

IN THE 1830S AND 1840S EUROPEAN POWERS WERE INCREASINGLY STRUTTING IN AN AGGRESSIVE FASHION IN THE FAR EAST. CHINA LOST THE OPIUM WAR WITH BRITAIN AND IN THE 1842 TREATY OF NANKING WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS THAT GAVE MUCH POWER TO WESTERN COUNTRIES.



NEWS OF THIS EVENTUALLY REACHED JAPAN, ISOLATED SINCE THE 1630S, AND ADDED TO A GROWING SENSE OF UNEASE FELT BY A FEW FARSIGHTED FIGURES. THE EASY DEFEAT OF THE MUCH-ADMIRERD CHINESE EMPIRE AT THE HANDS OF FOREIGN BARBARIANS WAS A SHOCK.

MIZUNO TADAKUNI, IN 1828-1843 AND AGAIN IN 1844-1845, THE ROJU (CHIEF SENIOR COUNSELOR) OF THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE THAT RULED JAPAN

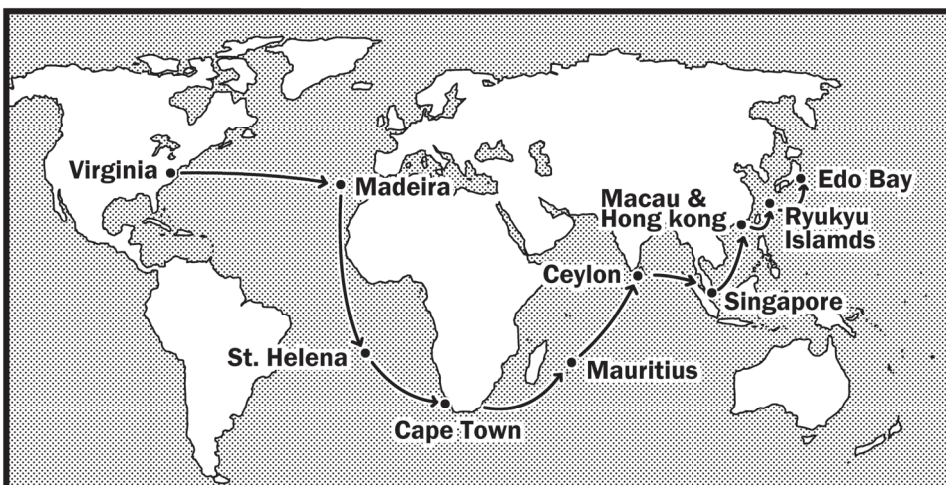


THIS CONCERNS ANOTHER COUNTRY, BUT IT SHOULD BE A WARNING FOR US TOO.

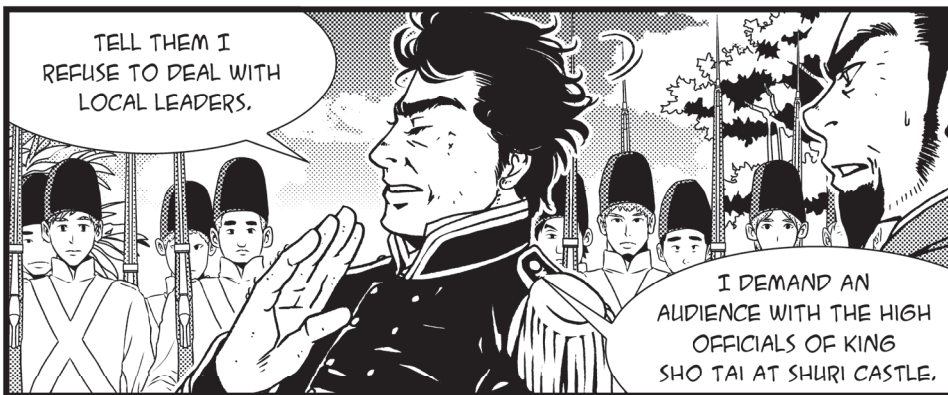
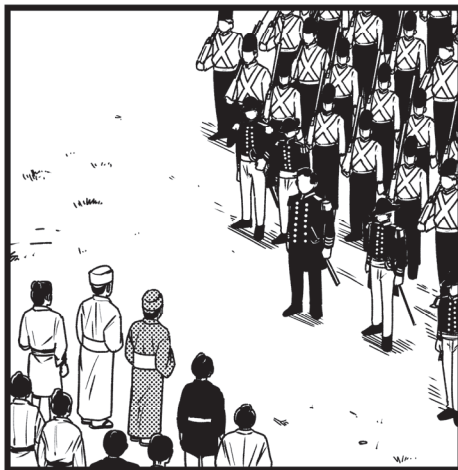
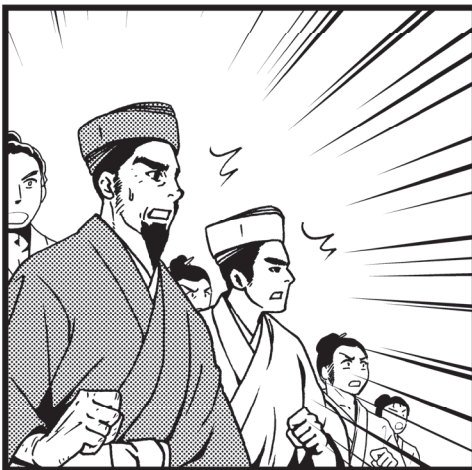
COMMODORE MATTHEW CALBRAITH PERRY (1794-1858) WAS A SENIOR OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY. FIRM AND CALCULATING, HE HAD BEEN GRANTED FULL AND DISCRETIONARY POWERS, INCLUDING THE USE OF FORCE, BY THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE.



