

Sir Ernest Satow in Japan, 1862-69: Comparing his diary ('journal') and his memoir titled *A Diplomat in Japan*

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Sir Ernest Satow, P.C., G.C.M.G., LL.D., D.C.L. (1843-1929) was a man of many parts: diplomat, Japanologist, scholar of diplomacy and international law, linguist, qualified lawyer, traveller, guidebook author, mountaineer, amateur botanist, book collector, avid reader, letter writer and diarist – to name just the main ones. His two best-known books are in quite different fields. *A Diplomat in Japan* is his personal account as a witness of the ending of the Tokugawa shogunate in the 1860s, while his *Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (first published by Longmans, Green & Co. in 1917) examines the custom and practice of diplomacy from a historical perspective, and has since been republished in several posthumous editions with different editors,¹ in the manner of a well-regarded and authoritative legal text book.

The two main sources for this paper are *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow, 1861-1869*, edited by Robert Morton & Ian Ruxton, (Kyoto: Eureka Press, 2013) and Satow's memoir *A Diplomat in Japan* first published in London by Seeley, Service & Co. in 1921 during the latter part of his retirement. Careful examination of both sources is revealing of how the author changed from a wild and ill-disciplined youth with great intelligence and potential to an efficient and effective consular official by the end of 1869, and finally to a cautious, prim and proper diplomat and scholar of distinction in his retirement, which began in 1906.

This paper will first indicate the parts of the diary which were not included, or rather deliberately omitted, from the published book, and discuss the reasons for the omissions. It will then look in detail at various key passages which have been included from the diary, and discuss the differences in language and how they are introduced.

A Diplomat in Japan

A Diplomat in Japan is justly famous and unrivalled as the most perceptive and informative record written by a foreign observer of the end of the Tokugawa shogunate (*Bakumatsu*). Like the *Guide to Diplomatic Practice* its widely recognized importance means it has appeared in several editions, though apparently the only one faithful to the original pagination is the hardcover Oxford Historical Reprint² of the late 1960s, introduced by Professor Gordon Daniels. It was written in two stages: the first was 1885-87 when Satow was Minister in Bangkok; the second was during the latter part of his retirement (September 1919 – January 1921) at the urging of younger relations.

Daniels notes in his introduction that '...[t]he main advantage of Satow's work is its firm foundation of documentary authenticity. By and large it is based on the author's private letters and journals and though there are divergencies between the book and the original diaries, the two correspond so closely that the advantages of publishing the diaries as against printing the memoirs are little more than marginal. Essentially the book and the diaries tell the same story, though at certain points Satow retouched his original account when preparing his memoirs for publication.'³

In their editorial preface to the published diaries, Morton and Ruxton disagreed, as they were bound to do, about the marginal advantage of publishing them, stating that '[m]ore than a third of the material in the diaries did not make it into the book in any form, and much that did was altered in ways that to historians of *bakumatsu* politics, and the British influence on them, are highly significant.'⁴

Omissions from the Published Memoir

So what did Satow leave out of the published book from the diaries? First, there is all the early period in China before he ever reached Japan. This is the focus of Professor Morton's work. In *A Diplomat in Japan* Satow devotes barely a page to his experiences in China: he explains why he and two other student interpreters (R.A. Jamieson and Russell Robertson) were initially stationed at the British Legation in Peking: it was to learn the Chinese language, which was thought to be an indispensable first step to learning Japanese. However, a note from the Japanese government, which no Chinese person could translate, arrived in Peking. This put paid to the theory, and Satow commented: 'I thought then, and still think, that though an acquaintance with Chinese characters may be found useful by the student of Japanese, it is no more indispensable than that of Latin is to a person who wishes to acquire Italian or Spanish. We were consequently bundled off to Japan with the least possible delay.'⁵

Later in the same chapter (Chapter One) Satow writes somewhat regretfully and wistfully of China: 'I should like to dwell longer on our life in Peking – the rides in the early morning [part omitted]... excursions to the ruins of the Summer Palace...the magnificent temples... the dirt and dust of the streets... the beggars... the bazaar... the Temple of Heaven...but there is no time.'⁶ Inasmuch as Satow states at the beginning of the chapter that he never wished or intended to go to China, and he was fascinated from the beginning by Japan, the omission of his China experiences from the book seems entirely reasonable. Moreover, China is not mentioned in the title of the book. At the same time the omission conveniently allows Satow to pass over some of the more embarrassing incidents in which he was involved with his student interpreter colleagues.

