

Sir Ernest Satow in Siam, 1884-87: Focusing on his Visits to Japan from Siam in 1884 and 1886, and his Research into Japan-Siam Relations

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Introduction

Ernest Satow left Japan (i.e. Yokohama) at the end of 1882, after spending most of 20 years apart from home leaves working there as a consular official: student interpreter, interpreter and then Japanese Secretary at the British legation.¹ I have written about his two stints in Japan (1862-69 and 1870-83) in previous papers published in the *IJS Journal*, Volumes 1 and 2. This paper focuses on his interest in, and connections with, Japan during his posting to Siam (now Thailand), which he accepted as a good and ultimately successful career move: he was soon promoted from the British consular to the diplomatic service, which in itself was a rare recognition of his considerable talent. Satow visited Japan twice in the period, in 1884 and 1886. Whom did he meet, and what did he discuss with them?² Also what did he discover about the historical relations between the two countries? (N.B. Detailed discussion of his visits to Nikko which was one of Satow's favourite places in Japan will be reserved for another paper.)

Satow applies, and is appointed, to serve in Siam

At the end of 1883 while in England, Satow applied for the post of Agent and Consul-General in Bangkok, within the consular service.³ He was informed that his application was successful on January 13, 1884⁴ and he left London for Bangkok on January 25th.⁵ Travelling via Aden, Penang and Singapore, he reached Bangkok on March 6th.

We know about his initial reactions to Siam and his regret at leaving Japan from letters to his friend Frederick Victor Dickins and friend and consular colleague William George Aston. On March 20th he wrote to Dickins from Bangkok:

“...At Singapore I stayed nearly a week and found there the Baynes and the George Dares. The Baynes look very young, and were eagerly anticipating their return to Japan. I never think of that country without the liveliest feelings of regret. One was so happy there in spite of the distance from England, and the travelling in the interior was so delightful. Sometimes I think I was a great fool to leave it simply for promotion, for though this place is tolerable, it is not the same thing, and as yet I have no friends to take the place of those I am cut off from. And every mail hitherto has only brought me letters from Yedo [Edo, Tokyo] offering me a welcome back there, which circumstances will not allow me to enjoy...”

Satow expressed further regret in a letter dated March 21st to Aston:

“This is not such a bad place, though there is much that makes me regret Japan. The town lies on the river in the midst of a wide delta chiefly cultivated as paddy fields. The public buildings are fine and even picturesque, rather more so than in Japan owing to the great number of sharp spires in the Buddhist temples, but the houses of the inhabitants are squalid and dirty. That is partly due to the difficulty of being neat and tidy in a hot country. One chiefly goes about in a sort of gondola, but there are few roads, and I have taken my first ride today. We have tennis in the [British] agency compound. The house is not altogether bad, though quite destitute of ornament, and I have plenty of room. I like the work pretty well as a change from Japanese newspapers and interpreting, but I am very sorry not to be in at the Revision of the Treaties [*jouyaku kaisei* 条約改正]. And I like the

Plunketts⁶ so much that it is a real grief to me not to be in Tokio⁷ during their reign...⁸

Satow's Visit to Japan in 1884 (October 1st – November 22nd)

On September 15th Satow called on the King of Siam, prior to leaving for Japan:

“Went to take leave of the King, who mentioned his desire to renew relations with Japan. I said he w[ou]ld. be able to obtain cheaper there many things w[hi]ch. he now gets from Europe.”

On September 17th Satow left Bangkok with his long-serving and faithful Japanese manservant Honma Saburō. Travelling by sea via Hong Kong, he arrived in Nagasaki at 8 p.m. on October 1st where he found Frank W. Playfair in charge as acting Consul, John Carey Hall having been summoned to Tokio (as he spelt it). He went ashore next day to buy some Hirado and Kameyama porcelain at the shop of Sato Yukichi in Funadaiku Machi.

Travelling via Shimonoseki Satow reached Kobe on the evening of October 3rd. The next day he

“[w]ent ashore to the [Consul James] Troups. After lunch with [Vice-Consul Henry A.C.] Bonar to see Noguchi's widow, & children.⁹ Promised to give her a monthly pension of \$5, to be paid thro' Bonar.¹⁰ Left at 6 p.m.”

