

TOKIO, 8th FEBRUARY 1882.

H. E. SIR HARRY S. PARKES, K. C. B.; G. C. M. G.,

*H. B. M. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary,
and Consul-General in Japan.*

SIR,

We, the undersigned British subjects resident in Japan, beg most respectfully to invite your Excellency's attention to the existing restrictions on foreign travel and residence in the interior of this country, and pray that you will take an early opportunity of bringing the subject under the notice of the Japanese Government, in order that some modifications of these restrictions may be obtained.

We beg to assure your Excellency and the Government of Japan that we fully recognise the right of the Government to enact regulations for foreign travel in the interior. But we feel that some of the existing regulations are unduly stringent and irksome, and that they bear oppressively both upon foreigners and also upon the Japanese with whom they have to do while in the interior.

We refer more particularly, in the first place, to the inconvenience and delay to which, by the present regulations, we are subjected. Your Excellency is aware that residents in Tokio and Yokohama can seldom obtain passports in less than *two* days; while at the other open ports a period of *ten* days, and in some instances one of *two* or *three weeks*, is required. It thus sometimes happens that in the interim between the application for and the receipt of a passport, circumstances arise which render the contemplated journey useless or impossible, and the passport has to be returned unused.

Secondly. The holder of a passport while in the interior often finds it necessary to return to the treaty port for a few hours or a day. According to the present regulations his passport, in those circumstances, becomes null and void, and a renewal is necessary before starting out again; thus occasioning additional inconvenience and delay.

Thirdly. We consider that the limitation of the object or purpose of travel to one of two things, viz., (1) Benefit of Health or (2) Scientific Research, is uncalled for, and is frequently embarrassing to a large class of persons who desire to travel for purposes proper in themselves, and in harmony with the principles underlying the present progressive policy of the Japanese Government, but not specified in the existing regulations. For instance, some persons desire to travel simply for pleasure; some to see the country and become acquainted with the people and their customs; some for the study of the Japanese language and exercise in it; while others desire to visit friends, or to give counsel and instruction to those of the Japanese who have embraced the Christian Faith. It is therefore a hardship to be restricted to a plea of health or scientific research.

Fourthly. Foreigners while travelling in the interior are frequently refused accommodation or subjected to excessive charges by hotel-keepers, who allege as a

reason, the trouble, annoyance and expense to which they are put in consequence of the stringency of the instructions issued to them by the authorities in reference to the copying of passports, notifying of officials, etc., etc.

We beg to direct your Excellency's attention to the facilities for travel in the interior of China, which our countrymen there enjoy, in conformity with the stipulations of Art. IX. of the Treaty of Tientsin, herewith appended, and ask that your Excellency will use your influence with the Japanese Government to obtain for us, in common with subjects or citizens of the other Treaty Powers, similar privileges in Japan.

We venture to suggest the following modifications of the existing regulations, viz.:-

I.—That British subjects have the right to travel freely, under a system of passports, to all parts of the Empire of Japan.

II.—That when desired by the applicants, passports be available for *one year*, during which the holders may come and go at pleasure.

III.—That for greater convenience, passports be made obtainable from the chief local authority at each of the treaty ports, through our respective Consuls, and that no declaration as to object of travel be necessary.

IV.—That the existing regulations, according to which Japanese hotel-keepers, and others with whom foreigners may be temporarily lodging while travelling in the interior, are required to notify the police of the arrival and departure of a foreign guest, to copy his passport, etc., be either abolished, or so modified that they shall be less irksome and oppressive than they are at present.

We beg also that your Excellency will endeavour to persuade the Japanese Government to remove those restrictions on freedom of movement to which such foreigners as are employed and live in the interior by special permission of the Government are now subjected. Without a passport such foreigners are not at liberty to be absent from their own houses for a single night, not even on the invitation of a Japanese friend or for the purpose of procuring medical advice, nor can they visit any of the treaty ports for the transaction of the most urgent business; and in obtaining and using passports they are subjected, at least in some parts of the country, to all the delay and inconvenience to which foreigners in general are liable. It appears to us that as no foreigner can reside in the interior without first having obtained the sanction of the Government, such *sanction* ought to carry with it all reasonable liberty of movement.

We admit that when the present regulations were framed, there may have been reasons why the Japanese Government, desiring on the one hand the welfare of its own people, and on the other the safety of foreigners, should impose some stringent restrictions on foreign travel in the interior. But it seems to us that these reasons have now altogether or in great measure ceased to exist, and that the Government might therefore readily consent to such changes in the existing regulations as we have indicated. Many of us have had several years experience of the country and people, and have made many friends among them; and we feel that such modifications would be for the convenience and benefit of both foreigners and natives, and would tend to confirm and extend the amicable relations which exist between us.

Praying that Your Excellency will endeavour to secure for us the privileges we ask for,

We have the honor to remain,

Your Excellency's humble and most obedient servants.

signed by 240 British subjects resident at the Treaty Ports and Tokio

ARTICLE IX. OF THE TREATY OF TIENTSIN.

"British subjects are hereby authorized to travel, for their pleasure or for purposes of trade, to all parts of the interior, under passports which will be issued by their Consuls, and countersigned by the local authorities.

"These passports, if demanded, must be produced for examination in the localities passed through. If the passport be not irregular, the bearer will be allowed to proceed, and no opposition shall be offered to his hiring persons, or hiring vessels for the carriage of his baggage or merchandise. If he be without a passport, or if he commit any offence against the law, he shall be handed over to the nearest Consul for punishment, but he must not be subjected to any ill-usage in excess of necessary restraint. No passports need be applied for by persons going on excursions from the ports open to trade to a distance not exceeding 100 *li*, and for a period not exceeding five days," etc., etc.