

## PREVIEW

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# Baron Suematsu in Europe during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05): His Battle with Yellow Peril

By Masayoshi Matsumura

Translated by Ian Ruxton

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This book is published through Lulu Press, Inc. (lulu.com) which is part of Lulu Enterprises, Inc., 3131 RDU Center, Suite 210, Morrisville, North Carolina 27560, U.S.A. First published September 1, 2011.

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ISBN: 978-1-105-11202-7



Suematsu Kenchō in Meiji 35 (1902) when he was Minister of the Interior



Suematsu and family from the same photograph





Suematsu at the time of the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877



Japanese legation members at Notting Hill, London, 1878-9. Suematsu is on the far right in the back row.

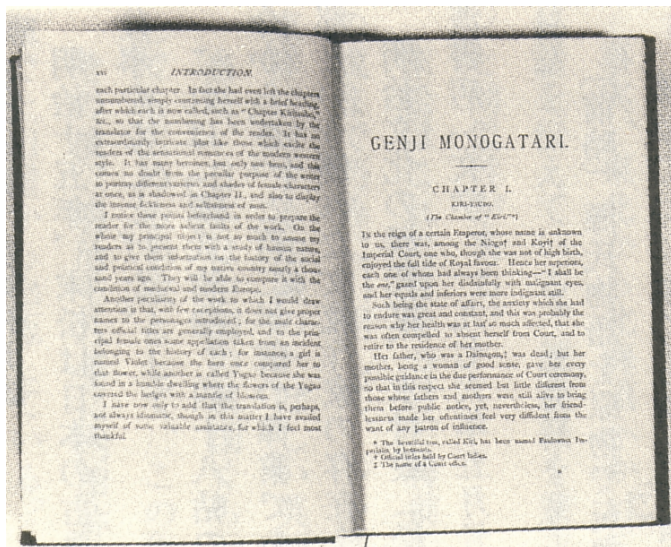


Young Suematsu in England



St. John's College, Cambridge where Suematsu was enrolled





The first edition of Suematsu's translation of *Genji Monogatari*



From Suematsu's name card used in the House of Representatives election of 1894



Suematsu with the editorial team of *BōChō Kaiten Shi* in 1898



Victoria Station, London where Suematsu arrived on 14 March 1904.





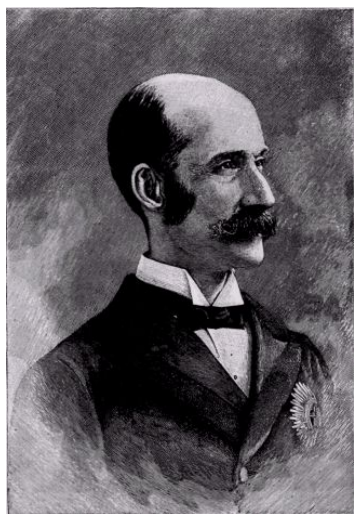
The Constitutional Club, No. 29 Northumberland Avenue, London where Suematsu spoke about strengthening the Anglo-Japanese Alliance on 5 May 1904. Nelson's column is visible in the back of the photograph. The building was demolished in the 1960s. (Photograph courtesy of [www.victorianlondon.org](http://www.victorianlondon.org) )



Suematsu in *Review of Reviews* article, July 1904



Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain (*Taiyō* magazine, 9-6)



Lord Lansdowne (Public domain image)