KNOWING THE TASK WOULD NOT BE EASY, HE TOOK EFFORTS TO PREPARE, READING THE FEW BOOKS ABOUT JAPAN THEN AVAILABLE AND MEETING WITH JAPANOLOGISTS LIKE PHILIPP FRANZ VON SIEBOLD, WHO HAD SPENT EIGHT YEARS WORKING IN THE SMALL DUTCH ISLAND TRADING POST OF DEJIMA IN NAGASAKI HARBOR.



PERRY AND CREW LEFT THE UNITED STATES FROM VIRGINIA ON NOVEMBER 24, 1852, STOPPING AT SEVERAL POINTS ON THE WAY. THEY REACHED HONG KONG IN APRIL 1853, MEETING WITH SAMUEL WELLS WILLIAMS, A SINOLOGIST WHO STUDIED CHINESE LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND CIVILIZATION AND WHO HAD BEEN TO JAPAN IN 1837 WITH THE ILL-FATED VISIT OF THE SHIP *MORRISON*. WILLIAMS GAVE THEM CHINESE VERSIONS OF THE OFFICIAL U.S. LETTERS. IN SHANGHAI IN MAY, ANTON L. C. PORTMAN TRANSLATED THE LETTERS INTO DUTCH, AS THAT WAS THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE USED IN JAPAN.

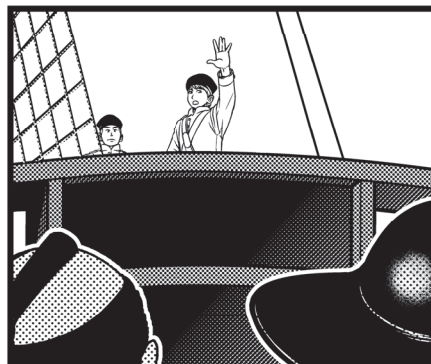


PERRY HAD DECIDED THAT IN THIS LAND OF STRICT CEREMONY AND HIERARCHY, THE BEST POLICY WAS TO REMAIN ALOOF AND APPEAR TO BE AN UNQUESTIONABLY IMPORTANT FIGURE.



IT APPEARS TO HAVE WORKED, AS EVENTUALLY A MEETING WAS ARRANGED.

ON JULY 9 A MAN CALLED NAKAJIMA SABIROSUKE ROWED OUT TO THE *SUSQUEHANNA*, WITH NO GUARDS, ONLY AN INTERPRETER. HE WAS A YORIKI, A MIDDLE-RANKING MEMBER OF THE URAGA BUGYO, THE OFFICIAL ADMINISTRATORS OF THE URAGA AREA.



AT FIRST THE AMERICANS REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM ABOARD. BUT AFTER SOME NEGOTIATION, THEY ALLOWED HIM TO COME.