Apart from the period in China (Shanghai 4 November 1861-16 March 1862; Peking 25 March – 24 August 1862), what else has been omitted, and why? There is a strong hint in the lengthy sub-title to the book, though we do not know if this and the title were written by Satow or the publisher: 'The

Inner History of the Critical Years in the Evolution of Japan when the Ports were Opened and the Monarchy Restored, Recorded by a Diplomatist who took an Active Part in the Events of the Time, with an Account of his Personal Experiences during that Period'. From this we see that the focus is on providing a historical account from the privileged position of an insider ('inner history') who by virtue of his position as a diplomat was bound to know more and be privy to negotiations and meetings which non-diplomats were not. As a memoir it is a testament based on personal experiences, so it would not be a mere record of meetings held, but also a narrative of travels and experiences in the interior of Japan, mainly with A.B. Mitford and Charles Wirgman.

Satow's Family

Satow was part of a typically large, middle class Victorian family of six brothers and five sisters. He was the eighth child and the third son. By the time of his return from the East in 1869 he had effectively become the 'golden boy,' and he already felt in 1861 that he was his father's favourite son. Yet in *A Diplomat in Japan* it is quite understandable that his family receives only a passing reference – one of the secondary sources for the book was letters to his mother, as Satow explains in the Preface, but these are no longer available to us in the Satow Papers at the National Archives. They were probably burnt at some point.

Arguments over Promotion

One of the most striking omissions from the published memoir is the diary entries about his promotion within the consular service, or leaving the service and going home. On 15 October 1863, when he was still a student interpreter on an annual salary of £200, Satow wrote to his father 'concerning the advisability of returning to Europe if a letter which I wrote to [acting head of Legation] Col. Neale & w[hi]ch. he has forwarded to the F[oreign].O[ffice]. asking for promotion has no effect; asked my father also to inquire of old Bergne of F.O. whether there will be anything for me in that line. In my mail before wrote also asking for wine, stores and stationery, & this mail for a pistol.'

The response was a letter from Satow's father Hans David Christoph Satow, urging him to come back to England. The entry is dated 26 March 1864, and is the first of that year after a lengthy gap from 15 October of the previous year, which suggests that Satow felt he must resume his diary because he had something of personal importance to write. It reads in full as follows:

'March. 26th. In answer to my letter of 15th Oct[ober]. I have received a letter of 10 Dec[ember]. from my father offering me £100 per an[num]. if I will go home & study the law; it is not easy to put down on paper any impression of what I thought & felt on receiving this letter, but I was put in a great state of perplexity. On the other hand a free and easy life with something of adventure, and means of gratifying my desire of studying Jap[anese]; on the other, fortune, probable if not certain, the prospect of marriage & of being able to live a decent life instead of the immoral one I have led lately, the pleasures of travel in Europe & the enjoyment of good music. For some time I was under the impression that I should be compelled by these latter considerations to go back to Europe, & wrote almost confidently about it to my people at home. I remained thus up to the date of Mar[ch] 4, when I had an interview with Alcock, & asked him what chance I had of promotion & what were my prospects were [sic]; he replied very kindly, listened to my arguments very patiently & promised to write home for my promotion. But altho' I decided to stay, I am not quite sure whether this was the whole reason, for after all it was small comfort. It is more probable that I felt that to leave Japan & return to that dull old England, would be to destroy the real happiness of my life & to cut off all the ties I have formed during the last 2½ years. Not only ties of friendship, for they are weak compared with what I have at home, but attachment to the country, to the language, & to the people. Having now decided which course to take, I must stick to it, and try to win the position of a great Japanese scholar, for the [to] know this language well is my intention, & to this end are all my efforts directed. Very few European

books ever open themselves before me, and I am gradually losing every tincture of my original knowledge of ancient learning. The reward I hope will be a great one when it comes. But I have still another arrow in the quiver. Trade, for which my knowledge of the language might in some measure to fit me, is a thing which would fit in with all my desires. The acquisition of a certain amount of tin [money?], combined with the study of Japanese. I have written to my father these things, and hope he will not be disappointed at my refusing offers so generous & kind. Perhaps the magnificence of them may have been one reason for refusing, for no doubt my other brothers would have looked upon me with jealous eyes. The position of a favourite is never a pleasant or a dignified one, and I think I felt this so even before I left home. I shall I hope be able to show my gratitude some day or other to my father, for his constant kindness. If he knew me now he would I think look upon me with different eyes, but to undeceive him, & to let him know straight out, that I am no longer the same moral or supposed moral youth I left him would be cruel to him & unpleasant to myself. I could never conceal from him my propensities, & therefore it is best that I never give [him] the chance even of suspecting me.'