◀ 枢密院議長・伊藤博文侯爵



▲ ポーツマス講和会議での日本首席全権委員・外務大臣 小村寿太郎



◀ 戦費調達のため欧米へ派遣された日本銀行副総裁・高橋是清。末松の若い頃からの友人

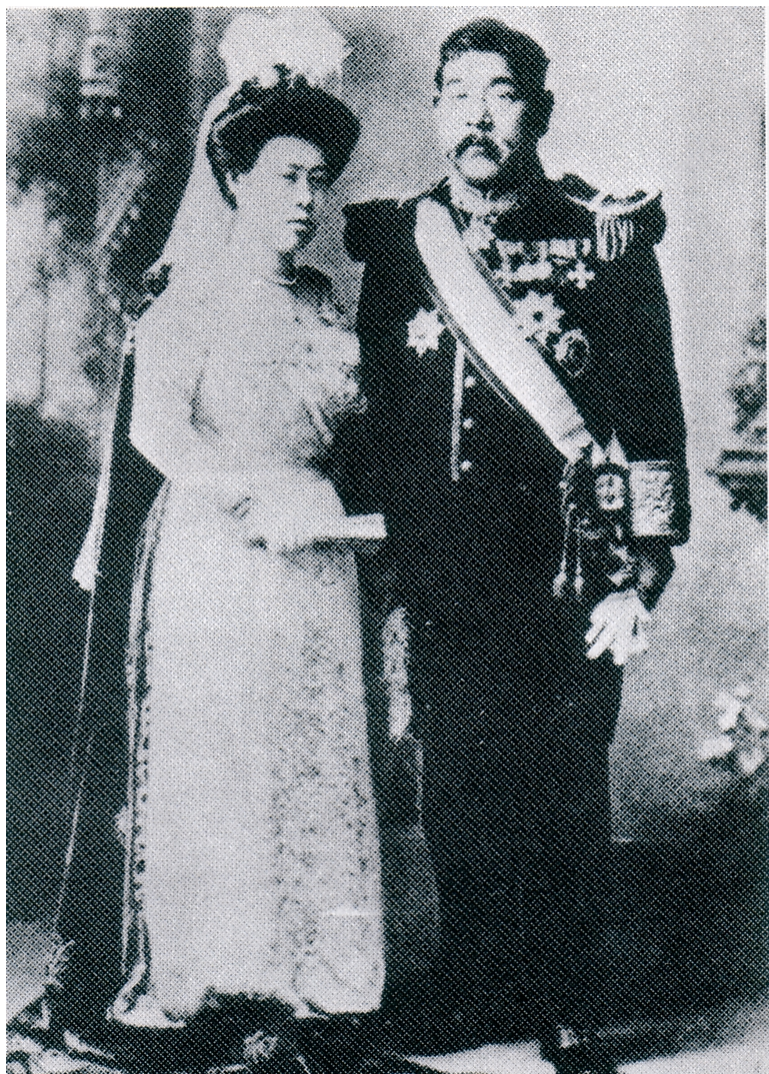


◀ 情報蒐集の達人、当時の駐ドイツ公使・井上勝之助（三康図書館蔵『太陽』1219）



▲ 米国での金子堅太郎男爵（1904年ボストンで撮影したもの；Courtesy of the Library of Congress）

Japanese statesmen and diplomats. Clockwise from top left: Itō Hirobumi, Komura Jutarō, Kaneko Kentarō, Inoue Katsunosuke, Takahashi Korekiyo.



Suematsu and Ikuko in 1906. He is dressed as a Privy Councillor.





The house where Suematsu was born (Author's photograph)



The house where Suematsu was born, photographed c. 1900.



Suematsu's birthplace memorial stone in Maeda village, Yukuhashi, Fukuoka prefecture (Translator's photograph)

SUYEMATSU, KENCHO. Matric. Non-Coll., Michs. 1881. S. of Gwanu. B. Sept. 30, 1855, at Buzen, Japan. Adm. pens. at St JOHN's, Oct. 10, 1883, as Kenchio Suyematzu; B.A. and LL.B. 1884; LL.M. 1888. D.Litt., Tokyo Imperial University. Civilian Staff Officer to the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial forces during the Satsuma rebellion, 1877. Elected Member of the House of Commons at first formation of Diet, 1890. Created a Baron, 1895, for distinguished service; and a Viscount, 1907. Minister of Communications and of the Interior, 1900. P.C. Author, *The Risen Sun, a fantasy of Far Japan*, etc. Married the eldest dau. of Prince Ito, of Shiba, Tokyo. Died Oct. 5, 1920. (*Who was Who*.)

Suematsu's entry in *Who Was Who, Alumni Cantabrigienses* Part II, 1752-1900 (Library of St. John's College, Cambridge.)





*Sōrōkaku*, Itō Hirobumi's seaside villa at Ōiso (Ōiso public library)



Yellow Peril in art – “Völker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter” (Peoples of Europe, protect your most sacred possessions) – a popular pen lithograph by Hermann Knackfuss, presented in 1895 to the Tsar by Kaiser Wilhelm II with the request that Eastern bogeys be kept in check. (Public domain image)

## Preface

It is comparatively well-known that just over 100 years ago when the Russo-Japanese War occurred in 1904-05, a lawyer and politician named Kaneko Kentarō (1853-1942) was entrusted with a “special mission” by the heads of the Japanese Government to go to America as an “Ambassador for Public Diplomacy”. He earned the great trust and cooperation of his fellow Harvard University graduate President Theodore Roosevelt, and was also a leading actor behind the scenes at the Treaty of Portsmouth. (See M. Matsumura, *Baron Kaneko and the Russo-Japanese War*, Lulu.com, 2009).