THESE ORDERS WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT NO FOREIGN SHIPS ARE ALLOWED INTO JAPANESE PORTS.



THANK YOU. I WILL SHOW THESE TO COMMODORE PERRY."

*AS BEFORE, THESE TALKS ALSO TOOK PLACE FROM JAPANESE TO DUTCH TO ENGLISH AND BACK AGAIN.

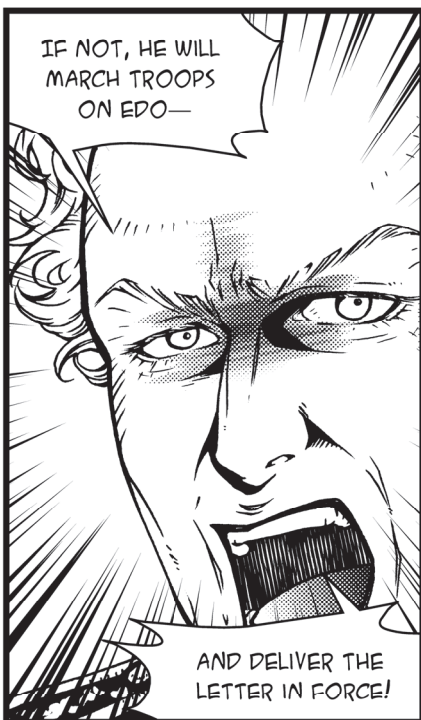
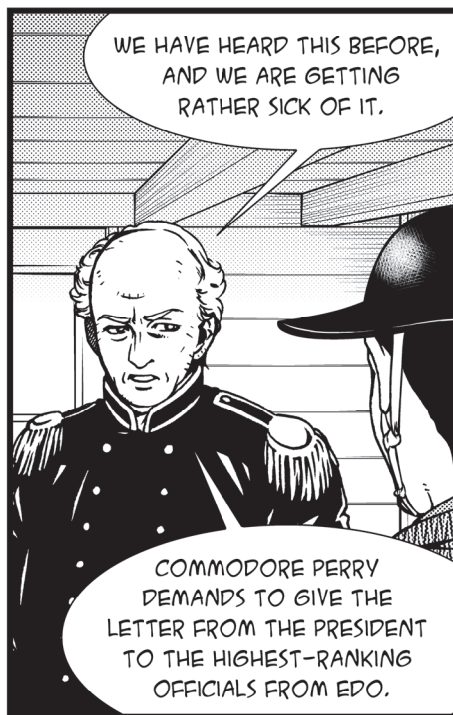
TELL THEM I REFUSE TO TALK TO LOWER OFFICIALS.

