On 11 August 1872, Terashima Munenori stepped onto the quay in Liverpool. Sporting a beard like many of his peers at that time, he looked elegant in Western clothes, his slight build and correct bearing lending him a false impression of height. Ozaki Saburō, his travelling companion on the voyage from New York, was struck by his ‘good-natured and sincere manner’, describing him as a man of ‘traditional’ views with ‘a tendency to be a little stubborn at times’. This was Terashima’s third visit to Britain. In 1862 he had been among the party of thirty-six delegates in the Tokugawa Bakufu’s first mission to Europe. In 1865 he had spent several months in London as an envoy for his native Satsuma domain. Now at the age of forty he was back as Japan’s first resident minister to Britain on behalf of the Meiji government.

On his arrival in London a few hours later, he checked into the Langham Hotel and that evening he received a visit from Sir Harry Parkes, his counterpart in Japan. The British minister, home on leave, briefed him on their plans for the following day. In the morning they were to catch a train to Portsmouth and then cross the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Their destination was Osborne House where, on behalf of the Emperor, he presented his credentials to the Queen.

With his scholarly background and reserved style, Terashima’s low profile belied his lasting impact on Meiji politics. Supremely confident in his abilities, he already had considerable experience in diplomatic affairs and held no qualms about confronting envoys of the treaty powers with their own vaunted principles of international law. His arrival in London in the high summer of 1872 marked the onset of a diplomatic duel with Parkes that would unfold over the course of the decade. Conducted generally with decorum, their battle of wills encapsulated the small but significant differences in the broadly cordial relations between early Meiji Japan and Victorian Britain.
'With sunny hair and a sunny smile', Parkes, the spirited champion of British merchants' interests, was a very different personality.\textsuperscript{3} The two men had known each other for several years, and previously their interests had largely coincided as Terashima tempted the Foreign Office with assurances of Satsuma's desire for open trade. Now there was growing discord, however, over the issue that would dominate Meiji foreign affairs, the new regime's stated desire to revise the 'unequal treaties' signed under Tokugawa rule in 1858. The combative British minister had been used to getting his way, but in Terashima he found a formidable adversary who calmly refused to be browbeaten into offering concessions like the pragmatic but short-sighted Bakufu officials of times past. Considering the weaknesses of the fledgling Meiji State, Parkes found his insistence on invoking Japanese sovereignty whenever possible sometimes difficult to tolerate.

AN OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR OF SCIENCE

Given his family background it was hardly surprising that the young Terashima made a name for himself in the world of Dutch Studies (rangaku), and with his sharp intellect and passion for learning, he soon attracted notice as a precocious talent. Born in 1832 near the town of Akune on the East China Sea coast, he was adopted at the age of five by his uncle Matsuki Muneyasu (Juan), a physician with a high reputation. On the orders of the daimyo, Juan had spent several years in Nagasaki studying under Phillip von Siebold, and now he was a leading figure in introducing Dutch-style medicine to Satsuma.\textsuperscript{4}

In 1837, Fujitarō, as Terashima was known as a boy, was taken to Nagasaki, where he grew up surrounded by specialists in science and medicine. He and his uncle lived together with Ueno Shunnojō, clockmaker, student of gunnery and father of Ueno Hikoma, later famous as Japan's first exponent of photography. During the six years he spent in Nagasaki, Fujitarō received an intensive training in Dutch from Japanese interpreters employed at Dejima, in those days the focal point of interest for scholars with an interest in the West.

His first excursion into the corridors of power was in 1841 when Matsuki Juan and Ueno Shunnojō were commissioned by Satsuma to help set up a chemical laboratory in Kagoshima. When they were granted an audience on their arrival, the nine-year-old Fujitarō, too, was presented to the daimyo.\textsuperscript{5} Two years later, when his uncle was again summoned back from Nagasaki to serve permanently in the castle-town, he enrolled at the Zōshikan, the domain's school for samurai in Kagoshima. By the time Juan died in 1845 at the age of fifty-nine, his own standing was already such that, although just thirteen years old, he inherited his position as head of the family. With head suitably shaven and his physician's status indicated by the new name of Matsuki Kōan, he then received orders to train in Dutch Studies in Edo, an honour practically unheard of as he later recalled with pride.\textsuperscript{6}

In the shogun's capital Matsuki went on to attend several private colleges, including the Shōsendō founded by the Dutch-style physician Itō Genboku. There, just as in Satsuma, his academic talents won universal acclaim and by the age of twenty-two he was appointed head of the Shōsendō himself. It was not until his first visit to Europe the following decade, however, that he would fully realize the shortcomings of his education in Edo. Confined to applied sciences, Dutch Studies were largely silent on social disciplines like politics and law. This was why, he concluded, early Japanese overseas travellers were so perplexed by