However, at that time there was one more person who was given the same mission (which he himself called a *mōmei* or “sacred task from above”) and crossed over to Europe, and also from his former Cambridge University contemporary (the then Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Balfour Cabinet Austen Chamberlain and his father the former Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain) received great kindness and warm support for his activities which were crowned with outstanding success before he returned to Japan. This was the son-in-law of Prince Itō Hirobumi, the historian and politician Suematsu Kenchō (1855-1920).

There are historical precedents for the despatch of a special mission in wartime to important neutral countries for a long time and the conduct of public diplomacy overseas: during the American War of Independence Benjamin Franklin was so engaged in Paris, and it is not rare in the countries of Europe and America. However, Japan had not acted in such a way during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), and the Russo-Japanese War ten years later saw the first attempt by the Japanese state to conduct public diplomacy. It arose from the necessity of preventing a renewed outbreak of ‘Yellow Peril’. This has been considered to be part of the careful planning and appropriate measures undertaken by the Japanese Government.

Moreover in fact it was Suematsu himself who, in his efforts towards a victorious conclusion to the Russo-Japanese War, had strongly proposed to the Japanese heads of government that it was necessary to appeal through a campaign conducted overseas aimed at the third party countries of Europe and America that Japan had been forced to take up



arms against Russia for *raison d'Etat* (her national interest) and her diplomatic policy etc., and to make the people of neutral countries accept the statements of Japan by all available means. And it was Suematsu who put his proposals into practice. Therefore it is proper that Suematsu and his activities should be forever recorded as great achievements.

So bearing in mind the backdrop of the circumstances of Europe at that time, in what ways and with what examples and style did Suematsu appeal strongly to the people of Britain, France, Germany and other European countries on behalf of Japan and the Japanese people? It is in an attempt to answer this question and tell the answer to as many people as possible that the author has taken up his pen and written this book.

This preface is almost a direct English translation of the preface which I provided for the Japanese edition which appeared in autumn 1986 as *Po-tsumasu e no michi: Kōkaron to Yōroppa no Suematsu Kenchō* (Tokyo: Hara Shobō). This is because even though 25 years have passed since then, it is almost unnecessary to change the gist of what I wrote at that time. This is the reason why the Japanese preface is being used almost without alteration as the preface for this English translation.

Masayoshi MATSUMURA

Autumn 2011

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## Chapter One – The Necessity of an overseas publicity campaign explained to the leaders of the Meiji government

### 1 – Going up to Tokyo from the warm climate of Ōiso

#### *Sōrōkaku*

In that year it was only just after the first day of spring (*risshun*, February 4<sup>th</sup>) and Ōiso in the Shōnan area about 100 kilometres southwest of Tokyo was warm as usual. There under a clear and broad blue sky the Pacific breakers both large and small tirelessly pounded the shore and retreated and came again on the long sandy beach, causing a vague smell of the sea to drift in the air.

This place had been known since the ancient time of the Kamakura period (1185-1333) as a highway staging post, and in the Edo period (1600-1867) began to attract wealthy merchants and became an area of economic significance. Eventually after the Meiji Restoration (1868) it became Japan's first sea bathing resort in 1885. Thereafter many prominent politicians and financiers built villas here and it developed into Japan's most luxurious health resort, and it retains that reputation to this day.

The time was the beginning of 1904, the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Meiji's reign. Since the previous July negotiations between Russia and Japan had already been heading for a dead end. However within Japan, even though the heavy pressure of the mighty country of Russia was keenly felt, there was a laudable atmosphere of refusing to be downhearted pervading the whole nation. And in this situation the severe cold of late January somehow passed and February came, and matters came to the point where there seemed to be no other way to preserve the independence of Japan than to suddenly break off relations with Russia.

In this tense situation of which he was also well aware, the then Baron Suematsu Kenchō who suffered from high blood pressure was avoiding the cold gusts of wind in Tokyo and was spending the winter in the slightly warmer Shōnan health resort. This was a natural choice for him. He had already left Tokyo at the beginning of the previous autumn and at the recommendation of his doctor moved north for a while to the cool of Karuizawa (Suematsu Kenchō, *Kōshi Itō Kō* [My Father-in-Law Duke Itō], Volume 12). "For the time being I will do as I please,

and take a leisurely trip to the country” and “indulge myself in the clean air of the mountains” he wrote in a letter to his father-in-law. (*Itō Hirobumi Kankei Monjo*, [Letters relating to Itō Hirobumi] Volume 5, Letter No. 155). After resigning from his post as Minister of the Interior in Itō’s fourth cabinet in June 1901 (Meiji 34) he had sought to avoid the troubles of *Seiyūkai*<sup>1</sup> party matters and rest his slightly overweight body. And at length with the coming of winter he moved south to the warmth of Ōiso where his father-in-law had a villa named *Sōrōkaku*, probably at the recommendation of his wife Ikuko.

