equal status with them—thus deserving renegotiation of the unequal treaties of the early Meiji period. A “popular rights movement” led by former government leader Itagaki Taisuke (1837–1919) gathered momentum. By the late 1870s, historian Peter Duus notes, “the main question for most government leaders was not *whether* to establish a constitution and national assembly but *what kind* should be established and *when*.”²³

Grant was a strong supporter of the liberal democratic traditions of nineteenth-century America. He believed in the principles of a broadly-based representative government and was perhaps the strongest advocate of suffrage and equal rights for Black Americans of any President between Lincoln and Eisenhower.²⁴ So it is interesting to note here how the General urged a calm deliberative pace for the Japanese. According to Young:

*A question was asked which brought up the subject now paramount in political discussions in Japan, the granting of an assembly and legislative functions to the people. General Grant said that this question seemed to be the only one about which there was much feeling in Japan, the only one he had observed. It was a question to be considered with great care. No one could doubt that governments became stronger and nations more prosperous as they became representatives of the people. This was also true of monarchies, and no monarchs were as strong as those who depended upon a parliament. No one could doubt that a legislative system would be an advantage in Japan, but the question of when and how to grant it would require careful consideration. It should be remembered that rights of this kind, rights of suffrage and representation, once given could not be withdrawn. They should be given gradually. An elective assembly, to meet in Tokio, and discuss all questions with the Ministry might be an advantage. Such an Assembly should not have legislative power at the outset. This seemed to the general to be the first step. The rest would come as a result of the admirable system of education which he saw in Japan.*²⁵

Itō, the Emperor, and other Japanese leaders often quoted Grant as they formulated plans for gradual political reform in the 1880s.

EDUCATION AND FOREIGN TEACHERS

The above reference to the need to have an educated citizenry before Japan could initiate its own version of representative democracy was coupled with the General's commentary on the great potential of Japan's educational system. He himself had received an excellent education at West Point, with its emphasis on engineering, so it is interesting to read of his high opinion of Japanese schools, especially the “Tokio school of engineering,” which he termed the best in the world.²⁶ He was delighted also to see how much progress was being made in the study of English. He also commented that the officials he met in the Japanese government appeared to be well-educated, able, and very efficient.²⁷

While in Japan, Grant undoubtedly met some of the foreigners hired by the Japanese government as teachers and experts to assist with the modernization of the country. Many taught science, math,

engineering, and other subjects at Japan's emerging universities, including the school that would become Tokyo University. While advising the Japanese to advance as many of their own young Japanese scholars as teachers as soon as possible, and noting that in due course that the Japanese would be able to do without these foreign experts, Grant noted that care should be taken to withdraw the foreigners only very slowly. Foreign professors, with their greater experience, should be retained to oversee the work of younger Japanese teachers.²⁸

THE ARTS

General Grant, while in Japan, enjoyed the traditional theatre of Japan, especially Nōh. Donald Keene points out that Grant unconsciously played a role in preventing at least the temporary extinction of Nōh, which was in decline amidst the Meiji rush for all things Western and modern. He attended a program of Nōh performances at the palatial home of Meiji leader Iwakura Tomomi and later urged his hosts to do everything to preserve Nōh. Grant's words spurred a strong and successful movement by Iwakura and others to save Nōh and to pay more attention to traditional arts before they were lost.²⁹

Grant attended other traditional forms of Japanese theatre, including kabuki, rendering prestige to the various theatres he visited.

WHY WAS THE GRANT VISIT IMPORTANT?

General Grant's visit to Japan is largely forgotten today, but it was not without significance at the time. *The New York Times* quoted an 1880 Tokyo correspondent who noted that Grant was “an unseen attendant at every council board, an invisible, but influential, participator in every cabinet meeting” in Japan.³⁰

History provides further evidence of the importance of General Grant's advice to the Meiji government:

Grant's warning that Japan should not become a debtor nation made a strong impression on the Emperor and other Japanese leaders for years to come. When the government sought ways to raise revenues in 1880, Councilor Okuma Shigenobu recommended that Japan acquire a foreign loan of fifty million yen from the British. Government leaders, unable to arrive at a final decision, sought the advice of the Emperor, who replied in an Imperial rescript: “While I know how difficult it is to balance the budget, I also know that it is quite wrong to float a foreign loan. Last year Grant spoke of the harm of foreign debts. His words are still fresh in my ears.”³¹