It is easy to see why such a personal entry was omitted from the published memoir with its suggestion of sexual adventures and an 'immoral' life in Japan far away from parental eyes, but it does show clearly the merit of studying the diary which allows us to get much closer to Satow as a young man, his foibles, hopes and ambitions, personal struggles and doubts.

On 1 April 1865 Satow was promoted to the rank of Interpreter at the Yokohama consulate with an annual salary of £400, twice what he had received as a Student Interpreter. This is not mentioned in the diary, there being a gap from 10 October 1864 to 2 October 1865.⁷ It is mentioned in *A Diplomat in Japan*, Ch. XIV on p. 157. An argument with Sir Harry Parkes about an extra £100 per annum asked for by Satow and Siebold is mentioned in the book

as occurring in August 1866, while the diary is silent from 30 November 1865 to 26 November 1866. Again Satow contacted his father by letter, and received a telegram in reply telling him to come home at once. Satow went to Parkes and asked him to accept his resignation. 'After a little humming and hawing, he finally produced from a drawer a despatch from [the Foreign Secretary] Lord Clarendon, which had been lying there for several days, granting the applications of both Siebold and myself, and I consequently abandoned my intention of quitting the service.'⁸

The topic of promotion again appears in the diaries in 1867-68. On 31 December 1867 despatches from the Foreign Office arrived which included promotion to Japanese Secretary for Satow, with the substantial sum of £700 per annum. In the diary Satow noted: 'I am to be Japanese Secretary with 700 pounds a year, so there is no need for my kicking up a row, or cutting the service as I had thought of doing.' In *Diplomat* the idea of a row is glossed over, and only the facts are reported: 'That day, the last of the year 1867, despatches arrived from the Foreign Office sanctioning my appointment as Japanese Secretary, with a salary of £700 a year, in succession to Eusden, transferred to Hakodaté as consul.' (*Diplomat*, p. 294, end of Chapter XVIII.)

The row with Parkes which ensued in January 1868 when Parkes appointed his junior Lowder as Acting Consul at Hyogo with £800 per annum which Satow perceived as an affront is given in detail in the diary, but not mentioned in the book. The details were as follows: on 21 January Francis Gerhard Myburgh, the British consul at Hyogo (later Kobe), died after only three weeks in the post. Three days later on January 24th Parkes appointed the Vice Consul John Frederic Lowder as Acting Consul at Hyogo. Satow immediately went to Parkes and asked whether Lowder was therefore his senior. Parkes replied that it was usual to appoint the man on the spot to take charge. Satow replied that he hoped that the permanent appointment at Hyogo was not affected, as he believed he had a prior claim to it. Parkes denied this and tried to convince Satow he was better off as Japanese Secretary. When Satow refused to accept this, Parkes told him to put his arguments in writing for him to forward to the

Foreign Office. This Satow did on the same day with Mitford's help. The draft of the letter which they jointly produced appears in the diary as follows:

'In accordance with y[ou]r. desire expressed this morning to be furnished in writing with the reasons for which I wish to apply for the present vacancy in the list of Consuls, I have the honour to lay before you the following considerations.

Having been appointed by H.M. Sec[retar]y. of State for F[oreign]. A[ffairs]. to the post of Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]y. so soon as it shall become vacant by the promotion of Mr. Eusden to a Consulate, I believe that I am next junior to that officer in the Japan Consul[a]r. Establish[men]t. & consequently senior to all other officers under the rank of Consul.

You were good enough to express to me your opinion that the Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]yship is a more advantageous post to fill than a Consulship at a small port, & that if I were passed over on the present occasion it would be a proof that the rank was at least equal, thus placing me on a par with those of Junior Consuls.