Most of the *Sōrōkaku* building as it remains today (1987) has been transformed into a high class Chinese restaurant, and little is left of how it used to appear. However, there still remain some traces of foreign influence such as high stained glass windows and fine Japanese paintings from the Meiji Emperor: *Shizuka Gozenmai no Zu* and *Minamoto Yoshiie Gosannen no Eki no Zu* and other screen paintings (*fusuma-e*).<sup>2</sup> There is the living room where Itō must have relaxed after hard work and rested from his labours, and his study where he pondered deeply. The atmosphere of the good old days can be savoured in these rooms.

If one then looks outside from the front garden in front of the living room and study there is a wonderful view of deep green pine woods stretching towards the sea. Nowadays the *Gokendō* memorial to five Meiji statesmen (Sanjō Sanetomi, Iwakura Tomomi, Ōkubo Toshimichi, Kido Takayoshi and Itō Hirobumi) has been moved to the former residence of post-war Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru 1.5 kilometres to the west, but in former times when one looked at the sea from the living room or study of the *Sōrōkaku* it must have been visible on the east side of the pine woods to the left.

The deep green pine woods have now been separated from the beach by the Seishō expressway, but they extend for at least several hundred metres in the clear air and bright sunlight of Shōnan almost as far as the sandy shoreline. And further on the sudden deep blue of the Pacific Ocean continues.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Rikken Seiyūkai* (Friends of Constitutional Government) party had been founded by Itō Hirobumi on September 15, 1900. It was the most powerful party from 1900 to 1921. [Translator’s note]

<sup>2</sup> The *Sōrōkaku* 滄浪閣 was sold by the Seibu Group in 2007. [Translator’s note]



The waves which well up from the ocean are apparently called ‘Sōrō’ and are the origin of the name *Sōrōkaku* [House of the Ocean Swell]. In the collection of Chinese poems from the Warring States period (476-221 B.C.) called *Soji* is written:

*Sōrō no mizu sumaba, Motte waga ei wo arō beshi,*

*Sōrō no mizu nigoreba, Motte waga ashi wo arō beshi.*

(“If the water of the waves is clear, you can keep the crown on your head; but if the water of the waves is dirty, you should stay at home.”)

This immortal poem is by none other than Qu Yuan (circa 343-277 B.C., J: Kutsugen). The ‘ei’ of the poem is the lace which ties a crown. The meaning is broadly that when the world is peaceful you can go to work in public service and realise your ideals, but if the world is in chaos you should retire from it and look after yourself. Indeed the name *Sōrōkaku* was appropriate for the temporary residence of Itō Hirobumi who always considered and decided whether to resign or remain in office according to the course of events unfolding in the world.

### **Suematsu goes up to Tokyo**

It was after “the end of January, when Russo-Japanese diplomacy was approaching a real crisis” on February 4, 1904 in the first ten days of the second lunar month (*kisaragi*) when the spring was still young, and the several plum trees in the garden just off the veranda of the *Sōrōkaku* were beginning to bring forth their reddish blossoms as the weather became warmer. However, the sunsets were still early and the red sun had almost set in the West and the sandy beach of Shōnan was once again shrouded in the gathering twilight when Suematsu, Member of the House of Peers (*kizokuin*) who “happened to be at Ōiso in Sōshū [Sagami] staying at the *Sōrōkaku* received a telegram from Prime Minister Katsura Tarō in Tokyo demanding an urgent meeting. (*Nihon Gaikō Bunsho*, NichiRo Sensō V, Additional note to Document No. 459.)<sup>3</sup> However, as Suematsu’s wife Ikuko was Itō’s second daughter, he

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<sup>3</sup> *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho*, NichiRo Sensō V [Japanese Diplomatic Documents, Russo-Japanese War, V]. Hereafter *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho* will be referred to as *NGB*.

may have already heard by chance privately of the “very serious meeting” being held at the Imperial palace that same afternoon.

In fact at the palace that day from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. a so-called *Gozen Kaigi* (a council in the presence of the Meiji Emperor) was held for two and a half hours. It was attended by the five elder statesmen (*genrō*) Yamagata Aritomo, Inoue Kaoru, Ōyama Iwao, Matsukata Masayoshi and Itō himself, and also five cabinet members: Prime Minister Katsura, Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō, Army Minister Terauchi Masatake, Navy Minister Yamamoto Gonbei and Finance Minister Sone Arasuke. With His Imperial Majesty in attendance all present stated their views frankly and after a heated discussion at last a resolution to declare war on Russia was given Imperial sanction.