On October 6th Satow arrived at Yokohama at 1 a.m. He visited Sir Nicholas Hannen, a Judge in Her Britannic Majesty's Court for Japan since 1 February 1883 and a friend since 1871. He went up to Tokio by the 11 o'clock train and immediately visited his children, Eitaro and Hisayoshi. This was recorded in romanised Japanese in his diary, to prevent its easy comprehension by prying eyes:

Hirugo kodomo wo mi ni ittara... Futari tomo soken de otonashikute medzurashii. Eitarō [英太郎] wa issakunen yori kakubetsu sei ga nobinai, chieye ga tsuita. Hisakichi [久吉] irō shiroku waga otōto Theodore ni yoku nitari.¹¹

From October 10th to 14th Satow was at Miyanoshita, a hot spring resort in Hakone (Kanagawa prefecture) popular with foreigners, with his good friend the Minister Francis Plunkett

and Raymond de B. M. Layard. They stayed at the well-known Fujiya hotel, founded in 1878 and still open today.¹²

On October 11th the guests enjoyed fine weather:

“Magnificent day. Walked up to Ashi-no-yu (the whole party with the addition of a Major Clarke from Colombo), & met Sir Geo[rge]. Bowen¹³ near the top. Fine view of the coast E[ast]. of Odawara, & the summit of Ōyama. [John H.] Gubbins suffering fr[om]. acute pains in the legs. Plunkett & I tried to support him in walking, when he uttered a terrifying shriek. On to Hakone, where we lunched. Splendid view of [Mount] Fuji, with the usual patch of snow on the south side. On the way back Clarke & I ascended Futago yama; very hot climb. Took tea with Gubbins & came back after dark, running a good way down the path.”

The next day was rainy, but on October 13th it

“[b]egan to show signs of clearing up, so P[lunkett]. & I started for Otome Tōge [mountain pass], getting there in 3¼ h[ou]rs. including a stoppage at Sengokuhara. Much mist on further side, no view whatever. Lunched in hut at the top. Returning, mist had partly cleared; pretty view of Sengokuhara basin, and of the lake, Ōjigoku &c. Sir Geo. Bowen to dinner. Very fond of anecdote-telling and talking French with a bad English accent; fine old Irish gentleman of 63, good classical scholar, wrote Murray's Guide to Greece.”

Satow returned to Tokio the next day, and in the afternoon of October 15th “paid calls on Corps Diplomatique & Japanese Princes & Ministers.”

On the 16th Satow went “[w]ith Sir Geo[rge]. Bowen to Museum.” This was presumably the Tokyo National Museum which opened in 1872 and in 1882 moved to Ueno Park, its current location. In the evening they had “Dinner at Inouye's to Sir Geo. Bowen: sat between Matsugata and Mori Arinori.¹⁴ Party more sociable than ever before. Plunkett has clearly improved our relations [from the way they had been with Parkes].”

From October 17th to 23rd Satow stayed with the Hannens in Yokohama where he met Basil Hall Chamberlain and others. He went with the Hannens to the theatre at Asakusa on the 26th, and dined with Chamberlain again on November 2nd to meet Lieutenant Albert George Sydney Hawes, his co-

author of the *Handbook for Travellers in Central and Northern Japan* (Kelly & Co., Yokohama, 1881). Satow also noted: "Have nearly concluded purchase of a house [for his family] in Fujimi-chō, Shi chōme."¹⁵

On November 3rd there was a "Ball at Rokumei kwan¹⁶ for the Mikado's birthday." Then on November 6th Satow attended a dinner given in his honour:

"Dinner given to me at the Kō-yō-kwan by old Date [Munenari of Uwajima], Yoshida Kiyonari, Shiwoda Saburo.

Miyamoto, Nakai Kōzō, Watanabe Kōki, Ishibashi & a host of other persons who had belonged to the [Japanese] Foreign Office during the time I have been in Japan. Everything in Jap[ane]se. style, dancing girls &c. Yoshida made a complimentary speech in English, to w[hi]ch. I replied my regret at leaving a country where I had spent so much of my life, but there was compensation in the belief that Japan was destined to achieve a leading place among the nations of Asia, & I had never had any doubt about her future since 1868 &c. We drank then [to] 'the Prosperity of Japan'. Went away early."

On the next day (November 7th) Satow attended a Garden Party at the Palace:

"The Mikado [Emperor Meiji] looked more idiotic than ever, & c[ou]ld. only mumble some inarticulate words w[hi]ch. meant nothing; he is horribly ugly.¹⁷ Little Takehito¹⁸ looked nice. Dined with [seismologist John] Milne, met Dr. Henderson & a lawyer named Latham from Shanghai. The [Fujimi-cho] house bought & paid for today."¹⁹

From November 8th to 15th Satow left Tokyo for one of his favourite places in Japan: Nikko. He truly loved Lake Chuzenji, and always made a point of visiting whenever he could. When he returned to Japan as Minister in 1895 he had a villa constructed by the lake, and between 1895 and 1900 he visited no less than 31 times, the longest period being about seven weeks from July 29th to September 20, 1898.²⁰

On November 19th Satow "[r]ead paper before Asiatic Society of Japan on the 'Relations of Japan with Siam in the 17th century.' Crowded meeting at Summers' house."²¹ This was later published in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Volume

13, Part 2, 1885) as 'Notes on the Intercourse between Japan and Siam in the Seventeenth Century' (see below).

