

The United States and Japan's Civil War

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The Meiji Restoration has been the subject of voluminous research. Most work has concentrated on the internal causes and consequences of the event. Some scholars, notably Ishii Takashi, have explored the international context of the Meiji Restoration.¹⁾ On the one hand, the Meiji Restoration has been compared with other major revolutions such as the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. On the other hand, the role of foreigners, particularly the French and the British, has been examined. But one area that so far has received little attention is the way in which the Restoration was understood by outsiders; in other words, the foreign image of the Meiji Restoration. This paper sets out to look at the understandings Americans had of events taking place in Japan in the years between 1867 and 1869. Americans had only a few years earlier experienced their own civil war. Interestingly, it was through the lens of this experience that Americans saw the Restoration: they saw it as a conflict between north and south and as a conflict between adherence to tradition and an openness to change. The questions this paper will address are basic: what did Americans think the conflict was about? When did it begin? When did it end? Who won and why? My sources include American diplomatic correspondence and American newspapers, particularly letters sent regularly from the Yokohama-based correspondent to the San Francisco newspaper, the *Daily Alta California*.²⁾ I will also concentrate on the understanding constructed by the American Minister Resident in Japan, General Robert Van Valkenburgh.

The New Tycoon

Robert Bruce Van Valkenburgh (1821–1888) took up his appointment as American Resident Minister to Japan in 1866, arriving in midst of a second punitive expedition against the recalcitrant Choŝhū domain. The death of Shogun Iemochi provided a pretext to halt the hostilities. Late that year Hitotsubashi Keiki succeeded to the headship of the Tokugawa family and later formally became the 15th shogun. In a letter dated December 22, 1866 Van Valkenburgh reported to Secretary of State William Seward that the new Tycoon “appears to be a man of energy and ability, and not wedded to the policy of his predecessor. . . . I trust I shall soon be able to report to you that all civil commotion in Japan is at an end.”³⁾

Van Valkenburgh was granted an official audience with Keiki on May 3, 1867. He was impressed: “His Majesty the Tycoon is 31 years of age, and of extremely prepos-

sessing appearance. There is that about him which stamps him as a gentleman; such simple dignity and such an air of perfect breeding, only equaled by his intelligence, which is as superior as it is unassuming.” Van Valkenburgh clearly saw Keiki as a progressive force in Japan. On the next day, the American Minister delivered his letter of credence to the new shogun and spoke briefly: “The United States have recently come safely through the ordeal of war; rebellion existed among us; but the loyal hearts of the people, true to the instincts of patriotism, and guided by the aid of a Divine Providence on the field and on the sea, overcame that rebellion, and the Constitution and the laws were vindicated. That your Majesty may come safely through all present difficulties, overcoming or conciliating your enemies, and that your reign may continue through a succession of many years of peace, prosperity, and happiness to your Majesty and to the empire you rule, is the earnest wish of the President and the people of my country.” Keiki’s reply also touched on the civil war: “It gave us pleasure to learn that the war in your country has recently been brought an a successful termination; that the North and the South are at peace; and that the power of your government, by subduing the rebellion, has been fully vindicated. We are pleased that the President has appointed you his minister resident to this country. You appreciate our situation and act accordingly, and this we highly prize.”⁴⁾

Abdication — November 14, 1867

Van Valkenburgh continued to see progress toward peace in Japan. Plans proceeded for the opening of Edo to foreigners on January 1, 1868. In a letter dated October 22, 1867 to Seward, Van Valkenburgh gave details about the opening of Edo and praised the “spirit of progress” which to him was so apparent. Rumors of political unrest, however, abounded. The Special Correspondent to the *Daily Alta California*, a San Francisco paper, submitted a letter dated October 23, 1867, which looked forward to the opening of Yedo, but went on to complain of the “strong English sympathies” of the Yokohama papers such as the *Herald* and the *Japan Times* and their report of the abdication of the Tycoon. He declared this rumor to be false. According to the correspondent, “the Tycoon not only does not intend to abdicate, but is stronger now in his seat than when first inaugurated.” He complained of the rumors and hinted that the English were responsible. “Rumors to the contrary are set afloat by design, but they are without foundation. There is a paper lately started here called the *Gazette*, published by an American, but edited by an Englishman, so the American interests have no real mouthpiece.” As far as he and American interests were concerned, “The war is over, and the Empire is at peace within its borders, and attention is turning to trade and business.”⁵⁾

The *Daily Alta* was sympathetic to the Tokugawa cause. If rumors of the Tycoon’s abdication were true, it concluded, “we can conceive no greater misfortune to Japan at this present time. Stotsbashi [Hitotsubashi], the Tycoon, is a prince of much enlightenment, and far in advance of any of those Daimios whose names are best known to foreigners, was said to have abdicated and that the Mikado had conferred the Tycoon-

ate on the son of the Prince of Owari.”⁶⁾ Some rumors even proclaimed that the Tycoon had been assassinated. Again the *Daily Alta* rejected these reports and stated that American interests were best served by supporting the Edo government: “The Tycoon desires to favor the white people, but the majority of the nobility would sooner have the land rid of their pestilent presence. The death of the present Tycoon would be attended with a terrible war and the result of it can hardly be anticipated.”⁷⁾

Van Valkenbergh, in his letters to Seward, gave no indication of these rumors about the Tycoon’s abdication or his assassination. Indeed, on November 7 he noted that the Tycoon had been given additional titles and power, a good sign that events were moving in the direction of homogeneity and consolidation.⁸⁾ He concluded that “no radical change in the constitution of this government is contemplated.”

This prophecy quickly proved wrong. On the afternoon of November 16, a Tokugawa official informed Van Valkenburgh that the Tycoon was relieved of political responsibilities with respect to the internal affairs of Japan. In this way news of the return of governing authority to the Emperor reached American ears. Van Valkenburgh was shocked and immediately began gathering intelligence. He noted a great movement of soldiers and munitions of war toward Kyoto. On December 3 he reported that the opening of Edo was to be delayed until April 1. Suddenly Japan’s prospects were clouded: “we are all uncertain whether war or peace is to be the order.”⁹⁾

The *Daily Alta California* came to a similar conclusion. A letter from Edo dated December 2, 1867 described the partial abdication of the Tycoon on November 14. “The Mikado has been considered as the spiritual head of the Japanese Empire, but by this civil revolution, which it is, he has been clothed with new and formidable powers. The Tycoon is still charged, however, with all matters related to foreign powers and treaties . . . The civil affairs of Japan are completely revolutionized by this movement, but we all hope that war will not ensure. So far the revolution has been a peaceful one, and we trust that it will not eventuate in bloodshed.”¹⁰⁾

Palace Coup — January 3, 1868

Van Valkenburgh found it very difficult to comprehend what took place on January 3, 1868. To Seward he attempted to lay out the details of the palace coup. Opponents of the Tycoon arrived in Kyoto with more than 20,000 troops and took forcible possession of the Mikado and the government. They issued a decree abolishing the office of shogun, and proclaimed a new government. On the sixth, the Tycoon left Kyoto and took up resident in Osaka. Van Valkenburgh was certain that civil war was imminent: “the Tycoon and his adherents upon the one side, arrayed against Satsuma and his allies upon the other.” His sympathies continued to be with the former bakufu. “The Tycoon, as head of the Tokugawa family, is probably the most powerful and wealthy person in Japan. In his own right he owns large provinces and receives vast revenues. All of the open ports in Japan, including Yedo, Osaka, and Neegato [Niigata], are in his provinces. He has been very liberal in his negotiations with the foreign representatives, is desirous of faithfully observing the treaties, and of strengthening

the friendly relations with other powers, especially the United States, and in my opinion is the most progressive and liberal in his ideas of any Japanese official.”¹¹⁾ Nonetheless, if war were to ensue, Van Valkenburgh noted that he would preserve a strict neutrality.