I would beg to observe however that the app[oin]tm[en]t. of Mr. Eusden to the Consulship at Hakodate is a proof that the Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]y. ranks below a Consul of a small port. Further a Consul holds the Queen's Commission, whereas the Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]y. holding no commission occupies an undefined place in H.M. Leg[atio]n.

The Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]yship then, being a junior appointm[en]t. in the Consular service, it can hardly be supposed that any officer would wish to hold that position permanently instead of aspiring to the higher & more responsible office of Consul.

With regard to the parity of claims to promotion of the Jap[ane]se. Sec[retar]y. with those of the Junior Consuls, I cannot help feeling that the latter from their experience of the business of a Consulate might not unreasonably be considered as better fitted for the direction of a large port than an officer whose whole time must necessarily be given up to performing the functions of a translator & interpreter.

It is for these reasons therefore that I would respectfully submit my claims to be promoted to the vacant Consulship, in preference to my juniors in the Service.

I have &c.'

The diary indicates that this letter was delivered to Parkes on the same day, an indication of how tense and awkward the human relations had become. Parkes described the letter as 'dogmatic' and tried to scare Satow by saying that the Foreign Office might refuse to define Satow's position, or promote him to the Hyogo consulate and then promote his successor as Japanese Secretary to a larger Consulate, leaving Satow in a backwater. Satow remained defiant: 'That did not frighten me, so then he would have me understand that I must take precedence after Eusden forever. I answered that I would willingly do so. Then He tried to make me believe that I sh[ou]ld. be entirely shelved if I went to a Consulate. I don't believe it.'

On the next day Satow devoted the entire diary entry to the matter, and he was clearly most unhappy about the situation and his treatment by Parkes:

'Jan. 25. Today he sent [Legation Secretary Sidney] Locock to me as ambassador of course privately. I wouldn't budge. I still considered it my interest. [William] Willis⁹ went to him in the evening to talk ab[ou]t. his having been passed over, & told the chief that [if] he Willis had been made Act[in]g. Consul at Hiogo, my opposition w[ou]ld. have been much less; & advised him as it seems in a rather paternal way to delay writing about it for a mail or so. Since then we have heard no more. Evidently he wants for some reason or other to promote Lowder very fast, & he wishes to keep me at the Leg[atio]n. for ever to be his translator. He evidently had the opinion too that I would always be content with that position. I was up to the 24th but he sh[ou]ld. not try to put a junior like L[owder]. over me.'¹⁰

We hear nothing more in the diaries about promotion until Satow is in England on leave. On 30 June 1869 at Sidmouth he received a letter from the

Foreign Office signed by Sir Edmund Hammond, the Permanent Under-Secretary, offering him the chance to be a candidate for the consulship at Niigata. It was explained to him that if he chose to remain Japanese Secretary he would rank with, but after, consuls and before vice-consuls. Satow decided to remain as Japanese Secretary, and continued in that rank until he left Japan in 1883, with the dignity title of Second Secretary added in 1876. He never became a consul, staying throughout the period at the Legation where he had an arguably more important post at the political centre of things.

The Shipwreck of H.M.S. Rattler in 1868

In *A Diplomat in Japan* at the end of Chapter XXXII on p. 385, seemingly as an afterthought, Satow adds the following final paragraph:

'From September 8 to October 17 Adams and I were absent on a wild-goose chase after the Russians who were reported to be occupying the northern coast of Yezo [Hokkaido], in the course of which H.M.S. "Rattler," in which we had embarked, was wrecked in Sôya Bay. But *as this was not concerned with the progress of political events in Japan, it seems unnecessary to occupy space in narrating our experiences.* [Author's italics] We were rescued by the French corvette "Dupleix," Captain du Petit Thouars.'

Satow's dismissal of the time spent in Hokkaido as a 'wild-goose chase' is no doubt correct in terms of the mission on which he was sent there, but the diary entries for this period are full of interest even if they add nothing of value to the main theme of the book. First in the entry for September 8th Satow gives more detail about the mission:

'Embarked on board the Rattler commanded by [Henry] Stephenson nephew of Ad[miral]. Keppel with [F.O.] Adams for a political trip northwards, Noguchi and Yokichi with me. It appears probable that the Russians have taken possession of two of the Kurile group, namely Kunashiri [国後] and Itôrup [Etorofu 択捉] and we are to go up there to find the truth of this report and to look for a port in that neighbourhood which may be opened to foreign trade and Yezo thereby secured fr[om].