Satow's Visit to Japan in 1886 (June 23rd – September 2nd)

Satow's second visit to Japan, granted for rest and recuperation from the debilitating heat and unsanitary conditions of Siam (to escape from which he later requested a different posting) was slightly longer than the first: it was over two months from his arrival in his usual first port of call (Nagasaki) to leaving from the same port, while the first visit had been about seven weeks. Yet he did not entirely rest: he conscientiously updated himself on Japan's treaty revision developments, and there are two copies in the Satow Papers of semi-official letters written by him from Japan in this period.²²

Satow reached Nagasaki on the morning of June 23rd in a boat with two army officers (Lt. Cols. Ellis and Barker) who were travelling the world to report on coastal defences, and the Tokyo-based missionary Rev. Hugh Waddell and his family. He went ashore and drank tea with Consul James Joseph Enslie and the student interpreter Arthur Morrison Chalmers.

Two days later he was at Kobe:

"Ellis, Barker & I with the doctor went to the [Nunobiki] waterfall in the forenoon, and climbed thence up to the halfway ridge towards Mayasan [Mt. Maya]. I felt very fatigued, and had no difficulty in inducing the others to turn back. Afterwards [Consul James] Troup came off to see me, and I went to drink tea with him and his wife."

On June 27th Satow underwent quarantine procedures before reaching Yokohama:

"The whole crew & passengers had to go into hot baths, & the clothes they wore coming ashore were then fumigated or baked or steamed. The consequence of this was that I had an attack of fever. Getting to Yokohama, found the [Judge Nicholas John] Hannens, Whitfield & [Consul Russell Brooke] Robertson come off to meet me, and elected to accept the Hannens' invitation for a few days. As soon as I got to their house went to bed, & sweated off the fever, so that by 5 o'clock in the afternoon

was well enough to call on the Baynes & drink another cup of tea with them.”

By June 29th Satow had recovered sufficiently from his fever (treated by Dr. Erwin Baelz) to begin reading the papers on treaty revision at the legation in Tokyo:

“See that Plunkett has got F.O. permission to work independently of other Powers if necessary...I never believed the F.O. w[ould]. do it. Conference has gone back to Inouye [Kaoru]’s propositions of 1882. Plunkett & [German Minister Theodor von] Holleben proposed this, after it had been discovered that the other scheme put forward in May last was unworkable. Frenchman much disgusted at the turn things have taken. Rest of the cabinet are supposed not to be very friendly. Conference is now adjourned till October, in order that the home Gov[ernmen]ts. may have their say. Suppose they all agree, (& the Fr[ench]. man is prob[ably]. the only adverse one) then the Japanese have to complete their codes and present them in an authorized English version to the Powers within 2 years of the ratification. If that is done, the Jap[ane]se. will throw open the country with jurisdiction over foreigners outside Treaty limits, & after 3 years more they will have jurisdiction in the [foreign] settlements. So it all turns on their being ready with their codes. The conference may also go to shipwreck on the details in October & that is more than probable.”

Satow celebrated his 43rd birthday in Yokohama on June 30th: “Mrs. Hannen sent me a charming Imari plate as a birthday present.”

On July 2nd he

“[c]alled on Itō [Hirobumi] by app[oin]tm[en]t. He was very gracious. Talked a great deal ab[ou]t. Siam, & a little about Treaty Revision & R[ai]lw[a]ys. Looks somewhat old & worn. He is now Minister President of the Council & has immense power; the others are dwarfs. I do not quite understand how he sh[ould]. have so much preponderance.”

The next day Satow called on the politician and founder of the Liberal Party Gotō Shōjirō 後藤象二郎 (1838-1897) with Plunkett. Gotō did not mince his words:

“It w[ould]. take him several interviews to explain all his views. The FRR. [Foreign Representatives] were kept in ignorance of the real state of things by the Gov[ernmen]t. The balls & social entertainments, Ladies’ Bazaar & so on were dust thrown in the eyes of Foreign Powers. Gulf betw[een]. the Gov[ernmen]t. & people. Use of unauthorized torture by police. Mishima²³ & his road fr[om]. Fukushima to Tochigi; heavy taxation & brutal proceedings. Popular commotion, & anti gov[ernmen]t. movement resulting in trial of 70 men for treason; they had simply been driven into acts w[hi]ch. resembled insurrection by shocking oppression. Then the muzzling of the press & public meetings. The Gov[ernmen]t. had shown ultra-German tendencies, entirely ignoring the power & prestige of England in the east. The present [Treaty] Revision proposals he approved of in principle, but he thought Gov[ernmen]t. were playing a false game. Inouye’s proposals of 1882 had been made with the expectation that they w[ould]. be rejected by England & other PP. [Powers]. It was by promising this that he had induced the other members of the Cabinet to sanction them. Now the Germ[a]n R[epresentative]. had gone back to them & the Gov[ernmen]t. in a few days had quite veered round, & had adopted them again. Several members of the cabinet greatly opposed. He feared that the discussion of the details in October w[ould]. disclose the hollowness of the negotiations. The Jap[ane]se. people w[ould]. not stand by & see all sorts of reforms made for the sake of Europeans, of w[hi]ch. they w[ould]. not share the real benefit.”