The letter from the special correspondent to the *Alta*, dated Osaka, January 18, 1868, gave particulars of the coup. The editorial, “Revolution in the Far East,” shows how the restoration of imperial rule was understood in San Francisco: “It seems that Prince Satsuma, an ambitious and somewhat unscrupulous Daimio, associating with him several other of the hereditary feudal lords of the Empire, seized upon the Mikado, who is a young and inexperienced man, and by force of arms compelled him to accept a quasi resignation of the Tycoon, and then, still holding the Mikado prisoner, compelled him to entrust the Government of the Empire to the hands of a Council, which extraordinary body was composed of Satsuma and his associates, or fellow conspirators. . . . Such an act as that performed by the Mikado, under the compulsion of terrorism, is as morally binding as a written obligation signed by a man with a loaded pistol at his ear.”¹²⁾

The Tycoon remained in their eyes a friend of progress; the Satsuma conspirators, on the other hand, “have not been altogether friendly to foreign influences, and have regarded the concessions made to foreign trade with great distaste and ill-concealed disgust. They have seized upon the internal commotions of the country as a pretext for precipitating a political revolution.”¹³⁾

The *New York Times* agreed that the revolution had taken place in consequence of the opening of new ports to foreigners.¹⁴⁾ An editorial noted that “the process of civilizing Japan threatens to prove a very difficult one in consequences of a strong objection on the part of a majority of the Japanese Nobles to becoming civilized.” Satsuma was described as the leader of an “anti-treaty” party and the Tycoon as the leader of the “treaty party.” The *New York Times* urged American intervention to help suppress the rebellion. “A vigorous support of Stots-Bashi by our fleet will be greatly to the interests of civilization and commerce generally.”¹⁵⁾

Civil War Begins — January 26, 1868

The civil war began with the burning of the Satsuma Residence in Edo on January 19, 1868. As Van Valkenburgh was in Osaka at the time, the details of the fighting were sent to Washington by Mr. A. L. C. Portman at the American legation in Yokohama. He noted that the Edo government had been hard pressed to suppress the activities of bands of armed ruffians who were engaged in robbery and murder. They even threatened to march on Yokohama to kill foreigners. “There is reason to suspect that this extensive Ronin movement was not an isolated one, but that it formed part of a vast scheme of surpassing boldness for the purpose of overturning the Tycoon’s government and substituting the supremacy of the Prince of Satsuma.” Portman interpreted the ronin activities as part of a plot to “demonstrate to the treaty powers the oft-alleged unfitness of the Tycoon and his ministers to hold the reign of government.”

Acting on the pretext that the Satsuma men were about to kidnap the widow of the former Shogun, a woman closely related to the imperial family, the Edo forces surrounded the Satsuma residence and burnt it to the ground.¹⁶⁾

The attack on the Satsuma residence in Edo was the opening shot in Japan's civil war. On February 3, Van Valkenburgh sent a letter to Seward describing the events which led up to the outbreak of hostilities in the Kansai district. He described a private and social interview with the Tycoon on January 23. The conversation was "almost entirely led by the Tycoon, upon the form of government of the United States and England, and the purchase of the *Stonewall*, which he seemed to be anxious to receive."¹⁷⁾ Three days later, on January 26, the war between the Tycoon and Satsuma representing the Mikado's government commenced. After four days of heavy fighting, Van Valkenburgh was told that the Tycoon's troops were in full retreat. "From the top of my house, in the distance I had seen the burning fires of the yashikis and villages, in the march of the retreating army, and had made ready to leave my legation at a moment's warning." Van Valkenburgh was asked to help evacuate high Tokugawa officials, including the Tycoon himself. "About two o'clock in the morning of the 31st January, accompanied by his prime minister and other high officials, [the Tycoon] went on board the *Iroquois* by Japanese boats, remained there for about two hours, and then was transferred to his own frigate, which arrived at daylight, and upon which he sailed for Yedo."¹⁸⁾

News of the outbreak of hostilities reached San Francisco on April 1, in a letter sent from Yokohama on March 8. "The Empire is in arms . . . The revolution . . . has blossomed into war, and the crimson flowers are blooming in Japan. The Tycoon is arrayed on one side against Satsuma, Choiskiu [Cho'shu], Tosa and the Confederated Southern Daimios on the other. These latter, fighting under the banner of the Mikado, the ancient spiritual head of the Empire, and now its monarch *de facto*."¹⁹⁾ The language of the American civil war proved useful in describing what was taking place in Japan: the Tycoon and his Northern allies were at war with Satsuma and the Confederate South.

Neutrality — February 18, 1868

At the outset of the Battle of Osaka, on January 28, Tokugawa officials approached Van Valkenburgh and asked for assurances that Americans would "confine themselves strictly to the terms of the treaty prohibiting merchants vessels from entering unopened ports, and the sale of arms and ships of war to other than the Japanese government." Urging strict adherence to the law of nations during a time of civil war, the senior counsellors urged the Americans to remain a stranger to the interior affairs of the country. Van Valkenburgh immediately replied to this request to preserve neutrality, and on January 29 issued an order for American neutrality: "Hostilities having commenced between the Tycoon and Matsudaira Sui no Daibu [Satsuma] you will be careful to preserve a strict neutrality. . . . Munitions of war can only be sold to the Japanese government, or to foreigners, and merchant vessels must not visit unopened

ports.”²⁰⁾

Several days later, however, the foreign representatives were forced to debate who exactly represented the Japanese government. The Tycoon had lost and had retreated to Yedo. Portman, in Yokohama, issued notification of neutrality within the 10 *ri* treaty limits for the port of Kanagawa on February 11. He wrote to Seward that he would continue to deal with the Tycoon’s government in Edo as the *de facto* government.²¹⁾ In Kobe, on February 8, Highashi Kuza Saki Noshosho [Higashikuze Michitomi], envoy of the Mikado, met with the foreign representatives to announce that henceforward the Emperor would exercise supreme authority, both in regard to the internal and external affairs of the country. He assured the foreign representatives that the treaties would be respected and that foreigners were entitled to protection from the Japanese government, now defined as that of the Emperor. A series of meetings ensued in which the details of the relationship between the foreign powers and the new government were worked out. On February 11 the issue of neutrality was discussed. The Japanese officials wanted the foreign representatives to forbid foreign merchant vessels to carry troops of the Tycoon to the seat of war. The diplomats replied that the Mikado should issue a formal declaration of war against the Tycoon with requests that no foreign merchant vessels would be allowed to carry troops and other war material of the Tycoon, declaring at the same time that the government of the Mikado would abstain from similar measures. In such a case, it would be understood that the foreign representatives would preserve a strict neutrality between the contending parties, having *de facto* relations with both. The declaration of war was duly delivered on February 14. Four days later, on February 18, the United States and other foreign representatives issued formal declarations of neutrality.²²⁾

