STAJ

Studies in Transnational Africa and Japan

Vol. VII, 2025

ISSN: 2735-9662

Online ISSN:2736-0741

Studies in Transnational Africa and Japan (STAJ) provides a forum for interdisciplinary approaches to theoretical issues and practices in African and Japanese Studies. Our annual publications promotes and facilitates research in African and Japanese studies. STAG special issues, however, cover specific contemporary or topical issues.

For Contributors

STAJ is published twice a year. Submissions should comply with MLA Reference Style (for literature) and APA Reference Style (for language-oriented works). Our review process is anonymous. Contributors are therefore advised to avoid self-referencing and disclosures of their identities in the paper. The use of first-person pronouns and sexist/racist expressions are not welcome. Names, designations and contact addresses of contributors are to be indicated on the cover page. The title of the paper should appear on the first page. Submissions should be made to The Editor, **Studies in Transnational Africa and Japan (STAJ)** *Journal of Association of Japanese Studies (AAJS),* Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

5

Slaveholder Rebellions without Slavery in Early Meiji Japan: Perspectives for Furthering Africa's Prosperity

Amin Ghadimi

Graduate School of Humanities

Osaka University

Abstract

Leroy Lansing Janes's posture to Slaveholder Rebellions without Slavery in Early Meiji Japan is unpacked in this paper as an instructive Japanese experience that has global implicature. His assiduous pursuance and commitment to inclusive education-particularly for women and other disadvantaged persons in Japan's social strata lends Africa a counter strategy for advancing its campaign against overtly and subsequently covertly established colonial and imperialistic structures and ideologies. This paper focuses on the significance of Janes's initiatives in education and his enunciation of the same as major sources of disarming biases: cultural, political, and gender. These ideas resonate with the post-colonial realities that challenge Africa, which include religious pluralism, ethnicity, the diversity problem, gender inequality as well as generational divides. Janes's views reflect his ideals and postulations that gave rise to counter thoughts on the transformational role of resistance, social unrest as progress as well as the development of inclusive curricular and strategically positioned educators and people centered values.

Keywords: Leroy Lansing Janes,Pan-Africanism,Postcolonial Reform,Inclusive Education

Introduction

Slaveholder Rebellions without Slavery in Early Meiji Japan

"I never thought I should come down to be a teacher of girls," Ebina Danjō protested to Leroy Lansing Janes. Janes demolished him: "I might have said the same of you when I worried with you over the English alphabet." It was 1875, plus or minus one year. Ebina was Janes' teenage student at the Kumamoto School for Occidental Learning, which Janes, an American, had inaugurated in 1871 at the behest of the Kumamoto government. Now, Janes had brought in two girls, Tokutomi Hatsuko and Yokoi Miya, to study "on the same bench" as the boys. And in conformity with Janes' approach of having advanced students teach newer students, Ebina was educating the opposite sex.

The verbal drubbing Janes unleashed on Ebina was ruthless, devastating. "If you cannot rise to the height of this privilege by your own will and wisdom, you must keep your place beneath it and it will go on without you." He brushed Ebina off the road he paved for Japan, and he did not hold back from firing mordant imprecations as he proceeded. "But more than all that, Mr. Ebina," he continued,

> a nation which organizes its lowest prejudices into a system, whether it be against the foreigner or against the womanhood of its own land, deserves to live on in squalid semi-barbarism; to suffer the penalties of its perversity; to bury half its progeny in infancy and to rear the rest in ignorance, poverty, and vice, material for endless insurrection and revolution. (Janes, Part 3, 127; see Watase 122 –123 for Ebina's account of this incident)

Janes, a former army captain for the North in the US Civil War, had seen how his own country had organized its lowest prejudices into a system, how it had suffered from the penalties of its perversity, how it had fabricated its own material for endless insurrection and revolution. "Slavery brought America to the brink of ruin," he said to Ebina. "And I verily believe that this more subtle form of slavery implied in your contention for the inferiority and restriction of women, involves for your land more of latent [*sic*], but real, evil than slavery of the African ever entailed upon America." The "ignorance" of women inflicted on them by men "will punish you in ways of which you little dream," he fumed (Janes part 3, 124-125).

Janes had set about emancipating the minds of his boys and girls at his School for Occidental Learning. He put them on the path of autonomous learning to liberate them from the alleged fetters of a past of intellectual bondage, of prejudice, which, in turn, was ignorance. He set about, in his argot, "enlightening" his students. "The teacher must needs be an emancipator. Enlightenment is simply another name for

liberation of mind," he said in a statement that appears to be his final address before he left Kumamoto in 1876 (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 7, Folder 18, "Farewell Address"; see also Ishii 143–145).

To Janes, this liberating enlightenment was intelligible through the history of bondage and of slavery. The "mind," he continued in his farewell address, "is sure, sooner or later to shape the destiny of all men's material conditions. Hence, it was made a heinous crime, punishable with imprisonment and death, to teach slaves to read and write in all the eleven slave states." Why else was it that "children of the poor whites and of the slaves alike, were carefully and forcibly held aloof from contact with the teacher"? "For that relation was well known to be fatal to slavery!" he concluded (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 7, Folder 18, "Farewell Address").