Russian aggression. We are also to go down the west coast to Niigata and Nanao. What may be our situation at the former of these two places is uncertain.'

After about 84 hours steaming from Yokohama, the *Rattler* reached Hakodate on Saturday, September 12th. The consul ('little Eusden') was of no help in providing information, and the next day Stephenson, Adams and Satow called on the governor, a young court noble (*kuge*) named Shimizudani Jijiu. The *Rattler* finally left Hakodate on September 17th, followed by the *Rover*. The description of Kayanoma, which the ships reached on the 19th, is worth quoting here as just one example of Satow's writing. It is in part written in the manner of a guidebook, more densely informative than elegant, which is typical of Satow's descriptive style:

'Kayanoma lies on the seashore some 5 miles from Iwanai. It is a purely Japanese settlement of fishermen. [Erasmus] Gower's coalmine lies about two miles up a winding valley and is not visible from the anchorage. The *Rover* brought up some trucks, iron rails etc. for the tramway which is intended to connect the mine with the beach and other machinery under the superintendence of a man named Scott brought out here for the purpose. The Climate of this place is very cool even in summer, the thermometer falling to 20 deg. Fahr[enheit]. at night. In winter the cold is intense, to -8 degrees and the ground is covered with snow. Bears abound in the neighbouring hills. Salmon, salmon trout are taken in the river Ishibetsu halfway between Iwanai and Kayanoma, and cod, rock cod, iwashi [sardines] and other fish abound in the bay. Seaslug [namako], awabi and fish manure are exported in large quantities from Iwanai.'

It is not the purpose of this essay to explain all the references in detail, which can be checked in the published diaries. But it should be clear that there is much of historical and anthropological interest here, which is not in *A Diplomat in Japan*. The shipwreck occurred on September 24th:

'Going into Soya bay at six in the morning, fine and water smooth, the ship ran aground about two miles off the village of Soya. Various

attempts were made to get her off by laying out anchors at the stern, but one having broken its shaft under the strain and another having dragged further experiments were abandoned as futile, especially as the sea began to get up, preventing the pinnacle from taking out the best bower anchor.'

After a curious episode in which the apparent infatuation of a local girl for Satow is dismissed curtly by him as 'Probably nymphomania' (October 2nd) there are descriptions of the 'Aino' (Ainu) way of life and fishing:

'After that was over I went into the unjōya [運上屋 tax and licensing office] and talked to a fellow there ab[ou]t. the Ainos. He said that they are very docile and that the number of bad characteristics is but small. Nearly all the fullgrown males work willingly at the fishery for the sake of the allowance of rice, the tobacco, pipes and pipe cases, and clothing w[hi]ch. they get. The quantity of rice exceeds what a man can consume, being 7 1/2 go per diem of hulled rice, the old and infirm are fed gratis, but the women and children have to be supported on the surplus of the men's allowances. Snow lies to the depth of four feet in winter here on the seashore, and sledges are then put in recognition as a means of carrying. Leather shoes and snow shoes are worn, the former over hard snow, the latter over soft.'

The shipwrecked British party was rescued by the *Dupleix* on October 9th.

Satow had already visited Hakodate on two previous occasions: in October 1865 he sketched two Ainu men at nearby Otosube with a Mordan's mechanical pencil, and included the sketch in his diary along with some very unflattering comments about Ainu women whom he described on a first encounter as ugly and dirty. He was equally unimpressed by the small foreign community:

'After all the foreign community are the curiosities. Let us enumerate them. Co. Howell & his assistant Atkinson, not made their acquaintance. Wilkie & Gaertner, the former a married man, who dresses in a brown corduroy coat & speaks bad, not to say bawdy, & violent language before women; he's a cad.

Gaertner, a fat porkeating, liquorswilling German, whose idea of dressing for dinner is a loose grey coat & unbrushed hair: he is a cad from the misfortunes of his nature. Then there is Blakiston, proprietor of steam saw mill or something of that sort: formerly a captain in the artillery & a gentleman: now a master sawyer, and a voluntary cad because he likes it. Then there is Porter, who keeps a store in the name of a Japanese, & exports about a hundred piculs of seaweed per annum, & calls himself a merchant. He's born to the dignity of being a cad. The remainder of the community are grogshop keepers and suchlike. The Consular people far outnumber the merchants.'