Van Valkenburgh pondered over the question of neutrality. Earlier in 1867 the United States government had sold to the government of the Tycoon a powerful warship, the ironclad *Stonewall*. The ship, one of the most sophisticated weapons of war, was built in France for the Confederate Forces during the American civil war. Van Valkenburgh knew that to deliver the *Stonewall* to the Tokugawa forces would prolong the war and disrupt commerce. On February 24 he told Seward that “The Tycoon, with the *Stonewall* in his possession, would at once command the seas; could blockade successfully Osaka, Hiogo, and Nagasaki, all now in possession of the Mikado, cutting off all communication, and thus prevent the carrying on of any business, and endanger the lives and property of our countrymen.”²³⁾ He wrote to Portman in Yokohama instructing him that, in view of the declaration of neutrality, the *Stonewall* was not to be delivered to the Tycoon. Later, on February 28, a formal memorandum was drawn up between the Foreign representatives which recognized both the Mikado and the Tycoon as belligerents and insisting upon perfect neutrality. To this end it was agreed the delivery to either of the contending parties of any vessel of war purchased from one of the foreign powers would constitute a breach of neutrality.²⁴⁾ The *Stonewall* arrived in Yokohama on April 23 and, as agreed, was not turned over to either of the belligerents. It remained, however, an important factor in the outcome of Ja-

pan's civil war. As the *Daily Alta California* put it:

“There is a craft . . . lying in Japanese waters which will secure the victory to the party to which she may be surrendered. She is the war steamer called the *Stonewall*, originally constructed for the rebels. She fell into our hands and other assets of the defunct confederacy at the close of the rebellion. Sometime ago she was sold by our Government to the Government of Japan, then represented by the Tycoon. When she arrived, there was, in consequences of the late difficulties, a doubt as to whether she was to be delivered to the Tycoon or the Mikado. In this strait our Minister, Mr. Van Valkenburg, forbid the transfer, and substituted the Stars and Stripes for the Japanese Flag. If that vessel should be delivered to the Tycoon, Japan would soon be at his feet. All the great cities of the Islands are on the seaboard; and this one vessel, if properly manned, would be sufficient to reduce the whole of them.”²⁵⁾

The Takeover of Edo — May 2, 1868

Despite the declaration of neutrality, American sympathies continued to be with the Tokugawa. On February 24, when Portman in Yokohama learned of the intention of the Tycoon to abdicate and nominate a successor, he immediately wrote to express American support for the foreign policy pursued by the Edo government, and urged him to reconsider his resignation. Later, on March 2, 1868 Portman wrote to Seward giving his views on the situation in Japan and complaining of the actions of Satsuma: “the Mikado is now to all intents and purposes the vassal if not the prisoner of that bold and unscrupulous Daimio.”²⁶⁾ Van Valkenburgh visited Osaka of March 5 where he learned that large bodies of troops loyal to the Mikado were marching toward Edo.²⁷⁾ On March 12 he left Hiogo for Yokohama. After staying there a few days, on the 18th he entered Edo and began a round of discussions with the governors of foreign affairs and the head of the junior counsellors. He was the only foreign representative in Edo; indeed Van Valkenburgh's presence in Edo contrasts sharply with the other foreign representatives who were invited to Kyoto on March 23 for an audience with the Mikado.

In Edo, Van Valkenburgh learned of the Tycoon's plans to submit to the orders of the Mikado. To this end he had entered confinement at a temple in Ueno, “thus proving to his people the sincerity of his submission.” The Mikado's troops were expected to arrive in ten days or two weeks: “This is a strange country and a singular people. I am unable to say what will occur; I think there will be slight or no opposition to their entering Yedo; yet after they have once arrived I fear much blood will be shed in street fights, and that, too, perhaps by organized bodies of men . . . I shall not remain here.”²⁸⁾

Van Valkenburgh returned to Yokohama. Edo was to be opened to foreigners on April 1, but the possibility of hostilities in the area forced another postponement. Beginning around April 30, members of the advance guard of the Mikado's army began to appear on the streets of Yokohama, causing much alarm. According to the report of the *Daily Alta California*, “The Mikado's soldiers, in marching along the

Tokaido (or national military highway) towards Yedo, straggled in large numbers into Yokohama, apparently under no control or order. They entered native and foreign houses and, when intoxicated, acted in a rude manner, and in one instance pulled a gold ear-ring out of the ear of an English lady. The people were alarmed and excited."²⁹⁾

As the Mikado's troops slowly marched toward Edo, the people of the city, especially women and children, began moving away. On April 14, Van Valkenburgh wrote to Seward that "should this continue at the present rate, there will be scarcely any one left in Yedo within a few days but men, and it is not unreasonable to expect that there will then be an outbreak."³⁰⁾ He learned of the extravagant demands that had been placed on the Tycoon "to surrender his castle, . . . to surrender his army, his navy, and his treasury, his own person to be placed in charge of the Prince of Bizen, and all his own people to vacate their houses and to withdraw to a certain named outskirts of Yedo."³¹⁾

On April 23, Van Valkenburgh heard that the Mikado's envoy, Hashimoto no Shosho, passed through Kanagawa on his way to Edo to negotiate the surrender of Edo Castle; Van Valkenburgh hoped that this would lead to a peaceful termination of the present difficulties.³²⁾ By the end of the month the supremacy of the Mikado's government seemed assured. Yokohama had passed out of Tokugawa control as had Edo. Van Valkenburg wrote Seward on April 27 that "The late Tycoon is in retirement at a temple in Yedo. The Mikado's envoys has reached that city, and we trust to hear before long of the amicable settlement of all difficulties." Still he warned that there were armed bodies of ronins roaming the countryside and active in Edo, responsible to no one, and that a state of guerrilla warfare would probably ensue for some time.³³⁾

While the British Minister Parkes left for Osaka to present a letter of credence to the Mikado, Van Valkenburgh and other foreign representatives were less eager to conclude that order had been restored under the undivided sway of the Mikado. They remained in Yokohama. Van Valkenburgh described the takeover of Edo in a letter dated May 25. The castle was surrendered and on May 2 and the former Tycoon left Edo for Mito. There he was reported to reside with a force between five and six thousand well armed men. Keiki left orders to his army, navy, and treasury to surrender, but the orders were all disobeyed: "the army scattered, taking their arms with them; the ships of war got up steam and left the Yedo anchorage and the treasury is reported to have been found quite empty."³⁴⁾ Van Valkenburgh concluded that the Mikado's victory was hollow. Indeed reports reached his ears on May 12 of the defeat of the Mikado's troops in a battle with the disbanded army some 80 miles north of Edo. "Almost daily . . . rumors of fights and skirmishes have been received here, nearly all of which are reported to have been adverse to the troops of the new government."³⁵⁾ Van Valkenburgh noted that the former Tycoon remained in possession of the eight provinces of the Kanto as well as the three provinces of Sumga [Suruga], Totomi, and Simodzke [Shimotsuke]. Thus, despite the surrender of Edo, "unless the Tokugawa

clan be shorn of most of its property, the chief of this clan will remain by far the most powerful personage in this empire.”³⁶⁾