General Grant's suggestions for a more measured pace in extending suffrage and in creating a national legislature certainly concurred with the opinions of Itō, who played a critical role in drafting the 1890 Meiji Constitution, and other Japanese leaders. This “go slow” approach became the framework for the Japanese, who inaugurated a Diet with a very limited suffrage in the early 1890s and who did not grant universal male suffrage until 1925. It is interesting to note that shortly before the promulgation of the new constitution, the Emperor, who deliberated over drafts of the documents with his ministers, repeatedly said, “On this question Grant said . . . On that question Grant taught me . . .”³²

Grant had urged that the Japanese adopt a more conciliatory approach on the Ryūkyū question. Even though the Japanese did meet the Chinese at the negotiating table, no satisfactory settlement was ever made. The Japanese seizure of the islands and its creation of the new Okinawa Prefecture became a *fait accompli*. Grant's greatest fear of a war between China and Japan, however, was postponed for another fifteen years, at which point Japan had emphati-

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cally become a major power that was in no danger at all of being cowed by any combination of world superpowers. The Japanese listened carefully to Grant's suggestion that they should explore the possibilities of direct negotiations instead of waging a war that potentially could be disastrous to both sides.³³

Grant had expressed his and his country's strong opposition with the tariff conventions that Japan had signed with the United States and other foreign countries. He argued that all foreign governments should be willing to renegotiate the treaties, giving the Japanese better terms. Grant's words encouraged the Japanese to keep working to bring an end to the worst aspects of these "unequal treaties." Unfortunately, the American government agreed to support treaty reform provided that the other powers followed suit, but none did, so any chance for meaningful reform failed for the next two decades.

Grant's visit had positive intangible results as well. He made a very favorable impression on Japanese leaders, including the still young Emperor, who seemed to gain a sense of confidence when dealing with foreigners. His praise for the rapid progress that the Japanese were making in their modernization efforts and for their industriousness, discipline, and organizational skills drew a warm response. Grant's warning that the Japanese should rely on themselves and not surrender any of their sovereignty to foreigners found its mark. But, above all, Grant's open deep respect and affection for the Japanese left a very positive impression not only of him, but also of the United States.³⁴

Grant's visit marked one of the high points of US-Japanese relations during the Meiji era. Grant was the perfect goodwill ambassador, portraying his country in a very favorable light while at the same time making the Japanese feel very good about themselves. Grant helped to considerably boost the self-confidence of the Japanese, making them realize that they could achieve wonders through their own initiatives, and that the international environment was not entirely hostile to their endeavors.

GRANT, JAPAN, AND LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY IMPERIALISM

At the time General Grant visited Tokyo, Japan, though an ancient nation, was a young nation-state attempting to maintain its independence and to gain full equality with Western powers. Despite their energetic efforts to make Japan a thoroughly modern nation, however, their work was hindered by the stigma of extraterritoriality and the disadvantages imposed on Japan by the "unequal treaties" that Japan had concluded with the Western powers in 1858. Japan's chief diplomatic goal throughout most of the Meiji era was the thorough revision of these treaties, which required the consent of most if not all of the nations concerned. Unfortunately, none of these powers except the United States showed any inclination to dump these treaties and to treat Japan as an equal partner despite Japan's

attempts to build a modern civil society along Western lines in its legal and political systems. Grant himself condemned this "selfish" policy of the European states. Richard T. Chang correctly notes that, "As a private American he reaffirmed America's traditional policy of strengthening Asia against European encroachment by pledging America's continued support and sympathy for Japan's quest for equality with the West."³⁵

The late nineteenth century was a period of extraordinary closeness between Japan and the United States. It was the US that had "opened" Japan and it was to the US that Japan sent most of its diplomatic missions. Japan sought American advice in particular concerning its modernization process, and hired hundreds of American teachers and other experts to teach the Japanese about the prowess of the West. Dozens of American writers toured Japan in the 1870s and 1880s, writing glowing commentaries on the intelligence, thrift, hard work, and amazing progress of the Japanese.