A 'cad' is an ill-bred man, especially one who behaves in a dishonourable or irresponsible way toward women (as defined by dictionary.com). It is probable that Satow himself was a cad in the 1860s, sowing wild oats where and when he could. It is also worth noting that this passage is quite amusing.

The other visit to Hakodate was on a brief trip north with Parkes and Mitford from July 23rd to August 1, 1867 during which he visited the theatre in Hakodate and noted:

'Wed. 31. Went to Theatre. fine building of solid timbers, new. Damsels in the box, but very dull. Japanese of all ranks at Hakodate a very rough & rude lot. Left theatre & went to a teahouse on seashore beyond fort kept by a juggler, who exhibited his art. Drank saké & waited for damsels, who were announced as being on the way just as we were leaving. Went on board Basilisk to dine & remained.'

Although Hakodate is mentioned several times in *A Diplomat in Japan*, it is mainly in passing with regard to its opening to foreign trade as a port, and in Chapter XXIV regarding the fighting there at the end of 1868, the dying embers of resistance of the Tokugawa shogunate led by Admiral Enomoto Takeaki (1836-1908).

We may conclude that Hokkaido receives less attention in *A Diplomat in Japan* than in the diaries because it was far from the centre of political affairs, and still in the 1860s somewhat unexplored and uncharted territory for the Japanese. Hakodate is in

the South of the island, and was the beginning of Japanese settlement.

Examples of Cultural Encounters not mentioned in *A Diplomat in Japan*

1) Sumo

Of course everything in Japan was new and fresh to young Ernest Satow when he stepped off the boat at Yokohama in September 1862, shortly before the Namamugi Incident (described in *A Diplomat in Japan*, Chapter V, p. 51 et seq.) But it is worth highlighting two parts of Japanese culture which he described in his diary but not in the book. First, his first attendance at a sumo tournament occurred on 5 April 1863, and it is also the first diary entry for 1863, which again indicates that he found it an important and noteworthy event. Here is the entry in full:

'Sunday, April 5 This day I went to see the wrestling [Sumo (相撲)]. It was exhibited in a temporary building formed of scaffold poles tied together and covered with coarse matting; this was raised about thirty feet from the ground and there were three tiers of seats, one above the other. In the centre of the enclosure was a roof supported on four poles, one at each corner, and within this was a platform of earth beaten down hard, of about 14ft. diameter. The seats of the common people were on mats placed on the ground within a railing, outside which stood those who could not afford to get a better position. There must have been about two thousand or fifteen hundred people present, and waiters carrying trays of food and baskets full of teapots went round among them continually. The wrestlers came in by twos and sat round the mound of earth, or ring as we might call it, till their turn came. Winning consists merely in pushing the opponent out of the ring or throwing him down within it. On the conclusion of a hard fought battle the supporters of the victor threw down pieces of their clothing, w[hi]ch. they had to redeem after by a fixed sum of money. The wrestler is stripped on the waist & left only the loincloth on, which was of dark blue silk with a fringe for the better ones, and common cotton of cloth for the

novices. The processings commenced with the later, who won by two falls out of three. After coming within the ring, the first thing was to lift up each foot and place in [sic. it] on the ground again firmly with a slap on the thigh; this was done once or twice. Then the wrestler proceeded to rinse out his mouth with water, wipe his lips and armpits with a bit of paper, and taking a little salt from a bowl which hung against the post, to sprinkle this on the ground. After that they crouched on their haunches on opposite sides of the ring and rubbing their hands together as if praying. Next they advanced into the middle and stood watching. Suddenly they both made a bound; perhaps it was a feint, and they shouted out mate, [*Matte* 待つて] mate, mate, (wait, wait, wait,) & returned to the position. When the struggle began it did not last for more than a minute, but the fierceness with which they attacked each other was very great. At intervals the grand wrestlers came in with long aprons of red and white cloth embroidered with gold, and made some postures as they stood round the ring and then retired again. The champion had a large belt of white rope, tied in a bow knot behind with festoons of paper hanging from it. His height was a good deal over six feet, and he was almost equalled in that respect by one or two others, but they are by no means so fat as Oliphant represents them.¹¹ Doubtless a good deal of their stoutness is mere corpulency & not muscle. There was a high tower outside on which sat a man beating a drum the whole time.