Satow analyzed the meeting with Gotō, for which he did most of the interpreting, in the same diary entry:

“Plunkett thinks, & I agree with him that this talk is an attempt to use him as a catspaw [tool] to upset the Ministry; that Gotō & his friends fear that the success of the negotiations will strengthen the Gov[ernmen]t. & that they are trying to discredit the latter for the purpose of defeating the revision scheme. I think so too partly. It appears however that a good deal of what Gotō said, especially ab[ou]t. Mishima, &

the hollowness of the social efforts made by Inouye are quite true. G[otō] is of course liberal to the backbone. Ōkuma I regard as in the main a political adventurer. Then the allusion to Germany was no doubt intended to set P[lunkett]. ag[ain]st. Holleben (it was not skilful). Result, one must not be led by sympathy with any political party. In every country the opposition has a great deal to allege ag[ain]st. the “Ms”. [Ministers?]”

Later in the same day Plunkett and Satow called on Inoue Kaoru who was “[v]ery happy ab[ou]t. the [Treaty] Revision. Holleben & Plunkett had helped them by proposing return to the propositions of 1882. Expressed his gratitude to Plunkett.”

On July 7th Satow called on Mutsu Munemitsu

“who said much the same things as Gotō, but more moderately. It is quite 12 yrs. since I have seen him, but he became friendly & open almost at once. The only attempt at diplomatic conceal[men]t. was in reference to Goto, but he soon dropped it, & said ‘I mean him’. He knows the chief points of Treaty revision, but is troubled ab[ou]t. the app[oin]tm[en]t. of judges. Professes himself very English in tendency. Does not think there will be any great influx of foreigners or foreign capital. Does not wish the transition period to be too long. Thinks it necessary to diminish the landtax by 10 millions, to impose income tax, & death duties. Much illicit tobacco dealing.”

Two days later, Satow called on another Anglophile, Ōkuma Shigenobu.

“School²⁴ is not quite so flourishing as might be, owing to competition of state-supported schools w[hi]ch. give greater advantages. Country very poor, owing to contraction of the currency; no opening for investment in commerce, so people put it into gov[ernmen]t. bonds &c. Hollowness of gov[ernmen]t. credit. But worst of all the police system; must be changed fr[om]. top to bottom. Brutality of police officers, chosen fr[om]. Shizoku [士族], who treat lower classes as being of another race. Itō has to shut his eyes to a great deal that goes on, w[hi]ch. he is powerless to remedy. Still the pres[en]t. people were strongly seated, & the opposition c[ou]ld. not

upset them.

I found he knew the latest proposals of Plunkett & Holleben, & he said he quite approved, tho’ he feared there might be difficulties ab[ou]t. details in Oct[obe]r. in relation to app[oin]tm[en]t. of judges, also the Frenchman troublesome. But on the whole he was pleased. Rather desired to see foreigners in the interior; sheep farming & cotton factories might result. He will support, and the opposition newspaper will likewise. Does not consider time has come for re-entering the gov[ernmen]t.”

On July 10th Satow

“[d]ined at Itō’s with Plunkett & Gen[era]l. Cameron. Afterwards to an assembly in the Great Hall of what until lately was the Engineering College. Jap[ane]se. swells very few. The Party was given by Watanabe Hiromoto [1848-1901], president of the new ‘Imperial University’ & his wife. Japanese ladies in European costume dancing quadrilles & lancers [sets of quadrilles], & walking ab[ou]t. arm in arm with their partners. In the morning we had attended the prizegiving of the Univ[ersit]y. when Plunkett pronounced a capital address.”

On July 11th Satow

“[c]alled on Terashima [Munenori of Satsuma, 1832-93], who seemed to take a very pessimistic view of all that had been done since the revolution, especially in the reform of the landtax. He did not know the latest development of Treaty revision, so I told him as a strict secret. He approved, but thought difficulties w[ou]ld. arise in connection with the app[oin]tm[en]t. of judges. Considers that no benefit will be derived from the institution of a Parliament in 1890. It is only bringing 600 ignoramus together to talk ab[ou]t. what they do not understand. Has written a pamphlet in Engl[ish]. on the subject, & will give me a copy. On the whole he talked sensibly enough fr[om]. the point of view of a critic who believes no good can ever come of men’s exertions to better social conditions...”

The next day Satow

“[c]alled on Mori [Arinori], who is now

Min[iste]r. of education; he talked nothing else. Is friendly to the Romaji kai, but believes the result aimed at by them will be reached thro' the wider knowledge of English w[hi]ch. the teaching of that language in all the middle schools will bring about. His father dying of jaundice, & other family troubles."