Janes sought, in his interpretation, to bring Japan and, especially its youth, into the fold of a vast global enlightenment, one that originated in the United States. This enlightenment project had two intellectual dimensions. The first, which was spatial, suggested that all people everywhere were inherently the same and that proper education would "enlighten" people to recognize that reality. The second, which was temporal, suggested that this enlightenment, this emancipation, was a global phenomenon inaugurated by the United States,because of its history of slavery, in the late nineteenth century.

As Janes suggested to Ebina, this emancipation could not be a purely civil, peaceful process, as the history of the United States testified. Those who had material and intellectual stakes in what Janes called the "prejudices" of the past would obstruct a peaceful enlightenment. Janes interpreted the rebellions that were unfolding around him in Japan in this way, as rebellions against a universal enlightenment akin to those of slaveholder rebellions in the United States.

Indeed, as the boys, and girls, of Leroy Lansing Janes in the Kumamoto School for Occidental Learning emerged from their alleged heteronomy, from the intellectual "slavery" and "bondage" of their own native land and their own "race," they landed in the heteronomy of the past of another: they became Christians, sparking a ferocious backlash in Kumamoto. Janes created the very conditions that he theoretically anticipated based on US history, and thus, his very belief that what he regarded as the lessons of US history would apply in the Japan inasmuch as they inaugurated a new world order made them indeed apply to Japan. History and historiography, reality and interpretation, intertwined. The arrival of the person of

Janes to Kumamoto, and the educational venture he undertook there, thus brought the ideational dimensions of the history of American enslavement of people he described as "Africans" into the heart of Kumamoto and made American racism destabilize Japanese life not only as a matter of comparison or theory, as Janes suggested, but as a matter of causality.

The space of enlightenment

Janes arrived in Japan from the United States in August 1871, alighting in Yokohama just days before the dissolution of feudal domains and installation of prefectures under a centralized Meiji state (*haihan chiken*). He reached Kumamoto, to which he had been invited by the erstwhile domanial government, about a month later. The new prefecture was in the midst of radical, thoroughgoing reforms under the influence of the ascendant Practical Learning faction (*jitsugakutō*), which had ousted the longstanding Confucianist powerholders, the Academy faction (*gakkōtō*). In 1870, the new authorities shut down the Jishūkan, the major Confucianist school in the domain, and invested in new education for its youth. They sought to bring an American to teach military affairs, specifically requesting a man of a social status analogous to that of a Japanese samurai. This quest to establish an American school came, in part, on the request of the young Yokoi Daihei, who had returned prematurely from studies at Rutgers University in the United States and who was the nephew of the eminent Practical Learning scholar Yokoi Shōnan, who had been assassinated in 1869. In 1871, after the Kumamoto domain was dissolved, the plan for a military school was declined by the central government in Tokyo, which now took responsibility for the matter (Notehelfer 115, Ishii 34–49; Watase 50). Janes proceeded to Kumamoto to inaugurate a more general academy under the ascendant Meiji regime.

Kumamoto leaders had had misgivings about bringing a foreign man to teach "Occidental Learning" in their domain. Anti-foreign sentiment from the Bakumatsu era remained rampant. Violence against the American teacher or students in the school would not be surprising. To such qualms, Yokoi Daihei is said to have retorted that Kumamoto could not wait forever for hatred of other people to end before bringing those other people into the country. One account holds that Yokoi cited "the American Indians," who "still bore undiminished inimical feelings toward the white men, although several hundred years had elapsed since their emigration" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 15, Folder 2, "Captain Janes And His Work In Japan," Letter to Davis, pp. 21 – 27). America had race problems, but enlightenment had to progress, not wait, precisely because of those problems of race.

The reasoning Daihei offered turned out to be the same as that of Janes himself in justifying his educational endeavor: there were bigots and xenophobes everywhere, but fear of those forces could not obstruct the path of enlightenment. Janes reflected in later years: "Not that I was unaware of the volcanic condition of society and sentiment everywhere in Japan and especially in Higo [Kumamoto] at that time," he wrote, citing the "abundance of their warnings" and "the very obtrusive means of 'protection' provided in justification and pledge of their warnings." There was a genuine fear that he would be assassinated. "But all these precautions," Janes continued, "served only to inflame my feeling of the need of a counteracting influence, potent enough to awe, control, unify, and finally direct even the most virulent of opposing forces into the highway of enlightenment and progress" (Leroy Lansing Janes's Papers, Box 7, Folder 14, "Untitled Typescript"). It was precisely because the embers of anti-foreign hatred had not cooled that some sort of "counteracting influence," an "enlightenment" among the youth, was needed, he maintained. The trouble was, would that counteracting influence in fact inflame those embers further?