The performances commenced early in the morning and ended about six. I was told that the wages of the champion are about 25 cobangs¹² a day, and the others, 20, 15, 10 according to their strength or skill. Very little of the latter is exhibited. In one corner of the place was erected an altar with cakes upon it; and a lot of priests prayed before it that no harm might come to the wrestlers. Afterwards a small altar was erected on one side of the ring, incense burnt before a tablet on it, & cakes offered up, which were afterwards thrown among the people. All the wrestlers did their obeisance to this. Most of them had not the front of the head shaved.'

This description of sumo is careful, precise and accurate. The sport (or more correctly martial art) has hardly changed, and modern spectators would recognize all that Satow mentions.

2) The Nagasaki 'kunchi' Festival

Although he did not describe it by that name, Satow attended the famous Nagasaki *kunchi* (festival) in October 1867 and devoted several pages of his diary to it, but omitted it from *Diplomat*. The festival is now held between October 7th and 9th every year. (Satow had arrived in Nagasaki on September 12th on orders from Parkes to investigate the murder of drunken sailors of H.M.S. *Icarus* in the streets of that town. Seeing the festival was therefore a side benefit of a business trip. He left Nagasaki in H.M.S. *Coquette* on October 12th.)

'Oct[obe]r. 6. Sunday. Today the festival of Suwa [諏訪], a Shintô god, being the 9th day of the 9th month [by the lunar calendar *inreki* 陰曆]. Invitations had been sent round to all the Consuls to go to the Nishiyakusho ["West office" 西役所] & sit in the shed prepared there for the high & mighty of Nagasaki. Proceeding thither with [my manservant] Noguchi & a fellow [Aizu] clansman of his named Sagawa Tadasu, I found a crowd standing before a bamboo fence or gate...'

Two days later Satow was enjoying the final day of the festival:

'Oct[obe]r. 8. This morning [Consul] Flowers, his wife & I went again to the shed in front of nishiyakusho ["West office" 西役所] to see the processions which came up from the ohatoba [wharf *hatoba* 波止場] & then proceeded thro' the town to Suwa no Yashiro [Suwa shrine 諏訪之社]. The Maruyama Machi [丸山町] lot were first ab[ou]t. 7.30; two little girls of 13 & 14, but so diminutive that they looked only 6 or 7, dressed up in swellest *yûjo* [courtesan 遊女] garments; who performed a most dignified measure to the accompaniment of that mournful recitative the *utai* [Noh chanting 謡]; from today these tiny morsels of humanity who have been *kamuro* [a trainee 禿] hitherto are to become *yû-jo*. Yoriai machi [寄合町 next to Maruyama machi]

showed a similar lot. None of the hoko [floats] were different, but most of the dances were new.’

Language differences between the diary and the memoir

Limitations of space prevent a detailed treatment of this topic, which can only be adumbrated here. Broadly Satow in the editing process cleaned up and removed any vulgarities or inelegant language while following selected parts of the diary quite closely, as Professor Daniels indicated. For example, in the diary for December 27, 1866 when he meets Itoku, the half-Japanese daughter of Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) he notes: ‘Old Siebold it appears had the misfortune to get another child on the body of a female domestic when he was last in Japan; in imparting this piece of information Madame warned me to be careful not to tell any one, which is the reason I suppose why I write it down.’ The meeting with Itoku is in fact not mentioned at all in *Diplomat*, let alone the rather vulgar phrase “get another child on the body of a female domestic...”

Satow also sometimes adds words, phrases and sentences by way of explanation or commentary, and sometimes omits them from *Diplomat*. His editorial work is careful, cautious, highly focused and precise, as one would expect from an elderly and scholarly (but still mentally very sharp) gentleman in his late retirement years (1919-21), when he had plenty of time to do a thorough job and satisfy his own exacting standards.