On July 13th Satow went to Yokohama and called on the American physician Dr. James Curtis Hepburn (1815-1911) who created the Hepburn Romanization system: "He is 72 & she 68. Has nearly finished stereotyping 3rd edit[io]n. of his dictionary."

On July 16th Satow

"[r]eturned Yamao [Yozo]'s call. He talked a good deal about Ōye Taku & his associates, & did not seem to think much of Mutsu or any of them. Then to a Japanese dinner at Count Inouye's house on Torii-zaka, where Brinkley lived and after him Anderson.²⁵ Yamagata, Yoshikawa (originally a doctor of Awa ni Shikoku) young Sameshima, Asada, a sec[retar]y of Inouye's who almost talked my head off after dinner, & several other Jap[ane]se. Kirkwood, Stevens, Denison, Palmer & Brinkley. The latter listened just like a Jap[ane]se. to conversation betw[een]. Inouye & myself."

From July 17th to 23rd Satow was at Hakone enjoying walks and fresh air. Then on July 24th he left Tokyo by train for Utsunomiya and Nikkō where he joined the Plunketts and Layard. He stayed there, making the most of the chance to recuperate and take exercise by the lake and in the hills, until August 15th. The next day he dined privately with Dr. Baelz.

From August 17th to 24th he was again at Hakone:

"Spent this time at Hakone; it rained mostly every day, & the only 2 walks I had were to Gongen of Moto Hakone, & once on the hills towards Mishima, where the view was fine along the coast and over Idzu [Izu 伊豆], tho' the lake and m[oun]t[ai]ns. round were enveloped in cloud-rack [groups of drifting clouds]. Thus had time to write several quires of Chiengmai journal."²⁶

On August 26th Satow saw Goto again: the first part of their discussion was about the reformist

activist Korean Kim Okkyun金玉均 (1851-1894) who advanced Western ideas in Korea:

"Gotō thought the latter [Kim] had been very hardly [harshly] treated. When he was over here he came often to G[otō]. who conceived a great liking for him. He was of a family that had always been opposed to Chinese domination and his grandfather had died for the part he took ag[ain]st. China. Kim & G[otō]. were of opinion that the development of Korea was impossible if Chinese influence were not got rid of. But the party needed money and arms. These G[otō]. promised to try to procure for him. K[im]. went back to K[orea]. and wrote that the time had now come to strike a blow. He however did not need G[oto]'s. help as he had found unexpected sympathy fr[om]. Takezoye, who formerly very pro-Chinese & a great admirer of Li Hung-chang, had fallen in with his projects, & was encouraging the King to throw the Chinese over; he had given some Murata rifles²⁸ to the King to "smite" the Chinese with. It was evident that a coup d'etat was on the point of taking place..."

Next they discussed Treaty Revision:

"G[otō]. says many people fear the admission of foreigners to residence in the interior on equal terms with natives; it w[ou]ld. place the common Jap[ane]se. at an immense disadvantage. There used to be a proverb that if 2 Samurai lived in a village they would ruin it. He thought that when the details of the proposed treaty came to be discussed difficulties w[ou]ld. arise. The Jap[ane]se. people w[ou]ld. not be glad to receive the blessings of political freedom on acc[oun]t. of foreigners. Freedom ought first to have been accorded, & then the Treaty c[ou]ld. be revised. Press laws & public meetings reg[ulatio]ns. were such as foreigners could not submit to. Hence they w[ou]ld. have to be modified."

To this Satow replied thus:

"I said the object of the Foreign RR. [Representatives] was to put the relations of Japan with the rest of the world on an ordinary footing, but that as a sudden & complete abandonment of extraterritorial jurisdiction was not to be thought of, its gradual extinction had been provided for, and in the interests of

his own country I hoped the opportunity now afforded w[ould]. not be lost. Japan was the first of the countries where extra-territoriality had prevailed to find a way out of that condition, & this sort of pre-eminence sh[ould]. not be lightly abandoned. But he did not seem to be quite convinced.”

The conversation continued with discussion of the Parliament:

“We spoke also of the Parliament of 1890, & I pressed him not to abandon his post as a liberal leader, but to offer himself as a candidate. He, Ōkuma & Mutsu sh[ould]. enter parliament, so that their views might be exposed in a constitutional manner. Of the constitution to be granted he c[ould]. not say anything, but prob[ably]. the Cabinet w[ould]. try to keep as much power to themselves as possible, and throw obstacles in the way of himself and his friends being returned.”

Goto returned the compliment:

“He expressed the hope that I sh[ould]. come back to Japan as Envoy, & said that my knowledge of the history of the last twenty years & of the language made it much easier for him to consult me than an Envoy to whom he must speak thro’ an interpreter. I replied that nothing w[ould]. please me better. I had fr[om]. the first taken a great interest in Japan, & I believed I sh[ould]. be able to serve her during the difficult years w[hi]ch. w[ould]. ensue on the new Treaties coming into force, by smoothing over the friction that w[ould]. be likely to occur on the introduction of new machinery.”