Reactionism vs. Liberalism

Thus while the British were trumpeting the triumph of the Mikado, Van Valkenburg came to a more pessimistic conclusion: “The present crisis or revolution has clearly revealed the utter rottenness of the Japanese system of government. Treachery cropped up everywhere, and unless the Daimios who are with the Mikado are better than those who were formerly with the Tycoon, which is very doubtful, the Mikado, should the tide turn against his flag, may be betrayed in his turn.”³⁷⁾ Indeed, in comparing the prospect of the two belligerents, the former Tycoon still maintained the advantage. The Tycoon “is reputed extremely intelligent, in advance of his countrymen, and the best-informed person on the affairs of this country. He has no debt, and his treasury was sound. . . . On the other hand, the southern Daimios who have the control of the Mikado are not apparently in so favorable a situation. Choshin [Chošhu] and Tosa have only slightly exceeded their revenue. The case of the Prince of Satsuma, however, appears to be much more serious. This prince is known to be heavily in debt, principally to English merchants, for supplies of ships, arms, and munitions of war, etc.”³⁸⁾

The American press came to similar conclusions. A June 4 letter from the special correspondent to the *Alta* praised the Tycoon as a peacemaker: “he knew it would be useless to prolong a struggle which would bring untold misery upon his country, like the large and liberal-minded man that he is, his greatest efforts were put forth to restrain the ferocious passions of his clansmen and friends, and so far as in him lay, he put an end to the war.” After describing the Tycoon’s sad departure from Edo, the report suggested that the new government would soon be forced to recall him. “It is the prevailing opinion that the Mikado will be so propitiated by the implicit obedience yielded by the late Stotbashi that he will soon be recalled from his retirement and be admitted to the councils of the State.”³⁹⁾ An article on July 28 gave news of the victories of pro-Tokugawa guerrillas in the north, and concluded that the eventual outcome would be “a division of the country into two independent empires, governed by the Mikado and the Tycoon.”⁴⁰⁾

The *Daily Alta* editorial which appeared the next day gave reasons why Americans should support the Tycoon. First of all, the Mikado’s government had revived decrees against Christians. It was anti-foreign, whereas the Tycoon was a friend of progress. The Mikado, moreover, was a “ghostly personage,” who may or may not even exist. “No two persons agree in their description of his face. Some locate his eyebrows high upon his forehead, others low down and immediately over the eyes. The impulsive Sir Harry and his companions may have been treated to nothing more than a Japanese stage trick.”⁴¹⁾

If the government of the Mikado was a sham, Satsuma was described as an evil force pulling the strings from behind the stage. “He is the leader of the party which is

determined, at all hazards, to secure a ‘white man’s government’ for Japan. The platform upon which he has taken his stand is ‘the Constitution as it and the Japanese islands as they were.’ Satsuma is opposed to all change. He is the champion of immobility—the Horatio Seymour of that strange group of islands which have so long been a puzzle to the rest of the world.”⁴²⁾

It was too early, the paper cautioned, to cede victory to the reactionary forces. “The Tycoon, who was represented by the last mail completely subjugated, and engaged in a pilgrimage with bare feet, has put on his shoes and is now reported at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men, menacing the very city out of which he had walked but a short time before in such a submissive and penitential manner. He is the representative of the party of progress. It was from him that the foreigners have obtained all the concessions which they now enjoy. If it were safe to venture an opinion in relation to politics in Japan in the imperfect light as yet furnished, it might be said that the Tycoon has formed the project of demolishing the old superstitions of the past and bringing the islands into full and complete intercourse with all the nations of the earth. He has given evidence of the liberality of his views by sending his brother to Europe to be educated. This was at least an admission that the foreigners have something worth studying.”⁴³⁾

The Mikado of the North — August, 1868

Van Valkenburgh was aware that the Mikado’s government was suffering from financial and military problems after it succeeded in occupying Edo. Peasant unrest and bands of guerrilla soldiers denied the imperial army control of the countryside surrounding Edo and within the city, groups of young pro-Tokugawa loyalists such as the Shoōgitai meant that much of the city remained enemy territory. Moreover, many domains which had initially sided with the Mikado became freshly undecided. Taking advantage of the apparent weakness of the occupying forces, high Tokugawa officials began to petition Kyoto for the return of Tycoon. Van Valkenburgh noted that there were reports daily of skirmishes and engagement, and in nearly all of those have the forces of the new government been defeated.⁴⁴⁾ He paid particular attention to the role played by the Miya Sama [Rinnoji no miya], the younger brother of the late Emperor Koōmei (and uncle to the Mikado), and chief priest at Kaneiji, the temple stronghold of the Shoōgitai loyalists atop Ueno Hill. With the departure of the Tycoon for Mito, the people of Edo were increasingly looking to him for leadership if not salvation. “This high dignitary is strongly in favor of the Tokugawa interest, and his influence in Yedo is very great.” The imperial forces in Edo wanted to remove him from Edo, but met with stiff popular resistance. Outside of Edo, Van Valkenburgh described the formation of a coalition of northern Daimyo, headed by Sendai and Aizu against the Mikado’s government which was steadily gaining strength and solidity.⁴⁵⁾

Van Valkenburgh’s next dispatch, dated June 14, again emphasized the difficulties encountered by the new government. In Owari, for example, “there are now two parties — one in favor of the old and the other in favor of the new government . . . The

same appears to be more or less the case in other provinces.” He also noted that severe losses in fights, from murders, and poisoning among the southern troops has required reinforcements, and that these men were being conveyed in English steamers. He complained to the British about this violation of neutrality. “This neutrality I consider it my duty strictly to maintain. I respectfully decline to listen to overtures for the transfer of the *Stonewall*, repeatedly made within the last few days by the representatives of the Mikado’s government . . . This great anxiety to obtain possession of the *Stonewall* and to re-enforce the troops who are operating in this part of Japan, conclusively shows that there is great need for maintaining neutrality.”⁴⁶⁾ Van Valkenburgh reported that he had received an official letter from the Mikado on June 13 stating that the war was over and asking for the withdrawal of neutrality; he rejected this request, saying that “I prefer to believe the evidence of my own eyes.”⁴⁷⁾

Van Valkenburgh’s letter of June 26 spoke warmly of the northern confederacy of daimyo: “thirteen daimyo of the north in perfect union, even to the extent of declaring war against the Mikado.” He also related plans by the northern daimyo to seek an understanding with the Miya Sama to serve as their spiritual if not temporal leader, to proclaim him, in fact, as the true Mikado. Van Valkenburgh did not think this out of the question. “In such a case there might be two Mikados; and as the new one would probably obtain the suffrages of the majority of Daimios and of those who represent the most powerful interests, such scheme would probably possess all the elements of success.”⁴⁸⁾