This counteracting, enlightening influence, to Janes, was an education that emerged from and reinforced the knowledge of a universalism that transcended race, an idea on which he reflected deeply because of the starkness of his arrival in and sojourn in Kumamoto—and because of the starkness of that problem back home. The problem of prejudice arising from difference, especially racial difference but also differences of gender and social status, was, it seemed to him, the same inherent problem everywhere inasmuch as people were inherently the same everywhere. "I have about come to the conclusion," he wrote in a letter to the United States in October 1874, his third year in Japan, "that man is pretty much the same the world over. I thought so when I made the acquaintance of the American Indian. I am quite confirmed in the impression now" (Leroy Lansing Janes Paper, Box 1, Folder 2, Letter to Anna Warner, October 7, 1874). In 1875, he wrote again, reflecting on his interaction with his former wife Helen Frances Robinson, whom he called Nellie: "She showed me how first, the unlovely may become lovable, and how the barriers we are apt to call natural, become no barriers at all, but one broad field of love." Those "natural" barriers were barriers of color, and just as he learned to surmount them in the United States, he was learning to surmount them in Japan. He continued: "She made it possible for the interest that constrained me in Maryland, in the children of the negro sabbath school to deepen into love for them. And it has been the same influence, I verily believe that has kindled in my heart a love, a genuine love, for these yellow skinned heathens" (Leroy Lansing Janes Paper, Box 1, Folder 2, Letter to Anna

Warner, April 25, 1875). Little is known of Nellie: it appears she was Janes' first wife, but there is almost no record of her, and it seems Janes's family disapproved of the marriage. F. G. Notehelfer, the leading biographer of Janes, argues speculatively, but persuasively, based on careful readings of ostensibly fictional writing from Janes, that Nellie was an abolitionist and quite possibly "of slave extraction" herself—that is, she was of mixed White and Black heritage (Notehelfer 66; 58–68). That explains, to Notehelfer, both the silence and the poignant moments of non-silence about Nellie. In any case, it was the experience with Nellie, and that with American Indians and Black Americans, that taught Janes how to interact with and educate Japanese people, he said.

Janes had learned from American racism that the capacity of man to know and to be enlightened was the same everywhere, if only people were educated. "Three years ago when we began our work, I will confess that I was disappointed and sad," he recalled in 1874. "All that I had seen on my way in Japan, of schools, and all that every foreigner had told me, tended to make me sad and despondent" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko). Indeed, many accounts from Kumamoto, as well as histories of the general state of Confucianist education in Japan, testify to the squalor, both moral and physical, into which Confucianist academies of the Tokugawa era had fallen by the 1870s (for instance, Kozaki 13). Janes continued, though: "the minds and the intellectual capacities" of his students "are all equal in every respect, to those of any class I have known at the United States Military Academy, during more than seven years that I was connected with it. Of course, all my first depression has disappeared while I have been learning this about you" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko").

It took genuine love, Janes wrote in many places, for Janes to believe in "these yellow skinned heathens" whom he encountered in Japan, to recognize their inherent and equal capacities, and to place them on the road to enlightenment, just as it did in the United States with people of another race. This constructive, universal "love" also meant the destruction, or at least the dismantling, of what he considered the bondage of the Japanese past, just as that destruction was necessary in America. In his correspondence in 1874, Janes bemoaned "the past condition of the unprivileged masses" in Japan, which, he said, "has left them so completely subject unconsciously to the dictation of the ruling class in matters of opinion, and so much slaves of prejudice, and so plastic to every influence that descends through the upper orders"

(Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Letter to Mr. Carter, May 22, 1874). His role, he believed, was to force them out of this "slavery to prejudice," to break this past, and to show them the love of Jesus. And he was confident in his success: "Hearts filled with Confucian pride and conceit, entangled in Buddhist fables and fears, or frozen with Shinto apathy and stolidity, I have seen quietly expanding under the influence of the Living Spirit," he proclaimed (Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, "Letter to Mr. Carter," May 22, 1874). The influence of Christianity in "loving" the "yellow skinned heathen" was destructive as it was constructive.

Even if Janes thus condemned the stultified, stultifying religious tradition of Japan, he was hardly sympathetic to Christianity as it was practiced in the world at the time. Indeed, he wrote to his mother in 1876: "There is enough in the treatment of the subject of slavery and the slaves, also, by the great Christian bodies of America, to justify any body with a brain in his head and a heart in his bosom, in questioning their title to the exclusive possession of 'the truth as it is in Jesus'" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, letter dated June 13, 1876). He wrote elsewhere, "The lesson which Miss Ophelia learns from Topsy," he wrote two years earlier, referring to *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* "well learned and practiced by Europeans in their intercourse with men of different colored skin, would today double the fruit of all the missionary enterprise in the world," he insisted. Racism was not extraneous to Christianity as an institution at his time: it was a direct contradiction to the spirit of the faith but an embedded practice that was obstructing Christianity from attaining its potential. (Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, "Letter to Mr. Carter," May 22, 1874).