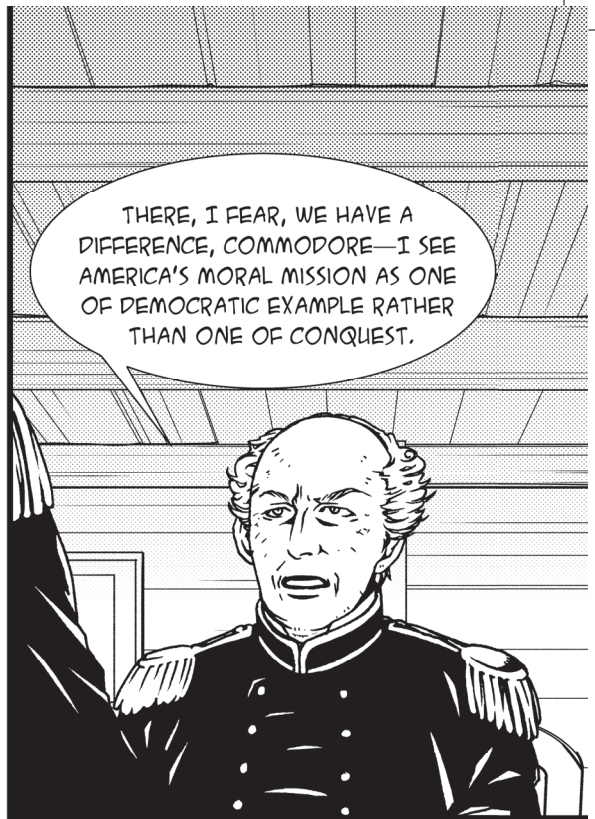


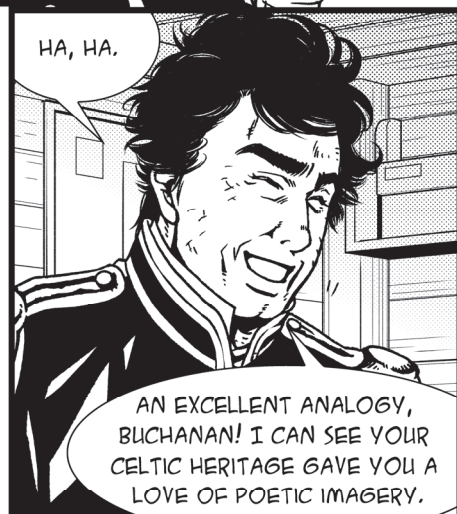
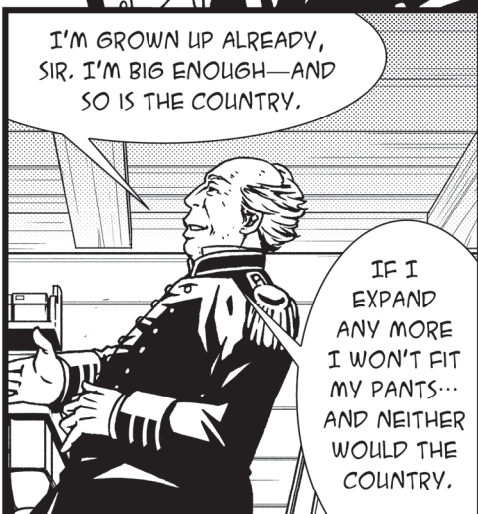
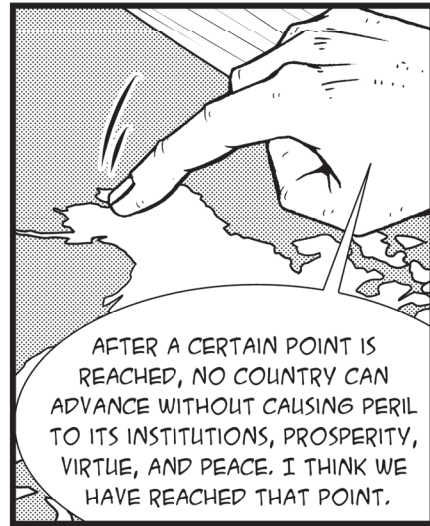
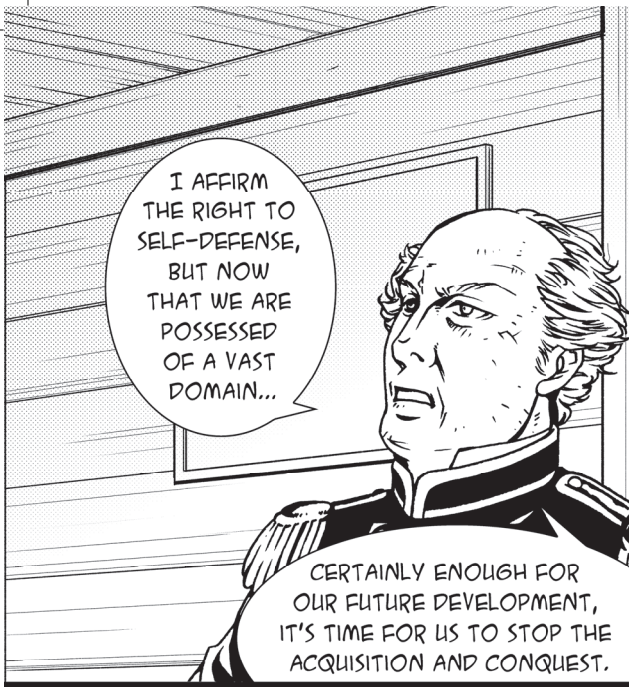
I HAVE A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND ONLY HIGH-RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WILL DO.