Late in the evening of that same day of course Suematsu must have dropped everything and hurried from Ōiso up to Tokyo. Nowadays it takes barely one and a half hours to travel the distance from Ōiso to Tokyo, but using the transportation of 100 years ago it probably took several hours. At any rate, what can his feelings have been as he sat in the train looking out of the window into the darkness and seeing his own reflection in the glass?

No doubt he felt that if it came to war with Russia, even though Japan was still a small and rising country in East Asia, she could not possibly lose. Or looking at matters in another way, in order to defeat the Great Power of Russia, the most vital thing was to explain Japan’s war aims and diplomatic policy to the main neutral countries in America and Europe sufficiently to make them understand, and so make them sympathisers and supporters of Japan. For this purpose, Kenchō himself would have to be willing to go, if any instructions would be given to him, to those countries and conduct a publicity campaign there. And this urgent summons by telegram from Prime Minister Katsura was probably connected with this ‘Visit to the West’.

These were his most likely thoughts and reflections. And indeed there were good grounds for Suematsu to be thinking along these lines.

### A letter of self-recommendation

As a historian Suematsu was able to learn excellent lessons from the past with which to view the future, and in fact less than a month before on January 11<sup>th</sup> from his temporary residence in Shōnan he had sent a letter of self-recommendation to the then President of the Privy Council Itō Hirobumi and the Chief of the General Staff Yamagata Aritomo in the following terms (*Itō Hirobumi Kankei Monjo*, Volume 5, Letter No. 158):

*At present in this national state of emergency I believe it is a matter of extreme urgency that means be found to rouse the public opinion of American and European countries, in particular those of Britain and the United States, and increase sympathy for Japan. I believe that this is already well understood, but the matter requires an even higher level of attention. For this purpose an individual with the appropriate qualifications who will give his all to this matter should be sent to Europe and America. If you agree with the above, then putting aside false modesty I believe that, unworthy as I am, I am now the person best suited to this task, and I am sure that I am not wrong about this. So if Your Lordships will give me your recommendation I will immediately seek to obey and engage earnestly in this public service. If you agree to the above proposal, I shall begin in a few days time.*

*I humbly await your instructions.*

*January 11<sup>th</sup>*

*Respectfully*

*Kenchō*

*To Their Lordships*

*Shunpo [Prince Itō]*

*Gansetsu [Prince Yamagata]*

In this letter is written “At present in this national state of emergency” from which we cannot conclude with certainty that he was already predicting clearly the imminent Russo-Japanese War, but whether Japan would soon be plunged into war with Russia or not, at that time of “national emergency” he was without doubt pleading the extreme urgency of the need to awaken public opinion in America and Europe, especially Britain and the United States, and make it sympathetic to Japan. Moreover for this purpose he mentions “an

individual with the appropriate qualifications” and as he regarded himself as such a person it is clear that he was not thinking of a great ambassador representing the state with the status of a diplomat, but a mere private citizen without any official titles. And “unworthy as I am” he requested of the then leaders of the government to be allowed to undertake this important duty.

Again he writes “putting aside false modesty I believe that, unworthy as I am, I am now the person best suited to this task” so we can say that it was an attempt to sell himself to the most influential people.

At any rate, for Suematsu both Itō and Yamagata were people with whom he was in close contact and to whom he could make a direct proposal regarding his abilities.

### **First meeting with Itō**

Going back 29 years previously to 1875 (Meiji 8) when Suematsu was still a young newspaper reporter aged 20 years, he first met Itō Hirobumi in a street in Tokyo’s Ginza district. At that time he was using the pen name ‘Sasanami Hyōji’ and was working at the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun* (forerunner of today’s *Mainichi Shinbun* newspaper), beginning through translations to introduce and comment on conditions overseas and to write well-crafted editorials, and very soon he was introduced to Itō through the new president of the company from 1876, Fukuchi Gen’ichirō (1841-1906, also nicknamed ‘Ōchi’).

Anyway, at the end of 1874 (Meiji 7) when Fukuchi joined the newspaper company Suematsu was already winning a reputation, and when the young man heard of the veteran’s joining he declared “My work is finished.” But in one episode his close friend Takahashi Korekiyo (1854-1936) apparently admonished him saying “He is a master and senior in age, so why don’t you learn from him?” This shows that for a while Suematsu was discouraged by the appointment of the famous writer Fukuchi as president designate. Nevertheless, in the following year (1875) when in his own words he was in appearance no more than “a threadbare and unkempt young apprentice writer”, Suematsu was taken by Fukuchi on a walk through the Ginza, when a western-style horse carriage approached and a voice called out to Fukuchi from within the carriage.