Compare the following part of a diary entry from August 3, 1867 with the memoir published in 1921:

‘After sitting for a couple of hours we went down to the Bansho [guardhouse 番所] in Hirokôji [広小路] & inspected a large island called [blank space] containing 30000 tsuboes which was one place proposed. Here again our chief made himself ridiculous in the eyes of natives by scrambling right up the roof of a shed in which a junk was being built to see the country. After that was over he dragged the party back to the pear orchard island opposite to the Bansho & then up the canal till about half past 6, not much to the improvement of the tempers of [Captain] Hewett or his boat’s crew who hadn’t had their suppers.’

And in *Diplomat* on p. 233: “After a two hours’ talk we started off to inspect an island in the river which it was proposed should be converted to the uses of a foreign settlement. Sir Harry, who was of an active inquisitive temperament, here signalized himself in the eyes of the natives by scrambling up to the top of a large shed, under which a junk was in course of construction, to get a view of the surrounding country, much to the horror of Mitford and myself, who were so orientalized by this time in our notions that we longed to see our chief conduct himself with the impassive dignity of a Japanese gentleman.”

Conclusion

The diaries are a franker and more immediate account. They are the young Ernest Satow’s raw and unprocessed experiences, written as the events happened. Satow called them his ‘journal’ and some of the language has been sanitized in the published memoir. It is in the diaries where we see most clearly how Satow grew up in the Far East. He appears a good deal more arrogant and unrestrained in the private diaries than in *A Diplomat in Japan*.

Reference

- ¹ The editors of ‘Satow’ (as the book is commonly called) in chronological order have until now been: Sir Ernest Satow (first and second editions 1917, 1922); Hugh Ritchie (third, 1932), Sir Nevile Bland (fourth, 1954), Lord Gore-Booth (fifth, 1979) and Sir Ivor Roberts (sixth and latest, 2009). For a review by Thomas Otte of the Roberts edition in *H-Diplo* dated 1 September 1910, see <http://h-diplo.org/essays/PDF/Otte-Roberts.pdf> accessed April 14, 2015. He points out some minor errors, but makes a couple of his own: it is Laurence (not Lancelot) Oliphant, and Satow studied Roman law at Marburg in 1876, not the late 1880s.
- ² A reprint is a new impression, without alteration, of a book or other printed work. It is particularly useful where the original books are hard to obtain and expensive antiques.
- ³ Sir Ernest Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. v.
- ⁴ Robert Morton and Ian Ruxton, ed., *The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow, 1861-1869*, Kyoto: Eureka Press, 2013, p. xii.
- ⁵ *A Diplomat in Japan*, Chapter I, p. 18.
- ⁶ *A Diplomat in Japan*, Chapter I, pp. 19-20. This is a partial quotation of a very long and somewhat clumsy sentence,

with some details omitted.

⁷ Regarding gaps in the diary, we can only fill them by reference to other sources. For example we know that Satow was in the despatch-gunboat H.M.S. *Coquette* which was sent to relieve the British barque *Onward*, wrecked at Kashima in December 1864 on her way to Hakodate: ‘...Mr. Satow, Student-Interpreter of this Legation, proceeded in the “Coquette” to Cape Kona, and made his way on shore in the gig through a tempestuous surf...’ (Charles O. Winchester, Chargé d’Affaires in Japan, despatch to Earl Russell, Foreign Secretary, dated 13 January 1865, reported in *London Gazette*, No, 22952, March 28, 1865. With thanks to Andrew Davis for this reference.)

⁸ *A Diplomat in Japan*, Chapter XIV, p. 158.

⁹ William Willis, M.D. was the Legation Medical Officer and appointed Vice-Consul at Edo and Kanagawa on January 1, 1868. He had been appointed Assistant Interpreter and Surgeon in Japan on November 16, 1861 and so he was Satow’s senior. (F.O. List, 1895)

¹⁰ Lowder quit the Consular Service in 1872, and then practised as a barrister in Yokohama where he died in 1902.

¹¹ Laurence Oliphant, who was first secretary of the British Legation at the time. Satow is referring to the description of sumo wrestlers in Oliphant’s book *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China and Japan, in the Years 1857-59*, (London: Blackwood, 1859; and Oxford Historical Reprints, 1970), Volume II, p. 222. Oliphant was not giving his own opinion, but that of Henry Heusken, secretary and interpreter to Townsend Harris, U.S. Consul from 1856 to 1861. There is also a lithograph of two wrestlers on the page.

¹² *Koban* (小判) were gold *ryō* coins, worth four *bu*.