Historians often refer to the defeat of the Shōgitai at the Battle of Ueno Hill on July 10, 1868 as evidence of the supremacy of the new imperial government.⁴⁹⁾ Edo was finally and fully in imperial hands. Van Valkenburgh, however, downplayed its significance. In a letter to Seward on July 13 he conceded “that the southern troops now hold complete sway at Edo,” but he laid more emphasis on the failure to obtain control of the Miya Sama, the chief symbol of forces opposed to the new government. “The principle object of the attack was not attained, and . . . the Miya Sama had left his temple and proceeded to the north . . . strongly escorted by volunteers.”⁵⁰⁾

Later, on July 25, Van Valkenburgh criticized the southern conquerors of Edo for “indulging freely in dissipation” and held out hope for a reversal in the fortunes of the Tokugawa side: “With a treasury that shows as yet no signs of weakness, the Tokugawa chiefs can hold out much longer than their southern opponents, who not only exceeded their revenues, but are heavily in debt to English and French subjects besides.”⁵¹⁾ He also passed on reports that Kugo Dainagon, the Kyoto noble who was to have taken charge of the northern provinces, has turned against the new government and instead “authorized the northern coalition to raise the Mikado’s flag their cause.”⁵²⁾

The correspondent to the *Alta*, in a letter from Yokohama dated July 26, explained the new development as follows: “Now that both parties have proclaimed for the Mikado and are struggling for the possession of his person, the chances are equalized, seemingly to the disgust of the Southerners. Choisu [Chošū] is reported to have

withdrawn from the coalition and returned to his dominions; and it is said that the “tojin”[foreigner]-beating Satsuma is weakening.”⁵³⁾

For readers of the *Daily Alta California*, the situation in Japan was becoming increasingly difficult to understand. An editorial on August 17, in response to the July 26 letter which was printed on that day, attempted a simple outline of the course of events: “A party of powerful princes — daimios — in the South, had formed a confederacy to take possession of the person and influence of the Mikado, or spiritual Emperor. These men, with Satsuma and Choisu, two powerful Daimios, at the head, are opposed to foreign influence, and are Japanese ‘conservatives.’ They do not believe in the Mikado’s being anything more than a mortal man, though the common people believe him to be sent to earth by the gods, and that at his so-called death he returns to them. This superstition of the mass of the people is the reason why the Mikado is so desirable a prize to the ambitious Princes — Satsuma & Co.

Against this combination are the Northern Daimios, who espouse the cause of the ex-Tycoon, and are in favor of a restoration of the office which the Mikado’s party has pretended to abolish. The Northern Party has been continually growing in power and strength. . . . The sympathies of foreigners, desirous of opening trade with Japan, and of seeing an enlightened and liberal generation in that country, are all with the Tycoon or Northern party, whatever it may be called. The inhuman persecution of Christians, . . . the continual restrictions on trade, and snubbing of the foreigners in Japan, are all the work of the Mikado, or the people who use him as a political puppet.”⁵⁴⁾

Van Valkenburgh’s letter of August 20 informed Washington about the ascension of Miya Sama as Mikado of the North. “This high dignitary is now said to have formally entered upon the duties of Mikado, taking the Haguro Mountain temples for the residence of himself and court.”⁵⁵⁾ Japan, he declared, now has two Mikados, a southern court and a northern court. The new Mikado would serve as the spiritual chief of the northern domains; he would unite their hearts and assure the people of the north that they were not forsaken by their gods. Van Valkenburgh reasoned that the advent of a new Mikado “was a master stroke on the part of the Tokugawa chief, as his presence consolidated the great northern coalition, and by allaying superstitious fears among the people more than doubled its power.”⁵⁶⁾ According to the *Alta* on August 29, the soldiers of the North had taken the name of “Shin-Kangun” and wear a similar crest to that of the Southern troops, only in green and gold. The first act of the new Mikado was to change the name of the year from Keio to Genju [to lengthen life]. His second act was to appoint Kujo Dainagon to Daijo Daijin of the new northern government. The newspaper described a general distrust by for the Southern government by the people in the Kanto provinces. They were refusing to pay their taxes. Moreover, “large numbers of volunteers join the Northern army daily, and even women are said to take an active part in the strife.” And if the North proved victorious, the Mikado of the North was certain to be the ruler of a united Japan, the other Mikado being forced into retirement.⁵⁷⁾

The Triangular War — October 4, 1868

After the *Stonewall* arrived on April 24, representatives of the Mikado and of the former Tycoon repeatedly requested that the vessel be turned over to them. On July 2, for example, an envoy from Higashi Kuze Jijin arrived asking for the *Stonewall*, but was refused. In response to a rumor that the Americans had agreed to turn over the *Stonewall*, Enomoto Takeaki, the commander-in-chief of the Tycoon's navy rushed to Yokohama to discuss the fate of the ship. Enomoto was unable to meet directly with Van Valkenburgh, but the record of his conversation with Portman left a strong impression on the American minister. According to Enomoto, "The government of the Mikado, so called, as at present constituted, is an impossibility. Its principal supporters were already abandoning the scheme. . . . The Daimios of the north, on the other hand, were thoroughly united, ready to raise their flags and to march for the re-establishment of the former government and the maintenance of their rights."⁵⁸⁾ Enomoto proceeded to give a detailed account of Tokugawa efforts to forestall hostilities and seek a negotiated settlement. If moderation proved impossible, however, the Tokugawa army and navy will receive orders to march. In any case, he emphasized that the *Stonewall* should not be delivered to what he called the "so-called" Mikado's government. "The *Stonewall* was bought with my master's money, and duly transferred to his authorized agents in American waters. If now my master, was then Tycoon, and the recognized sovereign of Japan, should simply become a Daimio, or chief of the Tokugawa clan, I claim, that even in such case this can be given to him, and to no one else."⁵⁹⁾

Van Valkenburgh was impressed with Enomoto: "Educated in Europe, where he spent five years, he consistently advocated progress, and a liberal foreign intercourse." He wrote Seward that he was inclined to believe Enomoto's assessment of the current political situation and that he was most interested in his description of Tokugawa policy: "passive resistance, with force in the background."⁶⁰⁾

On July 27 a group of men from Choŝhu officers arrived in Yokohama in yet another attempt to gain possession of the *Stonewall*. Again they were refused. According to Van Valkenburgh, Choŝhu was thoroughly anti-foreign and consequently: "Of all dignitaries in this country, this Prince Choshin, in my opinion, is the last to whom such a ship could with safety be delivered."⁶¹⁾

On September 18, Higashikuze Chinjio visited Van Valkenburgh saying that the Mikado's government, being at war, had great need of the *Stonewall*. His argument was that since the property of the Tycoon had all been turned over to the new government, it was therefore entitled to receive the *Stonewall* or the money paid for her by the Tycoon, but that they would prefer the ship to the money. Van Valkenburgh said he needed time to get instructions from Washington, but reminded Higashikuze that in the early part of the year "both Mikado and Tycoon requested me that the United States should maintain strict neutrality in the struggle that was then impending . . . and in concert with my colleagues . . . I issued a notification of neutrality. . . . Under those circumstances and while war was existing it was impossible for me to deliver

the *Stonewall*.” The Mikado’s envoy then repeatedly asked Van Valkenburgh to withdraw the neutrality notification; in reply, he “asked them how I could consistently do so, while war was ranging [sic-raging] in Japan, as they freely had admitted.”⁶²⁾