The owner of the voice was none other than the then high government official Itō Hirobumi. Then, after several words of greeting had been exchanged between Itō and Fukuchi, the latter introduced Suematsu to the most influential high official. Of course Itō was probably aware of Kenchō's writing from the newspaper, and even though it was a chance meeting, thanks to that encounter in a Ginza street from that time on he began to receive warm favours from the man who would in the future become his father-in-law. (Kaneko Atsuo, *Suematsu Kenchō to 'BōChō Kaitenshi'* [Suematsu Kenchō and 'The History of the Fluctuating Fortunes of Suo and Nagato provinces'])

Thus several days later when both men again came across each other in the street, Itō invited Suematsu to his house in Akabane in the north part of Tokyo, and gave him several Western books which he had once bought in Stockholm including Machiavelli's *Roman history* (probably *Discourses on Livy*). However, three years later in 1878 (Meiji 11) Suematsu would be sent to Britain with the duty of investigating English and French historical methods (historiography). When one considers that this duty was mainly to study the methodology of historical narration and the techniques for compiling history, and how in his latter years he oversaw the symbolic compilation of *BōChō Kaitenshi*, his life as a historian can be said to have already begun at that moment in Tokyo.

Suematsu's encounter with Itō would lead to him receiving further favours from General Yamagata Aritomo.

### **The Satsuma Rebellion and the 'Letter advising Surrender'**

At the end of the year in which Suematsu was introduced by Fukuchi to Itō he was very soon at Itō's recommendation transferred from the world of newspapers to that of government service, and became a commissioner in the Central Office of the Council of State (*seiin goyō gakari*) in January 1876. At that time a Japanese warship named *Unyō* had made a show of force in the Korean Bay of Kanghai and had been fired on from the island of Kanghai (just north of the present-day Inchon international airport) and Suematsu went over to Korea accompanying special plenipotentiary Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840-1900) to solve the so-called 'Island of Kanghai problem' (*Kōkatō mondai*). There he played a part in the drafting of the Japan-Korea Friendship Treaty (Treaty of Kanghai) which opened up the country of Korea.

After completing his duties in 1876 he returned to Japan and worked first in the Ministry of Works as a minor official (*gon no shōjō*) then a 4<sup>th</sup> grade legal officer in the Legislative Bureau (*Hōseikyoku*), but from the beginning of the following year (1877) the world changed suddenly. Saigō Takamori (1828-77) and others who had been defeated in the debate over subduing Korea (*SeiKanron*) raised troops in Kagoshima where the snow was falling for the first time in 50 years, and began marching up to Tokyo leading an army of 15,000 men.

Thus when the disturbances generally known as the Satsuma Rebellion (*Seinan no eki*) occurred Kenchō, while working at the Legislative Bureau, was promoted to be a secretary at the Council of State (*Dajōkan*) and in June 1877 was ordered to go to Kumamoto and very soon after that transferred to the Army Ministry and appointed to the headquarters of the Supreme Commander, and became an adjutant of General Yamagata Aritomo. And then according to the changing situation of the conflict he took part in various battles throughout Kyushu, but when the fighting was drawing to a close and at last Saigō's army was put to flight in the Sekiryō mountain range in Miyazaki, and in the end was cornered at Shiroyama in Kagoshima. There the commander of the government forces Yamagata Aritomo, now that Saigō's road to victory was closed, sent him a letter dated September 1<sup>st</sup> which later became famous as the 'Letter advising Surrender'. The letter begins "Yamagata Aritomo presents his most humble respects to the great General Saigō Takamori. For some years he has been your acquaintance and feels that he knows your mind deeply etc." In fact the person who drafted the letter was none other than Suematsu Kenchō, a fact which was already well known and a general topic of conversation.

At any rate Yamagata borrowed Suematsu's pen, and in the final section of the 'Letter advising Surrender' appealed earnestly to Saigō in the following terms:

*As the leader of young vigorous men of the nation and resisting a great and famous army through many fierce battles, your fame is already well enough known to the world. But now most of your brave generals are dead or injured, and your military power is daily growing weaker. It is already clear that at last your Satsuma army is unable to keep its spirit. I don't know what further things you can hope to achieve, except a hopeless defensive battle. If you, Saigō, rather than lengthening the rest of your days a little, prefer to cause hundreds and thousands of dead and wounded from both armies, there is nothing that I, Aritomo, can say to you. I beg you to judge for yourself as*



*you hold matters in the palm of your hand, and that you will save both armies from death and injury. Ah, you are a man famous and known in the world. About our national constitution naturally it is not only Aritomo who knows what you really think. But the matter has been settled over many years of public debate. I, Aritomo, earnestly beg you as your old friend. Writing this my tears fall like rain, and I cannot express myself at all. Please sympathize with the sincerity of my pain.*

This famous letter advising surrender was much praised even within Saigō's army, but the effort was in vain, and finally on September 24<sup>th</sup> the government army launched an all-out attack on Saigō's army. Then the greatest rebellion of the Meiji era before long drew to a close.