In summary, Janes understood his role in his educational mission as a case of infusing an all-encompassing love borne of Jesus, which transcended race and place, into Japan to counteract the forces of xenophobic hate, of "slavery," and to set people on a path of enlightenment, to a liberation of their minds from the prejudices of the past. He understood this quest specifically through the prism of American racism against American Indians and especially against Black people, which formed the intellectual undergirding of slavery. Enlightenment was the domain of all; all had the capacity to be educated and to learn. He wrote in 1874, "Race hatred and prejudice are, I believe, sensibly melting away, perforce, before the developing and self-asserting capacities of these Asiatics to hold their own under equally favorable circumstances, with the slave-making palefaces" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Letter to Mr. Carter, May 22, 1874).

The time of enlightenment

There was, then, something about the specific moment in which Janes lived, he believed, that enabled the rise of "Asiatics" to a place equal to that of "slave-making palefaces" and thus made "race hatred" melt away. There was a temporal dimension to his spatial universalism. It was a particular conception of time that made the moral outrage of American slavery, and the racism on which it rested, take a global turn: now had arrived, Janes was convinced, a moment of global emancipation in which he and Japan were but partaking, a moment in the late nineteenth century when the fetters and prejudices of the past could and necessarily needed to be cast off everywhere.

Janes expressed this idea forcefully in his 1874 public address for the "renewal" of the School of Occidental Learning. Janes's initial tenure in Kumamoto was set at three years, but Hosokawa Morihisa, governor, agreed to use prefectural funds to keep Janes and sustain his academy (Notehelfer 145; Ishii 102–111). The address is one of the very few extended, public texts available from Janes directly from his time in Kumamoto; most other non-retrospective sources come from letters he wrote, the vast majority of which are no longer extant after Janes himself destroyed them shortly before his death (Marius B. Jansen Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, Letter from Iris Janes dated May 22, 1978). In this 1874 address, Janes held forth in a didactic, perhaps overeager and gushing, but earnest, even febrile oration on the "enlightenment," rhapsodizing on how "greatly enlarged" his "ideas of the great work of education" had become since he embarked on the Kumamoto quest. He gaped at how "throughout the world," "during even these three short years, such astonishing progress has been making in the cause of education." And it was these global connections that enabled him to "rejoice at my connection with the great work," that is, the cause of education throughout the world, "in ever so humble and obscure a way." He was, then, just one "humble" and "obscure" figure amid global forces of emancipation and enlightenment, and Japan but drew from this broader global moment. "Japan has only partook of an impulse of advancement towards a higher civilization that has gone over the continents and oceans," Janes declared (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

Janes thus situated the history in which he lived, indeed the history he made, within the theoretical frame of a history he construed as global. It was amid this global moment of emancipation that he took the action he did in Kumamoto, and that

conception of global correlation thus became causation, forming the intellectual context in which he undertook his educational processes. Janes hammered away in 1874 at this single theme: that enlightenment, by which meant the "astonishing progress" in the education of people, had taken hold across the world. "The mind of man is expanding with new ideas, and leaping forward to new efforts. His soul swells with the contemplation of what he has accomplished in these few recent years, and all is aglow with hope and action," he observed. He was "certain": "a new spirit has been breathed in this age" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

This enlightenment, this "spirit" of the age, was visible in the products of an enlightening education, including new technologies and new ways of life. The railroad, steamships, or telegraphs, all products of enlightened education, showed evidence of this "influence of a new life." Education had made newspapers, and newspapers had made "men brethren throughout the earth. … The farmer in Japan will wish to know what his brother farmer in Europe or America is doing." Janes led, in his address, a global tour of China, England, Italy, and Austria, telling of the German defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war to Germany's universal education system, by which "intelligence triumphed. Brute force was struck down at first blow." "Even," in his perhaps ironically prejudiced telling, "the religion of the Mohammedan," whether in Constantinople, Egypt, or Persia, was showing signs of emancipating itself from its alleged "scorning" of education. "The mind of man is expanding with new ideas," he proclaimed (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

Amid this global enlightenment moment, the United States, Janes was convinced, bore an exceptional place because of its legacy of slavery—and it was slavery that was inimical to enlightenment and slavery that America had overcome through enlightenment. Just as he believed race influenced him to make him fit to lead his Japanese students, as we saw in the previous section, he believed it tragically made America after the Civil War a natural leader of the world. "To America belongs," he asseverated, "the supreme glory of which I am more proud than of any other, of having given to the world the idea of the benefit and the necessity of the general education of the people." What he was doing in Kumamoto was an American quest. It was American in part because of the "republican form of Government" of the United States, in which, he said, "the people must be enlightened" because "the government is of the people." It was republican democracy that demanded enlightenment. But

enlightenment was American, or global enlightenment began in America, more because of slavery. Janes pronounced:

