
East Asia and the Civil War in 1861: International Relations around the Sovereigns' Letters Exchanged between Shōgun and Lincoln

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It is a prevailing view that the preparation of the marriage of the Shōgun Tokugawa Iémochi and Kazunomiya, the younger sister of the Emperor Kōmei, was promoted under the Cabinet of Prime Minister Kuze Hirochika and Foreign Minister Andō Nobumasa during 1861. In the previous year, the Cabinet of Ii Naosuke, the Regent later assassinated, began to plan this marriage and thereafter the Bakufu was forced to embrace the anti-foreign policy of the Emperor, and in 1861, Iémochi wrote his letter to the sovereigns of treaty powers in order to request postponement of the execution of the 3rd article on the treaty ports' and cities' opening. In the United States, President Lincoln replied to the letter by himself. To this President's letter, few attention has been paid in Japan as well as in the U.S, and consequently, the domestic and international backgrounds of the letter and its effect on the foreign policy of the Bakufu have been overlooked or underestimated in the historiography. This article aims to explicate the hardline policy against Japan of the Administration of President Lincoln and the Secretary of State Seward from its beginning, which was caused by the assassination of Henry Heusken, the interpreter of the U.S. Legation in Japan, and the policy changing process to the sending of Lincoln's letter to Shōgun Iémochi. The analysis will be based on the diplomatic records of the Netherlands, Great Britain, and the United States. It will be pointed out that those sources reflect the European governments' evaluations on the ability of the Lincoln administration right after the outbreak of the Civil War. The U.S. administration finally withdrew its plan of military demonstration against Japan, and in place of it, Lincoln's letter and its accompanying letters requested Japan to fulfill the treaty stipulations, demanding duly punishment of Heusken's assassins, or, otherwise, to give satisfaction for the crime at first. The Bakufu accepted the letter and ordered to give satisfaction. Such indemnities were also paid successively to the Netherlands, Great Britain, and France, whose subjects had also been assassinated by antforeign samurais. As a result, the Bakufu suffered from complicated limitations in the diplomatic negotiations caused by repeating demands and concession of indemnities.

Key words: the Civil War, LINCOLN. A, TOKUGAWA Iémochi, SEWARD W., letter of Shōgun, President's letter, the Netherlands, indemnity for casualties of attacks by antforeignism, postponement of execution of articles on the treaty ports' and cities' opening, declaration of Paris (1856)