### 3 – “Go to Europe!”

#### **The memorandum of the ‘Sacred Mission’**

Returning to the main narrative, in the early spring of 1904 (Meiji 37) when the plum blossoms were beginning to open on February 5<sup>th</sup> in the Japanese capital the situation was tense.

The German doctor and personal physician to the Japanese Imperial family Erwin Bälz (1849-1913) who was staying in Tokyo wrote in his diary for that day: “Yesterday there was an ‘important meeting’ in the Palace. The various *Genrō* [elder statesmen] Itō [Hirobumi, 1841-1909], Yamagata [Aritomo, 1838-1922], Matsukata [Masayoshi, 1835-1924], Ōyama [Iwao, 1842-1916] and Inoue [Kaoru, 1835-1915] and the cabinet ministers attended. The meeting lasted a long time. At last a conclusion was reached. In fact now is the critical moment. Anyway from England there are already reports that Japan's enthusiasm [for war] and power are beginning to be doubted.” (Erwin Baelz's diary, of which the Japanese translation was published in small *bunko* size by the Iwanami Publishing Co.)

At any rate, after the urgent summons by telegram from Prime Minister Katsura, Suematsu had hurried from Ōiso up to Tokyo on the previous evening despite the lateness of the hour, and early on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> visited the Prime Minister at his official residence in Nagata-chō. In the presence of Foreign Minister Komura, Katsura briefly prefaced his request by stressing its urgency, then asked Suematsu that he make arrangements as quickly as possible to go

overseas, and in particular to Europe. There he should base himself in London and begin to make speeches and write so as to clarify to the nations of Europe what Japan's purposes were in making war with Russia at the present time. He should also seek to gain their sympathy and prevent further outbreaks of Yellow Peril sentiment. The request of the two ministers of state is set out in the following document from NGB, *NichiRo Sensō* V, Appendix to Document No. 459:

- 1. At this time the very existence of our country Japan is under threat from Russia which is our great enemy. If, in addition to this, we lose the sympathy of the countries of America and Europe, this will be a grave and serious problem for us. Moreover, we must use all available means to gain the sympathy of the Western countries.*
- 2. In order to achieve this, we must make statements of Japan's position in detail, and explain the rights and wrongs as between them [Russia] and us [Japan] to the world.*
- 3. The so-called 'Yellow Peril' theory easily moves popular sentiment in Western countries, and is now suddenly on the rise. If we do not fight against this argument with all our might, there is a risk that all the countries of Europe will in reality view us as a common enemy. Therefore we must use all available means to deal a blow to Yellow Peril and thus prevent a joint intervention by European countries.*
- 4. In each country we are represented by Ministers, Consuls etc. Of course they are performing their duties to the best of their ability, but the scope of their work is limited and fixed. Consequently we expect fully committed work beyond that and which is adaptable to circumstances.*
- 5. We do not necessarily stipulate the methods or place of residence. However, London should be the main base of your activities and also you should work to strengthen the Anglo-Japanese alliance.*
- 6. With regard to finances we are about to appoint a separate person to be responsible for this, but you should work also to facilitate the raising of foreign loans.*

And as Suematsu himself later referred to the mission given to him at this time by the heads of the government to travel overseas as “a sacred task from above”, we will also call this the ‘memorandum of the sacred mission’.

Anyway Suematsu who had been entrusted with the above mission to Europe had, as already mentioned, proposed the idea himself in his letter to Itō and Yamagata, and in that letter of proposal he had also

written in a direct application “If you agree with the above, then putting aside false modesty”, showing neither hesitation nor reluctance. Thus it was natural that he should respond as follows to the two ministers, Katsura and Komura: “Though my ability is limited I shall immediately proceed, and accept the heavy responsibility.”