> Ten years ago, this nation sustained the greatest trial a people or a government can be subjected to. For four years of terrible war, the forces of freedom and enlightenment were arrayed against those of slavery and ignorance in civil conflict. Enlightenment triumphed; every fibre of the Government grew stronger and healthier throughout the ordeal; and the ugly disease of African slavery was healed and a whole forest of the weedy growths due to the seeds of ignorance, with it, were burned in the fiery trial, root and branch (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

Slavery was ignorance, and emancipation was enlightenment. Janes cited Russia, England, and Brazil as places where, to his "rejoicing," "slaves" were being "emancipated": all examples demonstrated, he suggested, that "ignorance is the slavery of the mind to vice, as serfdom is the slavery of the body to power." The "freeing" of the mind and the body from their "bonds" at the exact some moment throughout the world was "an evidence of the world's growth in enlightenment that the year now closing should see the last of human slavery!" To these "slaves who were bought and sold like cattle," Europeans had at last acquiesced, he observed, "to pay back the great debt of wrong, with the blessed boon of education, which restores them to manhood" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

So it was, Janes concluded, that Japan was but one example of the worldwide emancipation moment. "I know that to many in this land the changes that have occurred here during the past ten or fifteen years seem peculiar to Japan," he promulgated. "But they think that while the world remains the same Japan is changing. There could not be a greater mistake: The whole world is, without a doubt, under the influence of a new life" (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 6, Folder 1, "Memorial Address For Renewal of Kumamoto Yogakko).

Just as there was a positive, generative universalism, as we saw in the previous section, in the enlightenment in Kumamoto, and there was a degenerating, dismantling one, the same dynamic played out across the world and thus in Japanese society. It was within the context of the American-inaugurated global emancipation moment that Janes interpreted the social disorder that engulfed Japan around him as well. Janes

wrote in a letter from May 1874 about the rebellion of Etō Shinpei, in which Etō, a former leading government official, defected and led a violent, weeks-long uprising in neighboring Saga prefecture earlier that year. “Unusual events have occurred in our vicinity since I last wrote,” Janes observed. He wrote of the turmoil that had overtaken Kumamoto had left “miserable winter for the poor people”; he wrote of “such fruitless bloodshed all around,” of “the risings, the brutal butcheries by the insurgents, and the final beheadings,” he wrote, no doubt a reference to the decapitation of Etō. Though Kumamoto itself had not become a battlefield—yet—he noted that “at one time for a month continually” fires repeatedly disturbed the city, and “the old warrior class with their longest swords and daggers thronged the streets like a disturbed hive of hornets” (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Letter to Mr. Carter, May 22, 1874).

What had so agitated this disturbed hive of hornets that led them out to the streets, and what had enabled him, despite this strife, to continue on with his educational work “right through the whole commotion”? Of the “sources and character of the influences that work these results,” Janes explained, referring to the rebellions, “They belong neither to the old system, nor to the new, nor to their conjunction.” In other words, these were not, actually samurai rebellions, not men of the “old warrior class” rebelling because they were of the old warrior class. The “fruitless bloodshed all around,” the “fighting and open rebellion,” Janes explained, “grow out of the wicked heart of man, as slavery and our slave-holders’ rebellions did.” And he continued, repeating a point we have already encountered:

> And but for the fact that God is now working specially with this people, as he was, specially, with our own, twelve years ago, they would drag or drive this nation to a universal conflagration and to perdition. In view of this fact, however, a conviction of which the experiences of three years in Japan have impressed upon me more and more:—and in view even of my observation during the last winter, my faith in this people increases rather than diminishes. The greater work is to build up better influences in the land, that shall one day control it for good, and bring these blind but giant forces into subjection—the ignorance, superstition, barbarism and idolatry that have been growing through so many centuries (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Letter to Mr. Carter, May 22, 1874).

The global enlightenment, the worldwide emancipation of people from enslavement and slavery, began in America because of its legacy of slavery. And the opposite was true: the destructive effects of “race hatred” began in America, which

acted as a historical model for interpreting social disorder and destruction elsewhere. It was the same force that led slaveholders to rebel in the United States that led the samurai to rise up: their "wicked heart," their hatred and opposition to enlightenment. And it was his role to help enlighten his students, to extricate them from the evils that had engendered American slavery, to prevent a similar "conflagration" from destroying Japan.

Slaveholder rebellion?

A conflagration did engulf Kumamoto, not nearly at the scale of that in the United States, but a conflagration nonetheless. And Janes had much to do with it.

Janes helped bring about through the Kumamoto School of Occidental Learning a transformation not only for his own students but also for Kumamoto as a whole. To his students, he taught math, science, political thought, and most of all, English. To the prefecture, he introduced or otherwise contributed to the development of American farming practices; Western food, including bread and beef; the printing press; and, as we have seen, co-education of boys and girls. Even the Meiji emperor himself visited the school in 1872 and witnessed the English-language education of the boys, as Ebina recollected (Watase 68).