Word that the Mikado would take up residence in Yedo and that the name of the capital had been changed to East Kioto arrived on September 17. Van Valkenburgh gave the announcement scant attention. The correspondent to the *Daily Alta*, writing on September 27, attempted to put the new city name into context: “The (Southern) Mikado has issued a decree changing the name of Yedo to East Kioto and he has officially announced his intention of establishing himself there for the present. Japanese officials have so much crooked diplomacy that we hesitate at believing that this last flourish is anything more than a bit of military strategy to force the people of this part of Japan into a more cordial support of the Mikado.”⁶³⁾ On September 23, Tokugawa Kamenosuke, the heir to the Tokugawa family following the abdication of the former Tycoon, was awarded the domain in Suruga with an annual revenue of 700,000. Van Valkenburgh recorded the event, but with no comment. The California press, however, wrote that the young Kamenosuke had been bought out. “This cautious youth, in consideration of 700,000 kokus (how much or whatever they may be), to be paid or delivered to him every year, has surrendered to the Mikado the right to make treaties with France and America and run the Japanese machine exclusively. . . . This little transaction finished, there does not now appear to be any serious obstacle in the way of the Mikado.”⁶⁴⁾

On October 4, Enomoto Takeaki, responding to the changed situation, made good his threat to resort to force if attempts at achieving a just settlement failed. He led a squadron of eight warships out of Edo Bay and headed north, carrying with it a land force of between five thousand and six thousand men. Van Valkenburgh wrote to Seward that the army and naval officers of the late government had decided to abandon the course of neutrality and take an active part in the struggle with all the means at their command. Reports of southern victories in the war against the northern league of daimyo may also have prompted Enomoto to act. In any case, the civil war in Japan had taken a new turn. As Van Valkenburgh noted, “The contest in some respects has now become a sort of triangular one.”⁶⁵⁾ He referred to the struggle between the Mikado, the Northern Government, and now the naval and military chiefs of the late government. He quoted Enomoto’s statement of purpose which found both the southerners and northerners at fault. “The object of one party is to utterly destroy their opponents and take possession of their property; nor has the other party any other object.”⁶⁶⁾

On October 23, Van Valkenburgh received news “announcing that the (Kioto) Mikado had been crowned in that city.” He was also told that the Kioto Mikado would arrive in Edo shortly. This news, however, did little to improve Van Valkenburgh’s impression of the young monarch. In a letter to Seward dated November 7, after remarking on the conflicting reports of victories and defeats about the wars in the north, and noting that Enomoto’s fleet had been damaged in a typhoon and was repairing in

Sendai Bay, Van Valkenburgh concluded that overall matters were in a most deplorable condition: “The Mikado, the nominal head of what is miscalled the government of Japan, and utterly irresponsible, in virtue of his alleged descent from the gods, is a mere instrument under the control of a few Daimios and others, who are zealously endeavoring to establish a monarchy, but which thus far has proved to be a simple despotism of the worst description.” As to the outcome of the war, he felt that the northerners held the advantage: “I do not believe that the south, notwithstanding its tremendous efforts, can subjugate the north; and even if they did, that they can succeed in holding it in submission for any length of time.”⁶⁷⁾

In California, the news of the “Apparent Triumph of the Mikado” was reported tongue in cheek. An editorial, dated November 24, criticized the young Mikado who “has himself anointed and crowned. He now claims to be the autocrat of all Japan. No longer will he keep his eyes fixed upon heavenly objects. He will exercise the Temporal as well as the Spiritual functions of the Empire. This, we presume, means for us outside pertinacious Barbarians that we shall have to negotiate with him over again for whatever privileges are now enjoyed in Japan.”⁶⁸⁾ The *New York Times* had even harsher words to describe the new status of the Mikado: “The Mikado, who has been slowly and painfully emerging from the seclusion of centuries, like a butterfly from its chrysalis, has at length consummated the act, thanks to my Lord Satsuma, and has celebrated it by a royal coronation. In the imperial City of Kioto, at 8 o’clock A.M., on Oct. 12, year of grace 1868, the splendid farce was enacted, and the poor boy, born a priest and educated a woman, was dragged out to play the King for the pleasure of the Southern Daimios.”⁶⁹⁾

Van Valkenburgh was reluctant to admit the defeat of the Northern army, rejecting a series of reports of Aizu’s capitulation as in late November as hearsay or exaggeration. He repeated to Seward that the war was not over and that the winter cold would come to the rescue of the hardier Northern people. Soon after the triumphal entry of the young Mikado into the new Eastern Capital, Van Valkenburgh finally admitted that the Southern Army had won this phase of the war. To some, Japan’s civil war seemed over. The *New York Times* looked forward to the beginning of a new era for Japan.⁷⁰⁾ When the *Daily Alta* printed the story confirming the surrender of Aizu, however, they had news of events in Hokkaido which made it declare “that the statement that the civil war in Japan was over was rather premature.”⁷¹⁾

The Hokkaido Government — January 27, 1869

The civil war in Japan entered yet another phase when Enomoto and his fleet succeeded in occupying the port of Hakodate on December 8 and proceeded to secure possession of the entire island of Hokkaido. On December 11, the American representative at Hakodate, E. E. Rice, wrote to Van Valkenburgh in Yokohama describing the takeover. He included a copy of the manifesto of the “exiled retainers” of the Tokugawa clan which stated their intention to set up a separate government on Hokkaido. “There is no doubt that H.M. the Mikado is possessed of very good intentions

to rule all Japan properly, but we know that he is often misled by several members of his Court. . . . We are quite as capable to govern and protect Japanese traders and farmers as . . . The civil war compelled us to leave the Provinces of the Kwanto so long inhabited by our ancestors; Yeso [Ezo, the old name for Hokkaido] will become a new province of Tokugawa and no doubt the Mikado will comprehend that we will work here for the general good of Japan as well as for our own benefit.”⁷²⁾ Van Valkenburgh replied on December 12 instructing Rice to “show strict neutrality transacting all necessary business with the Government *de facto*.”⁷³⁾ Rice met frequently with Enomoto and his officers and kept Van Valkenburgh informed of their activities, stressing that they were not pirates, as the English maintained, but a well organized government with plenty of weapons and troops.⁷⁴⁾

Rice openly sympathized with Enomoto. On December 30, the last day of 1868, Rice wrote a long letter to Seward described the recent dramatic events: “This day closes the most eventful year of my long residence in Japan in many respects. Politically, the most remarkable in the history of this country for more than two hundred years. The downfall of the Tycoon or Tokugawa Dynasty, and the assumption of the reins of Government by the Spiritual Emperor, a youth of fourteen years, through the agency of disaffected and ambitious Daimios, who seized his person and flag, for the purpose of self-aggrandizement and political position.” He then went on to describe the defeat of the Mikado’s forces in Hakodate, who after the first fire fled in a most disorderly manner. “The victory was so complete and unexpected that the city was left without a government for twenty-seven hours, except that provided by the Consuls and street officers, after which time the Tokugawa party arrived and have since conducted the affairs of Government in a most satisfactory manner.”⁷⁵⁾