After that he returned to his house at Shiroyama in Shiba, Tokyo (now there are high buildings on the site and there is no trace of the residence), and began to make hasty preparations for his departure on his overseas campaign. First he took up his pen and wrote to his father-in-law Itō who was presumably at his official residence as President of the Privy Council in Reinanzaka. (*Itō Hirobumi Kankei Monjo*, Volume 5, Letter No. 159):

*Most Honored Father-in-Law,*

*I have just met with the Prime Minister. I was earnestly entreated to depart as soon as possible, and agreed to do so. Now I am making preparations to leave by the next available boat. If you have instructions or letters of introduction for me, I beg you to send them privately. Dispensing with the normal courtesies, in haste*

*Ken [Kenchō]*

*To Prince Shun*

At this time Suematsu was a vigorous and energetic 49-year-old in his prime.

## **The selection of attendants**

Then Suematsu had to make haste to select two attendants to accompany and assist him on the trip to Europe for publicity activities. The two men who immediately came to mind were Takakusu Junjirō D. Litt. (1866-1945) who had served as his private secretary when he had been Minister for Communications in Itō's third cabinet (January-June 1898) and was still a young professor of Tokyo Imperial University, and Tomoeda Takahiko (1876-1957), his junior from his native province of Buzen.

Takakusu had graduated from Oxford University, and was at the height of his powers as a 39-year-old. He was continuing his studies on his way to becoming a great and famous scholar of Buddhist philosophy. Also Tomoeda had graduated from the Literature course

of Tokyo Imperial University and was very proficient in German. He would later be an associate professor of Tokyo University and director of the Japanisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft, and also an honorary professor of *Tokyo Bunrika Daigaku* (later *Tokyo Kyōiku Daigaku*, Tokyo University of Education), but at that time he was still a young man aged 28 years. From Suematsu's point of view, Takakusu had already worked as his private secretary, so there was a sufficient relationship of trust between them. Also in Tomoeda's case, apart from general work, Suematsu who understood the French language too, probably expected him with his linguistic skill in German to assist in publicity activities in the German-speaking countries of Europe.

### **One man sent to Europe, and one to America**

Suematsu himself had already written in his proposal letter of January 11<sup>th</sup> quoted above that “an individual with the appropriate qualifications who will give his all to this matter should be sent to Europe and America” and had further stated “putting aside false modesty I believe that, unworthy as I am, I am now the person best suited to this task”. His proposal had been considered and discussed in the three weeks or so up until February 4<sup>th</sup> by Itō, Yamagata, Katsura and other government heads, and the result was a concrete plan whereby the proposer himself, Suematsu Kenchō, would be sent to Europe and base himself in Britain, while Kaneko Kentarō would be sent to America. It would thus not be just one person sent to campaign in the whole of Europe and America, but they would be divided into two areas and one man would be sent to each of them.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, in the evening of February 4<sup>th</sup> after the *Gozen Kaigi* meeting in the presence of the Emperor in which it had been resolved to break off diplomatic relations with Russia Kaneko Kentarō who like Suematsu was a baron and member of the House of Peers and was also from Fukuoka prefecture (though Suematsu was of the Kokura clan and Kaneko was of the Kuroda clan, and in the Boshin war of 1868-9 the Kokura clan fought as an ally of the former shogunate's army, while the Kuroda clan was part of the new government's army) was at his home in 3-ban cho, Chiyoda ward, Tokyo city. From there he was urgently summoned by telephone to see Itō at the President of the Privy Council's official residence where he was given a similar special mission to that of Suematsu, and repeatedly urged that he should go as soon as possible to America. But unlike

Suematsu's case, this was a sudden proposal for Kaneko. Moreover, as he had visited America three times since graduating from Harvard University and returning to Japan and knew the pro-Russian situation in America very well, he felt that the success of such a difficult mission was doubtful, and it took a few days for him to overcome his hesitation and reluctance.

This was a fair reflection of the extent of the difficulties which could be predicted in accomplishing this duty, however important it was.

Incidentally, regarding the above-mentioned movements of the Japanese heads of government, as far as the author is aware, until both Suematsu and Kaneko arrived safely at their destinations nothing was reported in newspapers at the time, probably from the necessity of guaranteeing their safety. But the German doctor Bälz seems to have heard the news from somewhere. In his *Diary* for February 9<sup>th</sup> he wrote: "Envoys are being sent to both Britain and America. The former Interior Minister Baron Suematsu will go to Britain, and the former Justice Minister Baron Kaneko has been ordered to visit America. They will both apparently try to raise money." Indeed Bälz was well-informed as one might expect. But of course they were not going "to raise money". This was a separate matter, and in fact the person responsible for raising the funds lacking to conduct the war by going to Europe and America was the then Vice President of the Bank of Japan, Takahashi Korekiyo (1854-1936). In the end he was fortunate in receiving huge sums of financial aid from an American Jewish capitalist who hated Imperial Russia named Jacob Schiff (1847-1920). But we shall not go deeply into that process here.