

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

DIJ History and Humanities Study Group



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(University of Tokyo)

How Meiji Japan Governed Foreigners: Determining Failure and Success of Treaty Revision

To revise the so-called unequal treaties, which Japan signed with the Western powers from the 1850s onwards, was the most important and difficult task of Meiji diplomacy. It also called for various reforms which, to a large extent, shaped the fundamental character of modern politics and society in Japan.

Previous research on treaty revision history, however, has failed to grasp the variety and width of the challenges Japan faced because it was devoted to the well known success story of the quest for abolition of consular jurisdiction. As a consequence, its scope was technical negotiations with the treaty powers for the jurisdiction over foreigners. Instead I propose to focus on Japan's real quest for the restoration of the authority to establish administrative regulations upon foreigners. This approach hopes to clarify the significance of the relations between the treaty revision negotiation and the state building process by the emerging administration.

Based on these findings which I have presented in my 2010 book, in this presentation I will move on to ask what the "administration" was like and how it developed under and against the treaty privileges enjoyed by foreign residents in Meiji Japan. I will illustrate several episodes of disputes between foreigners and the Japanese administration to identify distinctive patterns of Japanese tactics to control foreigners through administrative regulations. This will contribute to a deeper understanding of the development of domestic administration which determined the failure and success of the treaty revision efforts.

Kaoru IOKIBE is Professor at the Graduate Schools for Law and Politics at the University of Tokyo. He mainly works on the political and diplomatic history of modern Japan and has published two books: *Okuma Shigenobu to Seito Seiji: Fukusu Seitosei no Kigen* [Okuma Shigenobu and Party Politics: Origins of the Multi-Party System, 1881-1914], Tokyo University Press, 2004 and *Joyaku Kaisei Shi: Hokenkaifuku no Tenbo to Nashonarizumu* [Meiji Treaty Revision: Prospect for a Unified Jurisdiction and Nationalism], Yuhikaku, 2010.

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum open to scholars working on Japan in any field of the humanities. It is organized by Miki Aoyama-Olschina and Torsten Weber. All are welcome to attend, but registration (weber@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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