Rice even urged Enomoto to write to Van Valkenburgh, and seek American help in petitioning the Mikado to permit Tokugawa settlement on Hokkaido. In his appeal, Enomoto contrasted the “well organized government” of the United States with the Asian style of government where “there is too great a distance between the Sovereign and the people, and as there is no interchange of opinion between them, it often happens that without good cause the Sovereign blame the people and the people hate the Sovereign.”⁷⁶⁾ Enomoto objected to being labeled a rebel or pirate, and stated that it were merely his desire to bring civilization to Hokkaido and provide a place of refuge for those true men of Tokugawa and others suffering from oppression. Later, on January 26, Enomoto sent a statement to Rice announcing his intention to establish the Tokugawa Government of Yesso, a permanent government with officers selected through elections on the basis of universal suffrage. He announced celebrations to be held on the 27th to commemorate “our taking possession *de facto*, of the entire Island of Yesso. We shall fire in this occasion 101 guns in the morning, from the port of Hakodade.”⁷⁷⁾ January 27 was also election day and the American Consul was informed that “Mr. Enomoto Kamadizro, Admiral of the Navy of Tokugawa, has been elected by vote to be Governor General, to have charge in the direction of the Government of the island of Yeso, and at the same time Mr. Matsudaira Taro to be Vice

Governor General.”⁷⁸⁾ In his correspondence with Washington, Van Valkenburgh referred to the new *de facto* government of Hokkaido and conferred rights as belligerents on Enomoto and his men. Two governments, in American eyes at least, existed in Japan.

Withdrawal of Neutrality — February 11, 1868

Given these new developments, the Mikado’s government once again approached Van Valkenburgh asking the United States to withdraw its neutrality proclamation and permit the delivery of the *Stonewall*. Van Valkenburgh refused: “I believe it to be the true policy and the interest of the United States as long as war continues in Japan not to withdraw the neutrality proclamation.”⁷⁹⁾ On January 5, 1869, Van Valkenburgh, along with other foreign representatives, was invited to the Imperial Palace in Tokyo for a formal audience with the Mikado. This was his first meeting with the young emperor, and he was pleasantly surprised: “If the sovereignty of the Mikado be only nominal at present, it is to be hoped that it may become a reality at an early day, as it seems impossible that this country can ever be reunited and strong under any other chief than the one whose recent reception of the Foreign representatives has given such satisfaction to all.”⁸⁰⁾ It took another month of intense lobbying efforts by Iwakura Tomomi and the English Minister Harry Parkes before Van Valkenburgh finally agreed to consider the withdrawal of neutrality. Reports reaching Yokohama on January 21 of the wreck of Enomoto’s most powerful warship, the *Kaiyo-maru*, were instrumental in causing Van Valkenburgh and others foreign ministers to reconsider the viability of the Hokkaido regime. Still, it was not until February 11 that official notice was given, thereby denying the Enomoto and his men status of belligerents. Finally, on March 8, the *Stonewall* was allowed to join the Mikado’s navy. Officially, Japan was no longer at war.

The American press nonetheless remained suspicious of the motives of the Mikado’s government. On March 28, the *Alta* carried a article from the *Gazette* which explained why the South had won the war: unity achieved by a “reign of terror.” The North was forced to succumb because of its inability to hold together in the same way.⁸¹⁾ Later, on April 1, 1869, the *Alta* declared that “It seems that the Mikado’s government proclaimed that the war had ceased merely to secure possession of that “Curio ship” and ponderous elephant, the *Stonewall*. For they no sooner had her in their custody than the utmost possible dispatch was used to inform the foreign legations that war existed in the North, and that the Imperial Government was determined to use all its force to subdue the insurrection.”⁸²⁾ And even at the very end when Enomoto was defeated and Japan’s civil war was truly over, Americans still held out some measure of sympathy for the northern cause. On July 4, American Independence Day, 1869, some six months after the inauguration of the Hokkaido government, an American in Hakodate wrote: “The great Republican Government of Yesso is ended and some eight of the principle actors are on their way to Yedo overland in cages to be exhibited to all who oppose the will of Sir Harry and his Japanese allies. . . . Thus ends the first attempt at liberalism in Japan.”⁸³⁾

Conclusion

Van Valkenburgh had a distinguished career in politics and in the military before taking up his appointment as resident minister to Japan in 1866. He was a member of the New York State Assembly in 1852, 1857, and 1858, and of the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth Congresses, 1861–65. These were the years of the American civil war. Without resigning his seat in the House of Representatives, he commanded a recruiting bureau at Elmira, New York, and organized seventeen volunteer regiments. He was colonel of the 107th Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, which he commanded at the bloody Battle of Antietam. In recognition of his service, he was made Brigadier-General.

Van Valkenburgh's civil war experience was a lens through which he sought to understand events taken place in Japan. He was open to arguments stressing the justice of the Northern cause against the South. As he understood it, the Mikado was merely a puppet under the control of Satsuma; the Southern camp was conservative, anti-Christian, anti-foreign and was willing to sacrifice principle for power. To use the language of the American civil war, the South stood for the aristocratic "white man's government." The Northern side, on the other hand, represented the forces of progress and spoke of justice, openness, righteousness, independence, and liberation. Such were his hopes for Japan's future. And such was the framework within which he sought to frame the story of Japan's civil war. "The present convulsion, instead of being fraught with danger to the independence of the people . . . will undoubtedly secure for them, in the creation of a middle class, the first gleam of real liberty, without which their independence, so called, is a sham, and not more. Whoever may be the next ruler of a united Japan, I feel confident will profit by experience, and base the policy of this country upon the support of the people instead of the two-sided class."⁸⁴

Van Valkenburgh's view of Japan's civil war is also interesting because the story line he (and the American press) developed to explain what happened in Japan between 1867 and 1869 differs remarkably from the story line with which we (who are interested in Japanese history) are normally accustomed. First of all, the chronology is different. I have emphasized this by retaining the dates in the Western calendar. Van Valkenburgh's narrative placed particular attention on the notification of neutrality (February 18, 1868) and its withdrawal almost exactly one year later (February 11, 1869) — the period in-between were Japan's war years, but they were punctuated by an unfamiliar set of turning points. Secondly, the contestants were different. Satsuma manipulated the Mikado; the Tycoon choose a strategy of passive resistance; the Northern League set up a rival Mikado-centered government in the Tohoku area; dissatisfied Tokugawa retainers sought to set up an independent government on Hokkaido. In the end, Satsuma proved triumphant, but it was not righteousness that prevailed but power. And by no means was the victory of the Mikado inevitable; Van Valkenburgh's description of the fractious nature of the Southern coalition and its precarious financial health emphasizes a thin line between victory and defeat.

We need not accept the American version of Japan's civil war in its entirety. It was

based on limited and sometimes incorrect information and a view shaped by contemporary American issues and interests. But Van Valkenburgh's narrative is interesting precisely because it offers another view of an important event in Japanese history. All historical narratives are constructions. Analyzing Valkenburg's account points to the importance of re-examining the ways in which established narratives of the Meiji Restoration have been constructed and the limitations and prejudices that they, too, reflect.

