

The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow Series

The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow, 1861-1869

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With a Foreword by **Sir David Warren**, Formerly Her Majesty's Ambassador to Japan

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The scholar and diplomat Sir Ernest Satow was the best-known Westerner who lived in Meiji Japan. Although he rose to become British Minister to Japan, the most interesting part of his career was the start of it, when he witnessed, and in a small way influenced, the fall of the Bakufu and the Meiji Restoration.

He wrote an account of this in a memoir called *A Diplomat in Japan* in 1921, which was based on the diaries transcribed in this volume. These diaries, hitherto unpublished, reveal the original material from which he crafted his memoir, as well as the material (about one-third of the diaries in total) he omitted.

In various respects, the memoir is a sanitized account, written partly in Bangkok in the 1880s, and completed in retirement at the urging of younger relatives. In *A Diplomat in Japan*, Satow comes across as an assured young statesman, who, with his excellent Japanese and ability to make contact with the key players, was able to perceive the direction that the turbulent and confused events he witnessed was taking. In the diaries, he is a little less assured and not quite so percipient and interspersed with tales of meeting the likes of Saigō Takamori and Sakamoto Ryōma, are stories such as that of the paternity claim against him by a Japanese woman in Nagasaki.

The part of the diaries relating to Satow's stay in China (Shanghai and Peking from January to August 1862) has never before been transcribed or published, and is the most interesting part on a human level. It was an environment in which Satow, aged just 18, was forced to grow up fast, and we see him and his fellow student interpreters behaving badly on numerous occasions. Yet we also see the breadth of his intellect in the books he was reading and his informed interest in everything he saw around him.

The editors have added extensive annotations and explanations to these diaries, making this book an indispensable reference work for students of bakumatsu Japan, and indeed anybody who wants to understand the story of how a very young, very clever, but rather awkward Englishman could have penetrated the very highest levels of the Japanese hierarchy to witness the transformation of the country from a feudal, inward-looking society to one that would become a major industrialized power to shock the world.

The Diaries of Sir Ernest Mason Satow, 1870-83

Edited and annotated by **Ian Ruxton**, Kyushu Institute of Technology

With an introduction by **Sir Hugh Cortazzi**, Formerly Her Majesty's Ambassador to Japan

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This volume of his diaries continues the story up to the time when Satow leaves Japan for subsequent appointments in Bangkok, Montevideo and Tangier, before returning to Tokyo as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in 1895. Although the years 1870-1883 were an interlude between the exciting years of the Bakumatsu and the promotion to Consul General in Bangkok, they give much detail of Satow's journeys under difficult conditions including appalling weather in the interior of Japan, and a firsthand account of the Satsuma Rebellion which was beginning as Satow returned to Japan from Europe in January 1877. There is also an account of a visit to Korea in late 1878, and of the visit to Japan of the British royal princes Arthur and George in 1881. His two leaves in Europe reflect his cultural interests, though Japan is mentioned only occasionally.

The editor has added extensive annotations and explanations to these diaries, making this book an indispensable reference work for students of early Meiji Japan, and indeed anybody who wants to understand the story of how a very young, very clever, but rather awkward Englishman could have penetrated the very highest levels of the Japanese hierarchy to witness the transformation of the country from a feudal, inward-looking society to one that would become a major industrialized power to shock the world.