Satow then wrote tellingly in square brackets of his ambition and confidence in his abilities:

“[I really think they c[ould]. not do better than send me to Japan as Plunkett’s successor.]”

However, Plunkett left Japan in 1887, to be followed by Hugh Fraser (1888-94), and Hon. P.H. Le Poer Trench (1894-5) before Satow returned as Minister, 1895-1900.

The next day (August 27th) Satow went down to Yokohama to prepare to leave Japan. The stay had certainly been good for his health, but also a chance to update himself on the current state of affairs with regard to Treaty Revision and other important matters. He left Japan via Kobe, where he met

William Gowland (1842-1922) the mining engineer and archaeologist:

“Gowland came down fr[om]. Ōzaka, & after tiffin[ing] [lunching] with him at the Troups where also were the Pownalls of the R[ai]lw[a].y. dep[artmen]t. returned with him to Ōzaka to look over his collection of finds fr[om]. dolmens, w[hi]ch. are very good. Spent the afternoon with him & returned by 6.25 train. Extremely good man to give up a whole day, & come all that way for me. Got away at 11 p.m.”

On September 1st Satow was once more in Nagasaki, where he shopped for *omiyage* (souvenirs), much as a modern traveller by air might do at an airport before leaving a country:

“Reached Nagasaki about 9 and left a little before six. Went ashore to [J.J.] Enslie, & then to the curio dealer Satō where I bought 5 pieces Satsuma, 1 ōkawachi, 2 Kameyama and 4 pieces of old Hirado; also a suzuri bako [writing box 硯箱] of gold lacquer with irises on inside of lid, & a fubako [box for letters 文箱], decorated with quail and flowers: 26 yen for the whole lot of porcelain, 33 yen for the two pieces of lacquer. Also at Furuya’s two pieces of sepulchral pottery for 2½ yen.”

Satow’s Research into Japan-Siam Relations

The other aspect of Satow’s focus on Japan while he was in Siam – aside from the two trips to Japan described above – was his academic interest in the historical relations (“intercourse”) between the two countries. As already mentioned above, on 19 November 1884 he read a paper to the Asiatic Society of Japan (which he had helped found in the early 1870s) titled ‘Notes on the Intercourse between Japan and Siam in the Seventeenth Century’, of which the opening paragraph reads as follows:

“During the century which elapsed from the discovery of Japan [in 1543] by Fernam Mendez Pinto [1509-83] and the almost complete closure of the country to foreign intercourse in 1636, its people abandoned their old habits of seclusion, and a spirit of enterprise arose which prompted them to undertake long voyages, extending even to the remote coasts of Western Europe. The Embassy despatched in 1582

under the auspices of the Jesuit missionaries to Philip II and the Pope was a conspicuous sign of the times, and thirty years later the mission of Hashikura Rokuyemon [1571-1622] was equally celebrated. The merchants of Ōzaka, Hirado and Nagasaki eagerly embarked in the trade to Annam, Tonquin, Cambodia and Siam, to Formosa, the Philippine Islands and the Malay peninsula. Japanese mariners engaged themselves on board the vessels of all the nations that frequented the open ports, and a small number even made a voyage to England and back. Others found employment as soldiers in the service of the Dutch in Macassar and Amboyna, or displayed their audacity and talent for stratagem in the capture of the Dutch Governor of Taiwan. Vessels suitable for navigating the open seas replaced the small junks in which they had formerly ventured timidly down the Yellow Sea, or crossed the straits of Krusenstern and Broughton by passing from island to island, and entered a spirited competition with the sailing ships of their European rivals for the trade of the Far East.”

Satow continues by pointing out that most histories of foreign relations with Japan are concerned with Europeans in Japan itself, “while the history of Japanese adventure in foreign countries has still to be written.” He states that the materials

“...are widely scattered, and must be gathered together before a continuous narrative is possible. In the present paper I have endeavoured to collect some hitherto unprinted documents and to present in condensed form notices from a variety of writers, with the object of illustrating the relations of Japan with Siam in the 17th century, and thus contributing to the study of a period rich in interest for Europeans.”

Satow dates the earliest record of written communication between Japan and Siam to a letter from the Shogun (Ieyasu) to the King of Siam in 1606. However, trade had clearly taken place earlier, since the original permissions (‘passports’) for Japanese junks to trade date back to 1592.

From Richard Cocks’²⁹ Diary (published by the Hakluyt Society) Satow learned that he sent a junk named *Sea Adventure* to Siam more than once. In 1614 William Adams (Miura Anjin) commanded her:

“He left Hirado in December, 1615, and returning thither in July, 1616, after an absence of seven months and a half. He went down with the northeast monsoon, and the southwest blew him back. The pass (called go shiu in; from the vermilion stamp of the Shōgun appended to it) had to be surrendered at the end of each voyage, and a new one taken out.”

