

РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК  
ИНСТИТУТ ВОСТОЧНЫХ РУКОПИСЕЙ  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО КУЛЬТУРЫ РФ  
РОССИЙСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ КУЛЬТУРОЛОГИИ

# НИКОЛАЙ НЕВСКИЙ: ЖИЗНЬ И НАСЛЕДИЕ

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В сборник вошли статьи отечественных и зарубежных ученых, основанные на докладах, представленных в рамках «Невских чтений» — международного симпозиума в честь 120-летия со дня рождения выдающегося российского востоковеда Николая Александровича Невского (1892–1937). Проблематика статей определена разносторонним характером исследований, которым посвятил себя ученый: мифология, синто, айноведение, язык и культура Рюкю, тангуоведение и др.

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A. P. Jenkins

WILLIAM BOARD, 1854:  
ARGUMENTS FOR REOPENING HIS CASE<sup>1</sup>

Introduction

The common narration of the Board incident suggests that on 12 June 1854 three members of the Perry expedition acting together on an outing in Naha entered several private houses in search of liquor. Two of them sought food in a market, one quarrelling with an official, which led to a stoning. In his drunken course, Board, the third, entered a house where he raped a woman. He left but, pursued by a stone-hurling mob, he ran to the port where he was drowned. Some 24 days after Board's death, and on his return from Edo, Perry pressed for the arrest of the felons and for a treaty. He got both, allowing the Ryūkyūan authorities (*ōfu*) to sentence the murderers to supposed exile.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Background knowledge of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Ryūkyū is assumed, *simpliciter*, a Chinese Empire outer tributary state while at the same time inconspicuously but tightly controlled from 1609 by Satsuma on behalf of the Shogunate, and knowledge of Commodore Perry's occupation of Naha sea roads and 'Tomari' between 1853 and 1854. See 安里進等、「沖縄県の歴史」山川出版社、東京、2004年 (A History of Okinawa Prefecture) a standard work; Kerr G. H. Okinawa: The History of an Island People (Vermont & Tokyo: Tuttle, 1958) conveys the general outline but his work is riddled with error on details and with assumption, including what he states on Board — hence his near exclusion from this paper. I wish to express thanks to Dr Evgeny Baksheev for his invitation to speak at this conference and for his friendship, to Ono Masako sensei for her years of instruction, and her support of my studies, and to Dr Patrick Beillevaire for reading an early version of this summary and for his ceaseless encouragement. N.B. footnote references are designedly sketchy in this preliminary report.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://setell.jp/3774> which links the current situation with events during Perry's time, though inaccurately; the same paragraph is also incorporated into [http://www.uchinanchu.org/uchinanchu/history\\_early.htm](http://www.uchinanchu.org/uchinanchu/history_early.htm); Kerr deals with the case pp.330-2, confusing, *inter alia*, different market incidents; George Feifer also treats it in *Breaking Open Japan...* (Smithsonian

Thus, the rape is commonly accepted, but the aim of this preliminary article is to assemble the printed sources with a view to a future detailed exposition of the evidence for the murder and the rape – such an exposition not being possible in this brief report. Though a detail of history, the importance of a murder resulting from an alleged drunken assault needs explanation in relation to, 1<sup>st</sup>, its effect on standard U.S.-*ōfu* diplomacy, 2<sup>nd</sup> its being a marker in an on-going political power shift in Ryūkyū (see the ‘Ono thesis’ below), 3<sup>rd</sup> continuing scholarly and social interest (the latter sometimes taking the rape as heralding post-1944 sexual violence in Okinawa), 4<sup>th</sup> its being a case where the murder victim was posthumously, and much later, accused of rape, and 5<sup>th</sup> the need to focus historical method more sharply.

### Sources

The evidence with which to address those approaches is rich though often conflicting, but little can be mentioned and developed in the space allowed. The justifications for proceeding can be judged against the principal *ōfu* source, Perry’s two published accounts of his time in Ryūkyū, other American printed evidence, the journal of Bernard Bettelheim, and Ono Masako’s work, past and current.

#### 1. The *Ryūkyū ōkoku hyōjōsho monjo* (RHM)

This series is the most extensive source. Those papers relating to foreign activities in Ryūkyū are two-way policy, action and advice directives and reports between Shuri and its field agents.<sup>3</sup> They are thus internal, administrative and usually non-propagandistic, though reports to Satsuma sometimes obscure key facts.