Notes

- 1) Some of the books by Ishii Takashi include, *Meiji ishin no kokusai teki kankyo*,⁷ expanded edition in three volumes, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1966; *Nihon Kaikokushi*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1972; *Meiji ishin to gaiatsu*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1993.
- 2) Primary sources for this paper include: *Foreign Relations of the United States: Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs*, Part II. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1867–68 (hereafter FRUS); *Diplomatic Correspondence: Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs*, Part I, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1868 (hereafter DC); *Historical Documents Relating to Japan in Foreign Countries: America*, microfilm collection held in the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo (hereafter HDRJFC); and the San Francisco newspaper, *The Daily Alta California*, microfilm held in the International Christian University Library (hereafter DAC).
- 3) Van Valkenburgh to Seward, no. 59, *FRUS*, 1867–68, Vol. II, pp. 18–19
- 4) No. 22, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, Osacca, May 6, 1868, *FRUS*, II, pp. 2–35
- 5) *DAC*, November 20, 1867
- 6) *Ibid*
- 7) *DAC*, January 1, 1868
- 8) No. 62, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *FRUS*, II, p. 68
- 9) No. 69, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *FRUS*, II, p. 79
- 10) *DAC*, January 3, 1868
- 11) No. 3, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Osaka, Jan. 16, 1868, p. 618
- 12) *DAC*, Feb. 18, 1868
- 13) *Ibid*
- 14) *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 1868
- 15) *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1868
- 16) Portman to Seward, *DC*, I, pp. 628–32
- 17) No. 7, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Hiogo, February 3, 1868, p. 635
- 18) No. 7, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Hiogo, February 3, 1868, p. 636
- 19) *DAC*, April 1, 1868
- 20) No. 20, *DC*, I, Osaka, January 29, 1868, p. 640
- 21) Portman to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, February 15, 1868, p. 648
- 22) *DC*, I, pp. 672–76
- 23) No. 12, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Hiogo, February 24, 1868, pp. 671–72
- 24) *DC*, I, Hiogo, February 28, 1868, p. 678
- 25) *DAC*, July 29, 1868
- 26) Portman to Seward, *DC*, I, March 2, 1868, p. 683
- 27) Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DI*, I, Hiogo, March 11, 1868, p. 697
- 28) No. 27, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yedo, March 23, 1868, p. 705
- 29) *DAC*, May 19, 1868
- 30) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 720.
- 31) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 720.
- 32) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 725.
- 33) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 732.

- 34) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 736.
- 35) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 737.
- 36) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 737.
- 37) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 737.
- 38) No. 38, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, April 14, 1868, p. 737–38.
- 39) *DAC*, June 27, 1868
- 40) *DAC*, June 28, 1868
- 41) *DAC*, June 28, 1868
- 42) *Ibid.* Horatio Seymour (1810–1886) was an American politician whose support for the North during the Civil War was territorial. A conservative member of the Democratic Party, he was not in favor of the emancipation of the slaves. In 1868 he was the Democratic nominee for president, but he stood little chance against the popular Civil War hero, Ulysses S. Grant, who ran on the Republican ticket. During the campaign, Seymour was labeled a Copperhead and member of the “Betrayal Party,” because he had favored peace with the South during the Civil War.
- 43) *DAC*, July 29, 1868
- 44) No. 57, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, June 4, 1868, p. 751
- 45) No. 57, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, June 4, 1868, p. 752
- 46) No. 57, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, June 4, 1868, p. 759
- 47) No. 57, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, June 4, 1868, p. 759
- 48) No. 66, VV to Seward, July 13, 1868, 772
- 49) For a study of the formation of the Shoōitai and the battle of Ueno Hill, see M. William Steele, “The Rise and Fall of the Shoōitai: A Social Drama,” in Tetsuo Najita and Victor Koschmann, eds., *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*, Princeton University Press, 1982.
- 50) No. 66, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 13, 1868, p. 772
- 51) No. 76, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 25, 1868, p. 783
- 52) No. 76, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 25, 1868, p. 784
- 53) *DAC*, August 17, 1868
- 54) *DAC*, August 17, 1868
- 55) No. 85, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, August 20, 1868, p. 805
- 56) No. 85, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, August 20, 1868, p. 806
- 57) *DAC*, August 29, 1868
- 58) No. 65, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 3, 1868, p. 764
- 59) No. 65, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 3, 1868, p. 764
- 60) No. 65, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, July 3, 1868, p. 765
- 61) No. 80, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, August 13, 1868, p. 788
- 62) No. 97, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, September 18, 1868, pp. 821–22
- 63) *DAC*, Oct. 21, 1868
- 64) *DAC*, November 24, 1868
- 65) No. 108, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, October 23, 1868, p. 830
- 66) No. 108, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, October 23, 1868, p. 830
- 67) No. 114, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, *DC*, I, Yokohama, November 7, 1868, pp. 833–37
- 68) *DAC*, November 24, 1868
- 69) *New York Times*, 15 December, 1868, letter dated Oct. 27 from Yokohama.
- 70) *New York Times*, January 18, 1869
- 71) *DAC*, January 21, 1869
- 72) No. 130, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, Yokohama, December 14, 1868, Enclosure 3, “The Exiled Retainers of Tokugawa to the Foreign Representatives,” December 3, 1868, HDRJFC No. 6951–10–11
- 73) *Ibid.*, Enclosure 4, “Van Valkenburgh to Rice.” Yokohama, December 12, 1868
- 74) No. 9, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, Yokohama, January 28, 1869, Enclosure 1, Rice to Van Valkenburgh, Hakodadi, Dec. 21, 1868, HDRJFC No. 6951–10–11
- 75) No. 30, Rice to Seward, Hakodadi, December 31, 1868, HDRJFC No. 6951–14–1
- 76) No. 9, January 28, 1869, Enclosure 4, Matsudaira Taro and Enomoto Kamajiro, the retainers of

- Tokugawa governing Yesso, to the American Minister in Japan, Hakodate, January 15, 1869, HDRJFC No. 6951-10-11
- 77) No. 15, Enclosure, Rice to Van Valkenburgh, Hakodadi, February 3, 1869, "The Kerai of Tokugawa Government of Yesso to the American Consul at Hakodadi," January 26, 1869, HDRJFC No. 6951-20-13
 - 78) Nos. 18 and 19, Rice to Van Valkenburgh, Hakodadi, February 9, 1869, HDRJFC No. 6951-20-13
 - 79) No. 138, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, Yokohama, Dec. 24, 1868, HDRJFC No. 6951-10-11
 - 80) No. 3, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, Yedo, January 7, 1869, HDRJFC No. 6951-10-11
 - 81) DAC, March 28, 1869
 - 82) DAC, April 1, 1869
 - 83) No. 66, Enclosure, (Nathan) Rice to Portman, Hakodadi, July 4, 1869, HDRJFC No. 6951-20-13
 - 84) No. 85, Van Valkenburgh to Seward, DC, I, August 20, 1868, p. 807