They proclaimed that just as America had become a major power because of the endless toil and dedication of its people, the Japanese were emulating the American model with great success. One young American writer, E. Warren Clark, explained that the Japanese were the "Anglo-Saxons" of Asia who would first adopt American culture and then benefit other Asians by spreading these ideals to them.³⁶

When Grant was President (1869–77), he received several Japanese delegations at the White House, and was positively influenced by these visits in his feelings toward Japan. His condemnation of other imperialist powers and his offer of straightforward advice and earnest counsel to the Japanese is an accurate reflection of the anti-imperialist stance of the US in Asian and even world affairs during this period. Grant's willingness to advise the Japanese and to treat them as equals clearly follows the anti-imperialist nature of American policy that he himself helped to forge during his long tenure as President.

There is, of course, probably some degree of disingenuousness in this late nineteenth-century criticism of European-style imperialism. Grant and other political leaders of the era saw the value of closer relations with Japan, China, and other powers, and realized that an anti-imperialist stance would enhance the position of the US in its relationships with these states. Whether this diplomatic stance was sincere or not, it had its desired effect in closer ties with the Meiji government.

Twenty years later, however, the United States fought a war against Spain that led to the American acquisition of Cuba (briefly), Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. There followed a bitter savage war (1899–1901) against Philippine nationalists who wanted to free themselves from American rule. By the time of Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), the United States under President Theodore Roosevelt had itself become an imperialist power that

was becoming increasingly worried about Japan's emergence as a Pacific power. The benign era of American tutelage over a developing but still comparatively weak Japan had come to an end. ■

NOTES

- Grant sought to differentiate the United States from other European powers. In a letter written to an old friend in the US, Grant asserted that America was a different, simpler country than Europe. "We are the only first class power that is not compelled to grind the laborers to the last degree to pay the interest on [military] debts and to support large armies and navies . . . I have seen nothing that would want to make me live outside the United States." See John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant*. Abridged, edited, and introduced by Michael Fellman (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), xvi.
- The Fellman edition of Young's book serves as the reference for this study. Later, Young was American Minister to China and Librarian of Congress.
- Born in Hagi in Yamaguchi, Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909) was the most powerful Japanese politician of the Meiji era, a close confidant of the Meiji Emperor, and principal author of the Meiji Constitution (1889). He served as Japan's first, fifth, seventh, and tenth Prime Minister.
- During the 1870s, tariffs were the single greatest source of income for the United States government.
- During the late 1870s, Japanese Foreign Minister Terashima Munemori presented the Western powers with documents indicating that actual tariff rates averaged only 3.4 percent and offered to open more ports in exchange for tariff autonomy. The United States announced its support for the proposal in 1878, but when London announced its opposition, the idea died.
- Grant was visibly angered by the imperious nature of the West in East Asia: "Sometimes my blood boils to see this unfairness and selfishness." He told the Meiji Emperor that "European powers have no interest in Asia, so far as I can judge from their diplomacy, that do not involve the humiliation and subjugation of the Asiatic peoples." Quoted in Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 315.
- Grant noted that: "When I was in India I saw what England had done with that empire. I think British rule is for the advantage of the Indian people. I do not see what could take the place of British power but anarchy. There are some things to regret, perhaps, but a great deal to admire in the manner in which India was governed. But since I left India I have seen things that made my blood boil, in the way the European powers attempt to degrade the Asiatic nations. I would not believe such a policy possible. It seems to have no other aim than the extinction of the Asiatic nation . . . I feel so about China and Japan. It seems incredible that rights, which at home we regard as essential to our independence and to our national existence, that no European nation, no matter how small, would surrender, are denied to China and Japan. Among these rights there is none as important as the right to control commerce. A nation's life may often depend on her commerce, and she is entitled to all of the profit that can come out of it." Quoted in Young, 414.
- Richard T. Chang, "General Grant's 1879 Visit to Japan" in *Monumenta Nipponica* (24.4, 1969), 374. Chang relates an incident when Grant was visiting Nikkō where Grant's own modesty further endeared him to the Japanese. When the Grant party approached the Nikkō mausoleum, his Japanese escorts invited him to cross the Shimbashi, a small bridge traversing a mountain stream that is customarily reserved for the Emperor. Grant waved his hand, noting that use of the bridge was reserved only for Japanese royalty.
- The Ryūkyūs had paid tribute to China since the seventh century and to Japan since 1607, but had maintained autonomy from both nations. In 1854 the Ryūkyū king concluded a treaty with American Commodore Perry and, a year later, with France. Japan, seeking to exercise suzerainty over the islands after the Meiji Restoration, designated the islands a domain and the king a daimyō. In 1874, the Japanese sent a punitive expedition to Taiwan to punish some Taiwanese aborigines who had massacred fifty-four shipwrecked Ryūkyūans. China tacitly acknowledged Japan's claims by paying an indemnity, but did little else as long as Japan did not formally incorporate the islands into its Empire.
- Some Chinese officials in the Tsungli Yamen, China's unofficial ministry of foreign affairs, feared that Japanese occupation of the islands would block China's naval and commercial shipping in the Pacific.
- "General Grant in Japan: Brilliant Fetes in his Honor at Tokio—Affairs of State Forced on His Attention," in *The New York Times*, August 24, 1879, 7. The *Times* reports that the General was at first reluctant to play any role, noting that as an outsider, he had no right to interfere. Also, Grant initially thought that Japan's supremacy over the islands was well established in 1879, but to his surprise the Japanese took great pains to document their side of the case to the General. In any case, Grant was very eager to play at least some role in trying to prevent war between Japan and China.
- Quoted in Donald Keene, 309. Prince Gong (1833–98) founded China's Zongli Yamen in 1861, which became China's defacto foreign ministry. The Prince acted as China's main liaison with Western powers from the 1860s through the 1890s. According to Young (369), Li Hung Chang (1823–1901), a Chinese statesman and general who as Viceroy of the capital province of Zhili (1870–95) exerted great influence over Chinese affairs, "begged that Grant would speak to the Japanese Emperor" about the Okinawa question with Japan, thereby, in Young's words, in securing justice, removing "a cloud from Asia, which threw an ominous shadow over the East."
- Quoted in Donald Keene, 309.
- Quoted in George H. Kerr, "Sovereignty of the Liuchiu Islands," in the *Far Eastern Survey* (14.8), July 1945, 100.
- Young, 417.
- In a letter written in early 1883 to Young when he was the American minister in China, Grant again mentions the need to keep Japan and China from fighting a mutually destructive war:

"If you can keep the two countries, China and Japan, from laying hands on each other, you will have rendered a service worthy of your mission. Such a conflict could only end in disaster for both, because no matter which power proved the strongest, it would end not only in the exhaustion of both, but in European powers intervening and compelling a peace humiliating and degrading to both." Quoted from "Documents: American Choices in the Far East in 1882," *American Historical Review*, 1924, 86.
- Quoted in Keene, 316.
- Kerr, 100.
- Paul Beillevaire, book review of Yamaguchi Eitetsu et al., *The Demise of the Ryukyū Kingdom*, in *The Ryukyuanist* (Winter 2003–2004), 2.
- Chang, 384.
- Young, 414.
- Quoted in Keene, 316.
- Peter Duus, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), 100.
- For an interesting assessment of Grant's attitudes about and liberal action towards American Indians and Blacks, see Josiah Bunting III, *Ulysses S. Grant* (New York: Times Books, 2004), esp. chapters 9–11.
- Young, 413.
- Young, 416.
- Young, 416.
- Keene, 316.
- Keene, 318–19.
- "Gen. Grant's Advice to Japan: His Suggestions Made the Basis of the Emperor's Policy Toward China," in *The New York Times*, May 1, 1880, 2.
- Quoted in Chang, 385.
- Quoted in Chang, 385.
- See George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1958), 390.
- Grant's public admiration for the Japanese was apparently quite sincere. For instance, he wrote his daughter Nellie, "The people [The Japanese] are docile and intelligent as well as industrious and frugal. Education is now becoming universal both among the males and females. This country is advancing beyond all precedent." Quoted in Chang, 391.
- Chang, 374.
- See E. Warren Clark, *Life and Adventure in Japan* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878).

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX is Professor of Asian Studies at Mary Baldwin College and Editor of the *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* and the *Virginia Review of Asian Studies*. He has written extensively on Japanese history, politics, and religion, including several books and articles on Japan's Sōka Gakkai Buddhist movement and on American teachers in Japan in the late nineteenth century.