Satow gives English translations of various letters in Chinese, Japanese and Siamese (Series I-VI). He also notes “In the *Tsūkō Ichi-ran* [Book. 269] there are notices of visits of Siamese junks on six several occasions, namely in 1680, 1687, 1693, 1716, 1718 and 1745.”

And further

“Yamada Jizayemon Nagamasa (for that is his full name) settled in Siam early in the 17th century, though the precise date is unknown. In return for aid given to the King in war against a neighbouring state, he is said to have received a royal princess in marriage, and to have been created Governor of a province... That Yamada was a man of some consequence in Siam is evident from his being in position to give letters of introduction to the envoys who were despatched to Japan on more than one occasion...”

The tale of Yamada continues over several pages (pp. 186-191) until he is poisoned and dies in 1633. The repercussions for the Japanese settlement at Ayuthia near Bangkok (which can be visited in the present day) including military actions continue for several more pages. Satow notes:

“It may be added that the site of the Japanese settlement at Ayuthia is still pointed out by tradition, though all traces of habitations have disappeared, its occupants having probably perished or been dispersed along with the rest of the population on the occasion of the sack of the city, by the Burmese in 1767. No living descendant of the Japanese nation is now to be found in Siam.”

Satow concludes with acknowledgements:

“In concluding these pages, I must thankfully acknowledge the assistance I have received from His Royal Highness Prince Devawongse in the identification of Siamese names, and from Mr. E.H. French and Mr. W.J. Archer, both of H.B.M.’s Legation, who have kindly furnished the references to Siamese History.”

Concluding Remarks

It is clear that Japan was much on Satow’s mind throughout the period of his self-imposed ‘exile’ for promotion in Siam. Whether it remained so for the period thereafter from 1887 to 1895 when he was on leave and served in far-off Uruguay and Morocco before he finally returned to Japan as Minister, is less clear. However, he was no doubt pleased to return in 1895, gaining both promotion and a chance to be with his young Japanese family.

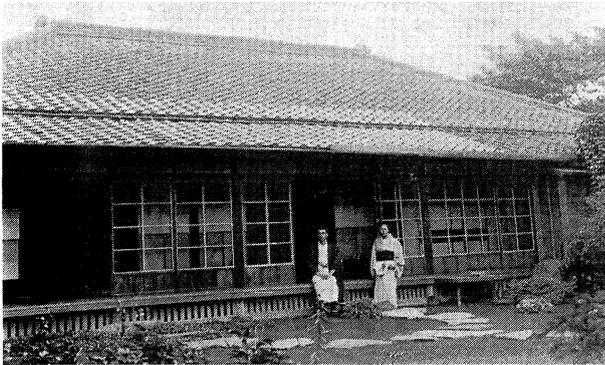
Notes

- ¹ In 1876 Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, granted Satow the local rank of a Second Secretary in the Diplomatic Service “as long as he holds the post of Japanese Secretary...It must be clearly understood that this local rank does not give him any claims to promotion in the diplomatic service, & that it will cease on his giving up the Japanese Secretaryship. You will also let it be known that the rank is given to Mr. Satow personally as an acknowledgement of his services, & that his successor will have no claim to the same privilege.” (Derby to Sir Harry Parkes, Copy of Consular No. 20, F.O. July 20, 1876, in Satow papers PRO 30/33 1/1).
- ² This paper arises from a presentation given at the EAJS (European Association for Japanese Studies) conference at Kobe University on 24 September 2016. I also presented at the IAJS conference at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto on 10 December 2016, but this was on the subject of the Northcroft Papers held at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand relating to the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal of 1946-48. An abstract of that presentation is contained in the current edition of the IAJS Newsletter.
- ³ See Satow’s diary for 11 December 1883. (Ruxton, 2016, p. 47)
- ⁴ “On going to [my lodgings at] Welbeck Street found a letter from [Thomas] Sanderson, informing me that Lord Granville had had much pleasure in submitting my name to the Queen [Victoria] for the post of Agent &c. at Bangkok. Went off to Plunkett & received his congratulations.” (Diary, 13 January 1884; Ruxton, 2016, p. 50.)
- ⁵ “Left London fr[om]. Holborn Viaduct at 7.55, and over to

Calais, not rough passage.” (Diary, 25 January 1884) He was promoted to Minister-Resident in the diplomatic service early in 1885.