Janes also helped to spread Christianity. After the renewal of the academy in 1874, Janes began a series of Bible classes with his students, who became increasingly enamored of the faith Janes taught them. There was resistance at first. Ebina, a star student, wrote in his recollections that a discipline of Yokoi Shōnan asked him at the time, "What do you think of the idea of 'loving your neighbor' in the foreign teachings?" Ebina did not think highly of it. "I replied, 'The just actions of the forty-seven samurai of Ako are my ideal." It was a tale of vengeance, not of forgiveness and love, "yet Christianity tells us to love even the most unforgivable enemy and the enemy of our fathers." "The foreign teachings," he wrote, invoking the common term for Christianity, "thus teach lawlessness, and there can be no doubt that these are evil teachings" (Watase 86–87; also Sekioka 73–78). But gradually, many of the young men, including Ebina, came to believe in the "lawless," "evil" teachings Janes taught them. And in a dramatic moment in January 1876, a group of 35 students climbed a nearby mountain, testified to their conversion to Christianity, and vowed to spread the teachings of Jesus across Japan.

The reaction was ferocious. Families were torn apart. One young convert, Kanamori Tsūrin, was pressured to recant by Takezaki Sadō, a leading official in

Kumamoto instrumental in Janes's settlement in Kumamoto. Kanamori was placed in solitary confinement and pressured to recant. He did not. He was banished first to nearby Yamaga and then to Uji and Kyoto. The father of Yoshida Sakuya, another convert, drew a sword at his son. Sakuya "quietly presented his neck." "Nothing could give him greater satisfaction," Kozaki, a fellow student, later recalled, than to be murdered by his father for his faith. His father held back but "struck his neck with the back of his sword." Yokoi Shōnan's widowed wife, chagrined at her son had converted, threatened to kill herself if he did not recant, impelled to do so partly by Takezaki Junko, wife of Takezaki Sadō, whom we will encounter shortly. Her suicide was interrupted, but her son was placed in solitary confinement and banished (Kozaki 21–23; Watase 87–118; Sekioka, 97–107; Notehelfer 199–205.).

Janes stood firm and unrepentant, showing no outward sign of remorse or vacillation, despite what he privately described in a letter as the "violent storm" around him, despite the "vindictive cry of unrelenting persecution raging around us," despite being "so exhausted with anxiety." "It was at one time feared what might become of my dear boys," he wrote. Some, he noted, were "pressed by their parents to commit suicide." Many were in "imprisonment under their own roofs." But they will "never be made to forsake their faith," he declaimed (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 15, Folder 2, "Captain Janes And His Work In Japan," Letter to Davis, pp. 21–27).

If the conversion of Janes's students incurred the wrath of their families, it also invited the displeasure of members of the Kumamoto government, including some who had been Janes's supporters, sponsors, and associates. Bonds of fraternity were sundered. Takezaki Sadō had been the "most intimate" friend of Janes during his sojourn. "Hundreds of times [Janes] was seen on horseback on his way to Mr. Takezaki's," his boys recalled, where they "usually talked for hours together." When Takezaki was sick, Janes "paid him daily visits and nursed him with his own hand, going so far as to prepare his food." Now Takezaki turned on Janes, or had Janes turned on him? Takezaki demanded that the boys recant their newfound faith (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 15, Folder 2, "Captain Janes And His Work In Japan," pp. 17–18).

There was no renewal of Janes's contract for a second time. The Occidental School was closed. Janes departed Kumamoto in early October 1876. In what appears to have been his farewell address, which we encountered earlier, Janes declared:

> In former years the Cotton States of America were wont to declare that "Cotton is King!" No member of the community was more contemned than the teacher. His relation (or hers) to that large section of human beings who were held as slaves, because their skins were black, was made the subject of stringently adverse legislation. For the power and necessary results of that relation, were well understood (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 7, Folder 18, "Farewell Address").

The result of the teacher's relations with the student, Janes said, was "emancipation," "liberation of the mind," something "fatal to slavery." Now the teacher was gone.

Just weeks after Janes departed Kumamoto, the ultranationalist, reactionary putsch known as the Shinpūren Rebellion, or the Rebellion of the League of the Divine Wind, erupted. The rebels assassinated the governor of Kumamoto and the head of the national military garrison, and their uprising ignited a chain of rebellions that stretched through Fukuoka and Yamaguchi prefectures. The extent of direct causality between Janes's sojourn and the rebellion is debatable and requires a separate discussion on the Shinpūren itself, but it is certain that the Westernizing reforms that Janes spurred helped to precipitate the violent backlash. Indeed, some sources suggest that the Shinpūren had gone to Janes's house to murder him only to find that he was not there (Kyūshū bungaku kisha 28; this is the Japanese original of the archival source in Box 15, Folder 2, cited above). In their atavistic valorization of Japanese tradition, and in their ferocious opposition to Christianity and what they deemed Westernization, the Shinpūren represented and quite literally fought for the antithesis of what Janes personified and taught. Janes's conviction, expressed in 1874, that Japanese needed to be enlightened to overcome the forces of "ignorance, superstition, barbarism and idolatry," belonging to the hearts of Japanese "insurgents" and to American slaveholders alike, indeed precipitated an insurgency stemming precisely from what Janes identified as those forces.