In those records can be traced mutual, cumulative U.S.-Ryūkyūan antagonism and incidents, e.g., *ōfu* denial of a free market, and instead purveyance which persistently supplied far less than ordered, though the *ōfu* purposely but provocatively sanctioned direct sales of *sake*. Thus, short of food and wanting even more booze, crewmen went ashore, sometimes with ill results, e.g., mutual physical assault.<sup>4</sup> Rape being our theme,

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Books, Collins, 2006), p.178, but adopts Kerr’s errors, and adds that the ‘young woman’ had a son who might have beaten Board!

<sup>3</sup> *Ryūkyū ōkoku hyōjōsho monjo* 「琉球王国評定所文書」琉球王国評定所文書編集委員会浦添市教育委員会, 1988-2003, 20 vols., hereafter *RHM* (dates cited are Gregorian).

<sup>4</sup> There was a market incident a month earlier involving an American sailor, a butcher, an attempt to purchase pork, a cudgel, a knife and mutual injuries, *RHM* 7, p.515, & Bettelheim II,

two other improper incidents are noted: late in 1853, a U.S. officer pinched the nipples of some farming women, and, to minimise the impression of lax foreigner surveillance, a report to Satsuma stated that he had touched the women's hands; later, another officer squeezed the bosom of a Naha stallholder.<sup>5</sup>

Hence to Board, crewman of the USS *Lexington*: the records collectively establish a framework for *ōfu* handling of the incident, there being three phases, the 1<sup>st</sup> a nominal investigation under the *chihō-kan*,<sup>6</sup> and denial of complicity in the death; the 2<sup>nd</sup>, more active but still a sham procedure after Perry's return from Edo, acknowledging culpability and producing six murder suspects, then a 3<sup>rd</sup> six months after Perry had left resulting in 14 alleged criminals, 13 new (but none in either set a *samurē*: the exclusive actors and movers in Ryūkyūan society).

This summary does no justice to the cumulative and significant detail revealed in successive reports on the incident, but where Board is concerned the initial statement is minimal. He entered a house occupied by a woman and a girl. He touched the woman's hand(s), she being rescued by the *chikusaji* assigned to tail him.<sup>7</sup> As reports accumulate, the woman emerges as Umitu, a widow of *samurē* stock (the girl her niece); she had screamed, had been run around her living room, resisting a knife-wielding Board, and had fainted during the rape, an accusation which, critically, emerged only after Perry had pressured the *ōfu* for a treaty. Again, suspiciously, the 2<sup>nd</sup> investigation found that a neighbouring kinsman named Gima had rescued Umitu, and that the principal murderer was one Kama Tokeshi, while in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, her rescuer was Matsunaga *shūsai*, Board's *next* alleged principal murderer!

Ryūkyūan counter-charges included criticism of Perry's unprecedented aggression, and then on July 5 the rape charge. In one meeting, an *ōfu* official let slip that Umitu was in her early-mid-50s – a seemingly unguarded comment undermining the rape charge in that it triggered Perry's immediate scepticism.

The internal and external inconsistencies of this immensely rich source raise a series of questions and doubts, and, since no *samurē* is implicated in any investigation, doubts become suspicions.

p.647. Kerr confuses that case with the June 12 marketplace fight, OHIP, p. 331, an error perpetuated by Feifer.

<sup>5</sup> *RHM* 7, pp.328-30, 10 Oct. 1853, etc.

<sup>6</sup> 地方官, 'Mayor of Naha' in Bettelheim and so adopted by the Perry expedition.

<sup>7</sup> *RHM* 7, pp.552-3, report dated June 13, the day after the incident.

## 2. The Perry Sources

Francis Hawkes compiled Perry's *Narrative* from items submitted by expedition members.<sup>8</sup> Board is discussed in one page and seven lines, a surprising summary because it does not mesh with well-known facts. Board's death is a 'supposed murder'; and 'death resulted from blows to the head and subsequent immersion in water... while insensible from the blows...' That, despite Perry's interview with the confessed Tokeshi, and a post-mortem empty-lung finding. Third, it states Perry accepted the probability of a 'most gross outrage on a female', despite reports of his ultimate scepticism. Next, it asserts that Board was 'more than half drunk', despite the widely known post mortem finding of an alcohol-free stomach and his known teetotalism.

Better informed, it mentions the knife, Umitu's niece, and scepticism as to the punishments of the alleged killers, but then it proceeds to self-contradiction on the drowning. So, various points are demonstrably wrong, and there is nothing new. If Perry was still *compos mentis*, and had exercised editorial control, the Board incident summary is unaccountable.