- ⁶ See Hugh Cortazzi, ‘Sir Francis Plunkett, 1835-1907: British Minister at Tokyo, 1884-87’ in *Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Volume 4 (Japan Library, 2002), Chapter 3, pp. 28-40. It begins: “In the history of Anglo-Japanese relations in the latter part of the nineteenth century Francis Plunkett has been overshadowed by the image of his forceful and abrasive predecessor Sir Harry Parkes. But Plunkett, who went on from Japan to more senior posts in Europe and who retired with a string of high honours, played a key role in the efforts which were made while he was in Japan, to achieve agreement on revision of the ‘unequal treaties’ between the Western Powers and Japan. These efforts proved abortive but he was not responsible for the failure and his contribution to Anglo-Japanese relations deserves to be recorded.”
- ⁷ It is interesting that in the letter to Dickins he uses the name “Yedo” but in the letter to Aston on the next day he uses “Tokio”.
- ⁸ See also Satow’s diary entry in Singapore on February 26, 1884: “Back to the ‘Clyde’ to see the Plunketts off. Both have been extremely kind, and I wished I were going back to Japan with them, instead of being an exile in Bangkok.” (Ruxton, 2016, p. 54)
- ⁹ Noguchi Tomizō, an Aizu samurai, had been Satow’s servant and private secretary in the 1860s, and had accompanied him back to England in 1869 for study, initially at Satow’s expense and later paid for by the Japanese Government. He had returned to Japan in 1875, and had died in January 1883. (Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 170, 281-2.)
- ¹⁰ On October 8th he wrote to Bonar enclosing a draft for \$120, “with instructions to pay \$5 a month to Noguchi’s widow, beginning with Oct[obe]r 31, until the whole is exhausted.” Thus he provided a pension for 24 months.
- ¹¹ “Went to see the children in the afternoon: both are healthy, gentle and charming. Eitaro hasn’t grown much since the year before last, but is more sensible. Hisayoshi is of fair complexion and looks much like my younger brother Theodore.” These are apparently Satow’s first diary references to his sons, born in 1881 and 1883. Satow occasionally resorted to romanised Japanese (romaji) which indicates his concern that his private diary might be read by others at some point.
- ¹² See <http://www.fujiyahotel.jp/en/index.html> (accessed 9 March 2016).
- ¹³ Sir George Ferguson Bowen (1821-1899) was a British author and colonial administrator. At this time he was the ninth Governor of Hong Kong (1883-87), on vacation in Japan.
- ¹⁴ Inoue Kaoru was Foreign Minister (1885-87), attempting to renegotiate Japan’s unequal treaties. Matsukata Masayoshi was Finance Minister and later Prime Minister. Mori Arinori had been Minister to Great Britain and was Minister of Education.

- ¹⁵ The house was between Yasukuni shrine and Hosei University and there is a plaque erected by Hosei University on the site.
- ¹⁶ The Rokumeikan 鹿鳴館 was a large two-storey building in Tokyo, completed in 1883. It became a controversial symbol of Westernization in Meiji Japan. Commissioned by Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru and designed by Josiah Conder, it was demolished in 1941.
- ¹⁷ The description of the Emperor in May 1868 given in *A Diplomat in Japan* (p. 371) is less negative.
- ¹⁸ Prince Arisugawa Takehito 有栖川宮威仁親王 (1862-1913). Career officer in the Imperial Japanese Navy.
- ¹⁹ See p.95, *The Ernest Satow Album* (Yokohama Archives of History, pub. *Yurindo*, 2001). for a photograph of the Fujimi-cho house.



- ²⁰ I was invited to give a lecture about Satow and Nikko on 11 September 2016 at Nikko Kanaya Hotel. The written details are at http://www.dhs.kyutech.ac.jp/~ruxton/Ernest_SATOW_and_NIKKO_11_Sept_2016.pdf (accessed 9 March 2016).

- ²¹ Rev. James Summers (1828-91). Editor of the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* after Satow left Japan in 1883.
- ²² See PRO 30/33 14/12. Satow to Currie (25 July 1886); Satow to Sir Frederick Weld (Nikko, 26 July 1886).
- ²³ Mishima Tsuyo/Michitsune 三島通庸 (1835-88) of Satsuma. Governor of Fukushima, then Tochigi prefecture. Satow was introduced to Mishima “who looks a brute & has the reputation of one” on July 10th.
- ²⁴ *Tokyo Senmon Gakko* was founded by Okuma in 1882. It was formally renamed *Waseda Daigaku* (Waseda University) on acquiring university status in 1902.
- ²⁵ Professor William Anderson (1842-1900) taught medicine at the Imperial Naval College of Medicine in Japan, 1873-80. First chairman of the Japan Society of London, 1892-1900.
- ²⁶ This is the account of Satow’s trip to Chiangmai from 1 December 1885 to 4 March 1886.
- ²⁷ Takezoe Shinichirō 竹添進一郎 (1842-1917). Japanese Minister in Korea at the time of the failed Gapsin Coup of 4-6 December 1884.
- ²⁸ The Murata rifle (*Murata jyū*) was the first indigenously produced Japanese service rifle, adopted in 1880.
- ²⁹ Richard Cocks (1566-1624) was the head of the British East India Company’s trading post (‘factory’) at Hirado between 1613 and 1623, i.e. from creation to closure. He wrote a very detailed diary relating to the history of the trading post, the situation of Japan etc. See entry in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.