Japan in the global emancipation moment

At a first glance, it seems only right to dismiss Janes's views about Japanese disorder as akin in origin to slaveholder resistance in the United States as the tendentious, baseless fancy of an American who arrived in a country unknown to him and had to make sense of it somehow, drawing from the only intellectual framework

he had at his disposal. After all, the comparison has little if any empirical basis. The rebellion of Etō Shinpei in 1874 was certainly not about slavery. Japan did not have institutional slavery as the United States did to start with. And the various rebellions that Janes all lumped into the category of slaveholder rebellions had vastly different ideological bases. Etō Shinpei was one of the most radical Westernizers of the Meiji regime; the Shinpūren were avowed enemies of that program of Westernization. To say that all these rebellions were caused by "wicked hearts" akin to those of slaveholders seems to hold no academic credence; at very best, it might be good-intentioned moralizing. Perhaps we should be satisfied with the argument that Janes's view about slavery and emancipation is significant historically as a prescriptive device, inasmuch as that view of history engendered the conditions it described, not historiographically or as a descriptive narrative, for it seems hardly to work as a valid frame of historical interpretation.

Curiously, Ikai Takaaki, a distinguished historian of social rebellion in the 1870s, reflects on this very point—that the various rebellions of the 1870s had little in common with each other—to make a claim, unbeknown to him, similar in important respects to that of Janes at the time. The rebellions to which Janes referred as slaveholder rebellions are conventionally described as rebellions of "disgruntled samurai" (*fuhei shizoku*). To describe these rebellions as "conservative" or emerging from "disgruntlement," Ikai argues, is far too sweeping; it is a claim that was developed by the Meiji regime itself to describe its opponents and is but a historical assumption, not one with any rigorous empirical basis in the motivations and impetuses of the rebellions (Ikai 5–6). Up to here, then, we appear to have an argument against the sort of characterization Janes, too, made.

Janes too would have agreed that there was nothing "conservative" about these rebellions: they were not of the "old system," he insisted, as we have seen. Ikai goes on to claim that if the rebellions were not about "conservatism" and "disgruntlement," they were about the attainment of freedom—of, we might say, emancipation. "The development of history is a process of realizing freedom," Ikai writes (8). Becoming both "free from" and "free to" constitute of the process of history, he argues; in the former case, under which the samurai rebellions also fall, in his reading, freedom means being "free from tyranny and enslavement; bondage and poverty; war and disease; and inconvenience" (Ikai 8). The samurai rebellions were, then, to Ikai, "action seeking the realization of the right to decide for themselves the things that pertain to themselves after the samurai had become free from various

feudal prerogatives and from their domains, or in the case of peasants, their villages and communities" (10).

We do not need to embrace this oddly romanticized view of the entire course of human history to extract a basic point: that to both Ikai and to Janes at the time, the social disorder around Janes, whatever its impetus, emerged out of a particular problem of "emancipation", and that problem of emancipation from the past had created an earnest reckoning about how to handle the problem of increased freedom and autonomy in a global world where those were becoming increasingly possible. Indeed, in a groundbreaking piece of scholarship, Daniel V. Botsman too sees this problem of freedom and emancipation as foundational to the story of early Meiji Japan, and he seeks to situate the era in the same series of global events that Janes himself had in mind: the emancipation of slaves in the British empire and America and the emancipation of serfs in Russia (1325). Like Janes, Botsman sees early Meiji questions of emancipation and freedom as both constitutive of and engendered by a global historical moment. Botsman writes, "the paradigm of 'freedom' and 'emancipation' started to be used to explain and justify a range of social reforms" and argues that the "'slavery metaphor,' together with contemporary ideas about freedom and emancipation, had a significant impact on Japanese political culture" (1356). Ultimately, Botsman seeks to claim that the case of the idea of slavery in Japan in the global emancipation moment serves to dissociate the idea of freedom and emancipation from a "unique cultural tradition so deeply rooted in the history of the West," by which he appears to mean slavery. He seeks to demonstrate that freedom was not a "weird Western concept."

Janes, as we have seen, situated Japan within the global emancipation moment, but for a rather different purpose. He had little if anything to say about freedom per se. But he had much to say about prejudice, hate, and racism, which were indeed weirdly America, because of the singularly atrocious history of the American slave trade and of American racism against Black people, but also universal, since all people and all societies struggled with problems of prejudice and hate. And that is where the payoff of the interpretive notion of "slaveholder rebellions" appears: for Janes, as for Ikai and Botsman, whatever their particular sources, the rebellions of 1870s Japan turned on a foundational problem of prejudice and disdain for people of difference, whether against women or people of another color. And this problem escalated to a global moment of reckoning in the late nineteenth century, both by correlation and causation.