WHEN THE JAPANESE OFFICIALS HEARD THIS, THEY DECIDED TO SEND ANOTHER MAN TO PRETEND TO BE THE CHIEF OFFICIAL OF THE AREA.



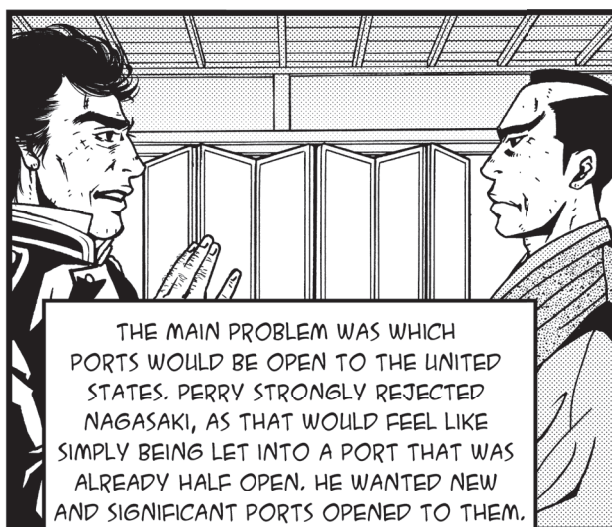






"HORACE GREELEY (1811-1872), EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE, SPOKE THESE FAMOUS WORDS.

AS NEGOTIATIONS MOVED ON, THE JAPANESE SIDE AGREED TO ALMOST ALL OF PERRY'S DEMANDS, EXCEPT THE TYPE OF COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS THAT CHINA HAD BEEN FORCED INTO EARLIER.



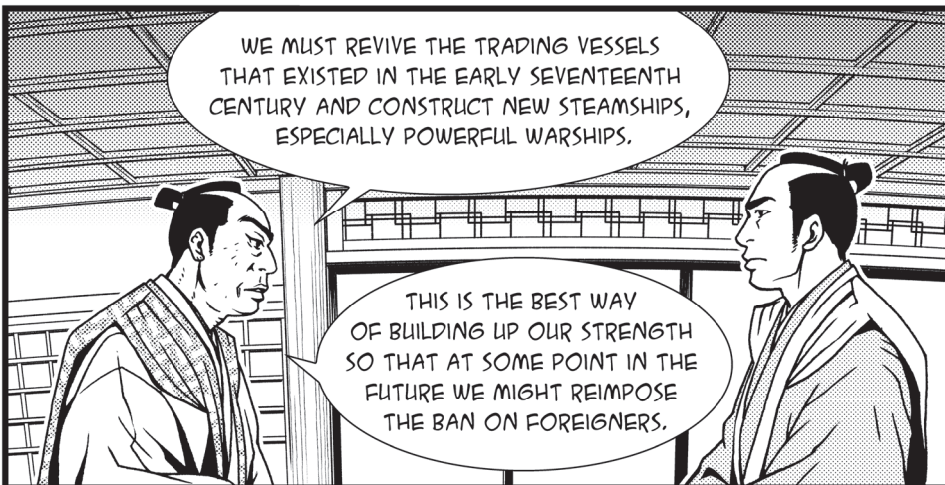
JAPAN HAD AT LEAST MANAGED TO AVOID THE ALMOST COMPLETE SUBJUGATION THAT CHINA HAD EXPERIENCED IN THE UNEQUAL TREATY SYSTEM. II NAOSUKE, THE DAIMYO OF HIKONE, WAS A KEY FIGURE WHO HAD RECOMMENDED THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE AMERICANS' TERMS.



CONDITIONS TODAY MEAN THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF OUR COUNTRY BY INSISTENCE ON SECLUSION.



WE MUST REVIVE THE TRADING VESSELS THAT EXISTED IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AND CONSTRUCT NEW STEAMSHIPS, ESPECIALLY POWERFUL WARSHIPS.



THIS IS THE BEST WAY OF BUILDING UP OUR STRENGTH SO THAT AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE WE MIGHT REIMPOSE THE BAN ON FOREIGNERS.

SINCE I UNDERSTAND THAT THE AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BECOME SKILLED IN NAVIGATION, I DO NOT SEE HOW WE CLEVER AND QUICK-WITTED JAPANESE SHOULD PROVE INFERIOR TO THEM.