The other Perry source is *The Personal Journal*.<sup>9</sup> Despite its title, Perry again occurs in the third person, once more hinting that he relied on an editor. It devotes eight lines to the incident, Board being unnamed. Our confidence immediately evaporates because we read the victim was a 'young girl', and that Board drowned as a result of falling into the harbour. Moreover, there is no scepticism on the sentencing. The case illustrated Perry's disciplinary success, Board the looming exception!

So, both sources are disappointing on the incident, to some extent contradictory, and almost unworthy of evidential citation, or of the credit which Ono allows the first in her article.

## 3. Other American Sources

As for noteworthy points in unofficial American records, Bayard Taylor comments informatively on *ōfu* surveillance practice.<sup>10</sup> Spalding interprets the Ryūkyūan shame explanation for the concealment of

<sup>8</sup> *Commodore M. C. Perry. Narrative of the Expedition to the China Seas and Japan, 1853–1854*, (New York: Dover Publications, 2000, facsimile ed.), pp.492-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Pineau R. (ed.). The Japan Expedition 1852–1854: The Personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry*, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968), p.219.

<sup>10</sup> *A Visit to India, China, and Japan, in the Year 1853*, (New York: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1855), p.453.

the rape as reason for the initial *ōfu* *modus operandi*. Important for my doubt thesis, he quotes the *Sōrikan*,<sup>11</sup> ‘All *men* detest rape and are angry at, and would, without thinking, strike and wound the one guilty’, uncharacteristically sympathetic if the true criminal(s) were not *samurē*.

Heine is lengthier, but how should we interpret him on the retrieval of the corpse: ‘local people tried to stop [us], but our party prevailed’ – righteous, popular outrage or planted rumour? He confirms Board sustained only three injuries, all to the head; further, ‘Evidence showed that the deceased had taken no part in the [*market*] altercation’, and ‘at that moment he had been on the opposite side of the river... everyone knew [him] to be quiet, even-tempered, and peaceable’.<sup>12</sup>

Williams, the longest source in this group, details the market events, naming the two Marines as Scott and Smith. They were ‘tipsy’, but ‘Board would take nothing’ (a teetotaler) and was not at the market attack... The post mortem showed the skull had been almost broken by blows, and congestion of the blood on the brain followed; no spirit was found in the stomach, nor any flesh wounds or cuts on the body’ – significant *vis-à-vis* the surely fabricated and inconsistent confessions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> investigation. He stresses the impossibility of suffering both frontal and rear injuries in one fall as claimed by the *ōfu*. He finds Ryūkyūan testimony ‘so contradictory that no reasonable account of the cause, provocation or mode of death could be obtained.’ Official statements made ‘it difficult for us to believe anything they said.’ It was unacceptable that Umitu was not examined, but he felt the rape ‘more likely than anything we had hitherto heard’. Sceptical of the 2<sup>nd</sup> investigation, he recalls that in China, ‘Wretches guilty of some other offense... [were] brought forward and given over to us to do what we liked... the officers would thus have washed their hands of the matter as soon as it assumed a serious aspect.’ Despite his insight, he concludes that the criminals had been identified!<sup>13</sup>

These sources are more valuable than the Perry works and contribute to our knowledge, though not without their own confusions.

<sup>11</sup> 総理官, also termed the Regent, Governor General or *Tsung-li-kwan* and *Tsung-ti-ta-fu* in Bettelheim, the mid-level bureaucrat assigned to impersonate a leading *ōfu* minister; *J. W. Spalding, The Japan Expedition: Japan and Around the World...* (London: S. Low, 1855), p.335.

<sup>12</sup> Wilhelm Heine, *With Perry to Japan...* (transl. into English. Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1990), p.166.

<sup>13</sup> S. W. Williams, *A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan...* (Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol.xxxvii: part II, 1910), pp.228, 229, 233-4, 236, 238.

#### 4. Bettelheim's journal

This journal is largely a newly available source.<sup>14</sup> In addition to his close involvement in the case, Bettelheim also provides in-depth cultural background on *ōfu* surveillance practices, female screaming, and the rather widespread stoning culture.

