

12 Emperor Meiji's Letter to President Grant on Iwakura Mission, 1871<sup>20</sup> Mutsuhito, Emperor of Japan, etc., to the President of the United States of America, our good brother and faithful friend, greeting:

Mr. President: Whereas since our accession by the blessing of heaven to the sacred throne on which our ancestors reigned from time immemorial, we have not dispatched any embassy to the Courts and Governments of friendly countries. We have thought fit to select our trusted and honored minister, Iwakura Tomomi, the Junior Prime Minister (*udaijin*), as Ambassador Extraordinary and have associated with him Kido Takayoshi, member of the Privy Council; Ōkubo Toshimichi, Minister of Finance; Itō Hirobumi, Acting Minister of Public Works; and Yamaguchi Masanao, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs as Associate Ambassadors Extraordinary, and invested them with full powers to proceed to the Government of the United States, as well as to other Governments, in order to declare our cordial friendship, and to place the peaceful relations between our respective nations on a firmer and broader basis. The period for revising the treaties now existing between ourselves and the United States is less than one year distant. We expect and intend to reform and improve the same so as to stand upon a similar footing with the most enlightened nations, and to attain the full development of public rights and interest. The civilization and institutions of Japan are so different from those of other countries that we cannot expect to reach the declared end at once. It is our purpose to select from the various institutions prevailing among enlightened nations such as are best suited to our present conditions, and adapt them in gradual reforms and improvements of our policy and customs so as to be upon an equality with them. With this object we desire to fully disclose to the United States Government the condition of affairs in our Empire, and to consult upon the means of giving greater efficiency to our institutions at present and in the future, and as soon as the said Embassy returns home we will consider the revision of the treaties and accomplish what we have expected and intended. The Ministers who compose this Embassy have our confidence and esteem. We request you to favor them with full credence and due regard, and we earnestly pray for your continued health and happiness, and for the peace and prosperity of your great Republic.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hand and the great seal of our Empire, at our palace in the city of Tokyo, this fourth day of eleventh month, of fourth year of Meiji.

Your affectionate brother and friend,

Signed

Countersigned

Mutsuhito

Sanjō Sanetomi, Prime Minister

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<sup>20</sup>Adopted from the official translation as reproduced in *The New York Times*, March 5, 1872.