

# SIR ERNEST SATOW

BY

**D. C. HOLTOM, Ph. D.**

Member of the Meiji Japan Society

The causes of success in the life of man may be variously enumerated. Three important factors of success are afforded striking illustration in the life and achievements of Sir Ernest Satow, namely, capacity for hard and continuous work which is after all a contribution of will, power to adapt oneself to a changing environment which is the contribution of a fine sense of proportion and of harmony in judgment, and longevity which is the gift of the gods. Satow exemplified the pertinence of all these factors. His enviable records in the two fields of diplomacy and literary scholarship tell the story of a skilled laborer who could sustain his gifts of physical and intellectual strength with the dynamic of a sturdy will. His power of adaptation is seen alike in his versatility and in his unusual ability to pick the major movement in a complicated situation, forecast its development and adapt himself thereto. His great contribution to the successful adjustment of East and West in the early Meiji Era, and more specifically the success with which he directed English diplomacy into an understanding of the potentialities of the revived Imperialist cause, are attestation of the truth of the words just written. And, finally, he lived to the ripe old age of eighty-six. He first came to Japan in 1861. He remained for forty-five years in the diplomatic service of his country; forty years of this time were spent

in the Orient. His active life in the Far East thus practically synchronized with the entire Meiji Era.

Ernest Satow was born in the month of June, 1843, as the third son of Hans David Christopher Satow and Margaret Mason. He died in England, August 26, 1929. His undergraduate education was received at Mill Hill School and at University College, London. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the latter school in 1861 and in the same year began his long and distinguished career in the Orient by entering Britain's consular service as student interpreter in Japan. During his life he was accorded high scholastic honours by some of the greatest universities of Europe. In 1877 the University of Marburg conferred on him an Hon. Ph. D. In 1903 he received an Hon. LL.D. from Cambridge, and in 1908 the degree of D.C.L. from Oxford.

From the beginning he made remarkable headway with the Japanese language. He was the first modern European scholar to gain real proficiency in both the Japanese written language and in the vernacular. Success in these fields won for him in 1865 the position of Interpreter to the British Embassy and in 1868 that of Japanese Secretary to the British Legation. The year 1884 saw him established as Agent and Consul-General at Bangkok. The next year he was appointed Minister-Resident at the same place. In later years he served as Minister-Resident at Monte-Video and again as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Morocco (1893). The year 1895 found him again established in Tokyo. He closed his diplomatic career in the Far East by serving as British Minister at Peking from 1900 to 1906.

Satow's versatility is revealed in the wide range of his literary activities which carried him from the field of

diplomacy to the study of Japanese history linguistics and religion. His published writings cover subjects as widely separated as European finance and Shinto *norito*. His publications include: First and Second Editions of Murray's Handbook for Japan (with A.G.S. Hawes); The Jesuit Mission Press in Japan, 1551-1610; Exercises in colloquial Japanese; The Voyage of Captain John Saris to Japan, 1613 (edited); The Selesian Loan and Frederick the Great, 1916; A Guide to Diplomatic Practice, 1917; and A Diplomat in Japan, 1921. Students of Things Japanese will always be particularly indebted to him for his contributions to the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan. He was in fact one of the founders of this Society. His most noteworthy papers in the Transactions deal with Shinto. His essays on "The Revival of Pure Shintau" (Vol. III) and "Ancient Japanese Rituals" (Vols. VII and IX) are of sufficient merit to insure for him a permanent place as an authority in Japanese history and philology, even if he had written nothing else.

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花ならば

さぐりてもみむ

今日の月

埒保己一

“I hear thee tell of the bright moon’s rays,  
In words that offer a meed of praise;  
But, alas! these heralds from the skies  
Make no appeal to my blinded eyes.”

—*Hanawa-Hoki-ichi*—