As a channel between the *ōfu* and expedition, it was to him that Board's body was taken, and whom *ōfu* representatives approached early in hopes of their version of the market and murder incidents being accepted, and themselves exculpated. Dr Nelson invited him to assist at the post mortem at which the lesions were defined, and absence of water in the lungs and of alcohol in the stomach established.<sup>15</sup> Board's good character is recorded elsewhere but the journal colourfully adds more in recounting Capt. Glasson's anecdotes.<sup>16</sup>

Bettelheim contributes to the odd and perhaps significant problem of funeral arrangements on which the *RHM* also comment. He attended the market-incident hearing and unpicked Ryūkyūan claims by criticising their persistently lumping Board with Smith and Scott, and refuting their claims as to where and how the body was found. When the rape charge emerged on July 5, he significantly records, 'They did not plainly say whether the man merely intended or really did the woman any harm.' Thereafter, he withdrew from direct involvement and only commented on Perry's diplomatic moves and on how the murder was used to achieve his treaty.

Having an eye for detail and an enquiring mind, Bettelheim is an invaluable source on *bakumatsu-ki* Ryūkyū, and on Perry's presence. He includes his expedition correspondence and some of its *ōfu* correspondence texts which he translated to and from Chinese. However, his purpose was the overthrow of the *ōfu*, and he saw Perry's expedition as one of the best means to that end. His leniency toward Americans colours his views.

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<sup>14</sup> Bernard Jean Bettelheim was a British protestant, lay medical missionary resident at Naminoue from 1846. Parts of his journal were summarised and abstracted in the reports of the Loochoo Naval Mission (LNM). Thereafter W. L. Schwartz published some limited abstracts as they related to aspects of Perry's presence in Ryūkyū; those two sources, however, represent only fractions of the journal as it survived in MS in the LNM records, though those themselves probably represent only something over half of what Bettelheim wrote, there being a yawning lacuna between July 1847 and Sep. 1850. This writer edited that material as *The Journal and Official Correspondence of Bernard Jean Bettelheim, 1845–54, Part I (1845–51) xxx+640pp.* and ... *Part II (1852–54) x+732pp.* (Okinawa ken-shi, *shiryō-hen* 21–22 *kinsei* 2–3, Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education, 2005, 2012). Data on the market and Board incidents occurs in Part II, pp.655-73.

<sup>15</sup> Bettelheim and other sources mentioned above.

<sup>16</sup> 'The character of the deceased was excellent, a very quiet unoffending young man.' Bettelheim Part II, p.657.



### The Ono Thesis<sup>17</sup>

Ono Masako is an authority on the *RHM* and author of a 1991 article on the Board incident.<sup>18</sup> Among her interests is Ryūkyūan society and its two élites, the Shuri and Kume-mura (*kuninda*) *samuré* castes, the pride of the *ōfu*.<sup>19</sup> They shared administrative duties but certain enviable privileges had accrued to the *kuninda*, e.g., educational opportunity in China (later shared with the Shuri élite), and, due to their linguistic heritage, the management of the Chinese investiture envoys (*sappōshi*). With the arrival of Westerners, though, linguistic need tended to English, and the Shuri *samuré* developed that skill and captured some interpretation duties, too, though the *kuninda* had administrative responsibility for foreign visitors. There was thus some continuing rivalry and jockeying over status. Ono sees the size of the Perry expedition as causing enormous strain on the *kuninda* scribal and supervisory machinery. Incidents arising, those men were, as regards competence and disgrace, ultimately answerable to Satsuma, which demanded extreme caution as regards foreign relations and presence.

Ono argues that if a *kuninda samuré* had found a U.S. sailor assaulting a *samuré* woman, his ire might lead, despite his duty, to loss of self-control. Were he to perpetrate a murder, the *ōfu* would conceal his rôle. Were there danger of exposure, scapegoats would, and did, emerge, as Williams foresaw, and I would suggest in a polity ruthless to its non-*samuré* members that the *Sōrikan*'s defensive words be recalled. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> investigation, the 2<sup>nd</sup> was explained to Satsuma as a hastily botched solution to satisfy Perry,<sup>20</sup> Ono sees the motive for the 3<sup>rd</sup> as a wish to solve the crime, though still pointing out the absence of *samuré* culprits. I see her view of a possible cover-up as needing to be extended to the 3<sup>rd</sup> investigation, in that possible discontent in some quarter or other might lead to the need to conceal a *samuré*, and so I interpret the 3<sup>rd</sup> as theatre, too. The 19 accused were all non-*samuré* and so we may be justified in contextualising the case in terms of the decline of the *kuninda*.

<sup>17</sup> The word thesis is mine; Ono's ideas are cautiously expressed as a possible interpretation. Her developing views were expressed in our bi-monthly Bettelheim study circle and what is written here only represents my understanding of her views.

<sup>18</sup> Ono Masako. 「評定所文書覚書 (3) ボード事件にみる女性たち」 浦添市立図書館. No. 3, 1991, Dec. pp.36-48 (The Women in the Board Incident, *Bulletin of the Urasoe City Library*).

<sup>19</sup> Gregory Smits covers aspects of the subject in his *Visions of Ryūkyū: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> *RHM* 8, pp.253-6.

## Conclusion

As for the five approaches, turbulence caused the routine *ōfu* deny-lie-and-delay diplomatic processes to descend into a vortex of right-hand-left-hand confusion.<sup>21</sup> That was followed by increasing *ōfu* defensive mendacity and ultimately the charge of rape. On his part, Perry used increasing muscle, e.g., intimidatory positioning of Marines as a lever. As for the socio-political shifts in Ryūkyū, the possibility of the murderer or instigator to murder being a *kuninda samuré* highlights the strains in the body politic – as suggested both by Ono and Takara.<sup>22</sup> We look for further publication by Ono to articulate her developing analysis and to bring the Board incident to wider scholarly consciousness. As for social interest, Takara recalls 1995 Japanese press approaches regarding Board after the appalling rape of that year. As for justice, Board had no defence counsel to call character witnesses – a non-drinker, and deeds and personality which impressed his acquaintances – or to expose glaringly contradictory *ōfu* evidence. As for history, the rape charge emerged, justified or unjustified, at an extremely critical moment and deserves to be placed more clearly in that context rather than cited prior to his death.

On sources, let us query not only central *RHM* reliability but also field-officer reports related to their own interests. It has been seen that the private American sources contribute more than the Perry works, and that Bettelheim provides valuable new data. Not yet examined are the U.S. official naval records, a gap which I purpose soon to rectify.

To return to the twice-use term ‘touch the hand’, it may have been a euphemism for more shameful acts. If not, that first internal report raises the question as to why rape was not reported if it had occurred, despite *ōfu* justification for delay owing to its shame culture. If it did occur, was the reporting field officer misled or did he have reason to conceal the facts because of who was involved?

More simple questions: why was a teetotal Board in Umitu’s house? Was it food or curiosity? Was he subject to opportunistic lust fulfilment? What of the inhibiting presence of a niece? With a *chikusaji* on his heels, was there time for an assault, especially if Umitu had screamed and grappled with him? Had she resisted his touching a domestic object, might he not have grasped her hand or arm? Might malice or misjudgement arising from xenophobia and the presence of an American in a *samuré*

<sup>21</sup> Bettelheim II, pp.656, 659.

<sup>22</sup> Professor Takara Kurayoshi, editor in chief of the *RHM*, kindly shared his thoughts on the Board case with me in 2012.

house – or even on Umitu’s part – have led to the charge? With Perry’s pressure becoming unbearable, and if a *samur * had discovered him there and caused the outcry or stoned him, might not the *ōfu* have played a trump card and accused Board of an outrage? How justified is Perry’s scepticism as to the rape of a woman possibly more than 30 years Board’s senior?<sup>23</sup> Were the stoning injuries inflicted on Scott, and the stoning death of Board merely respective strokes of fortune and misfortune, or were they punishments befitting different misdeeds? I hope to bring greater clarity in a future and longer analysis of the incident.

Энтони П. Дженкинс

УИЛЬЯМ БОРД, 1854:  
АРГУМЕНТЫ ДЛЯ ВОЗОБНОВЛЕНИЯ ДЕЛА

12 июня 1854 г., когда экспедиция Пэрри находилась на расстоянии от Наха, был убит молодой матрос Уильям Борд. Более трех недель спустя он был обвинен в том, что в этот самый день изнасиловал женщину самурайского сословия возрастом около 50 лет с небольшим. В данной статье собраны и пересмотрены письменные источники, позволяющие по-новому взглянуть на этот инцидент, а именно: правительственные материалы Рюкю, два документа Пэрри, различные дневники участников экспедиции, а также подготовленный недавно к печати дневник миссионера Бернарда Беттельхайма. При оценке достоверности этих записей автор помещает инцидент в контекст дипломатических хитростей рюкюской стороны, внутренних политических и социальных конфликтов в Рюкю, а также сильного давления со стороны Пэрри ради получения договора с Рюкю. Также рассматривается интерпретация этого инцидента Оно Масако.

<sup>23</sup> Besides Bettelheim, other American sources refer to him as young.