Where Janes takes us, and Bostman does not, is to the notion that emancipation was indeed exceptionally American because of the catastrophic consequences of American slavery. America inaugurated a global moment, a new global order, because its problem of slavery could only be resolved through a cataclysmic war involving unprecedented death and suffering. That cataclysm swept Japan, causally, into the same fold of "emancipation," though that emancipation was expressed differently. And so, in Japan too this problem of "emancipation" would inaugurate catastrophic consequences: that of reckoning with the issues of prejudice and hate. It would take intense social upheaval and violence to reckon with this problem, Janes foresaw, in Japan as in America.

Lest we be led to idolize Janes as some prophet of global race unity or an exemplar of unprejudiced enlightened thought, we must note that Janes himself, particularly in his later years, wrote with what can unproblematically be called abhorrent racism about Japanese people and more generally people of other races. Let us take his views on "miscegenation" as but one, but perhaps the most egregious, example, and let us allow for him to speak for himself:

> When a man has once got himself thoroughly stuck in the mire of mixed generation he is by that fact out of the count in estimating Japanese civilization and all other things Japanese. For he is the willing slave of the most powerful of all the instincts that can mar the motives and corrupt the judgement [*sic*] in these questions. He is at once brought under the most powerful of all inducements of individual ... to misjudge and misrepresent the notoriously lower conditions which he had chosen for himself and his children, and to disparage and impugn the privileges, relations, and entire higher civilization which he has renounced. He becomes either the active and malignant enemy of the society and the race that discards him as a renegade; or the helpless victim of the incongruities and isolation to which his perversity has consigned him, among the lower with whom he seeks in vain to affiliate (Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, Box 7, Folder 2, "Kumamoto, An Episode In Japan's Break From Feudalism, Miscegenation, Notes, 1901-1905").

The body of archival evidence suggests that Janes began to develop these more abhorrent views of Japan and of people of other races after his return to the United States and amid or in the wake of tumultuous personal crises, including separation from his wife, allegations of sexual infidelity, intense personal depression,

and an embarrassing legal spat. The contradictions between his earlier and later writings seem to suggest a transformation in his thought. Whether indeed this was a transformation over time or simply an inherent contradiction, and how to account for that either way, is not within our immediate concern here. Clearly, the image of Janes as a beacon of enlightenment is incomplete.

Nonetheless, it matters that Janes brought this conception of a global enlightenment moment to Kumamoto and thus the American problem of racism and racial violence right into the heart of Japanese youth. He shows us how the problem of American racism against Africans and people of African descent was a global problem, not a strictly American problem. As Janes reflected during his arrival in Japan in 1871, "There is but one remove, one step of progress, from the sentiment of patriotism to that of humanity, from the concept of countrymen, fellow-citizens, to that of mankind. But it is the mightiest that man ever makes in his views of human relations and human destiny." And he asked rhetorically, of America: "What would our Union, our Republican Institutions, our Enlightenment be, were they the whole, and all, for the sake of one people alone?" (quotations directly from Notehelfer 110)

Conclusion

What all this might mean for people in the African continent today is, of course, for people of Africa to decide for themselves, not for people external to the continent, people with little knowledge or experience there, to dictate to them. But Leroy Lansing Janes's narrative in general appears to hold both cautionary and hortatory value. The ferocious backlash to values of justice and universalism that he both incited and observed warns of the vested interests and ideological prejudices, including his own, that stand in the way of what he called universal "enlightenment." His conviction that there are lessons on a global scale to the national reality that it took a cataclysmic civil war to weld the different peoples of the United States together in a single unified political body does not augur well for us today. And yet Janes's belief in the capacity of all people, regardless of any inherent traits, to learn and to be educated; his conviction that this inner capacity for enlightenment made all people everywhere essentially the same; his observation that it was a set of circumstances in the late nineteenth century that enabled this inherent global universalism to be expressed in a novel, unprecedented global emancipation; and his uncanny insight that the dynamic of the relationship between people of African descent and people of

European descent had global implications, or that resolving the problem of racism against people of African descent in the United States had direct, unmistakable implications for problems of gender and political order in Kumamoto, Japan—these aspects of Janes's story seem to demand reflection from all people, including people in Africa.

References

Archival sources

Leroy Lansing Janes Papers, 1874–1938. Special Collections. Princeton University Library.

Marius B. Jansen Papers, 1920–2000. Special Collections. Princeton University Library.

Published sources

Botsman, Daniel V. "Freedom without Slavery? 'Coolies,' Prostitutes, and Outcastes in Meiji Japan's 'Emancipation Moment.'" *The American Historical Review,* vol. 116, no. 5, December 2011, pp. 1323–1347.

Dōshisha daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūsho, editor. *Kumamoto bando kenkyū: Nihon Purotesutantizumu no ishi genryū to tenkai.* Misuzu shobō, 1965.

Ikai Takaaki. "Reikishi kyōkasho kara no aimaina gainen no haijo no tame ni: 'Fuhei shizoku' o megutte." *Rekishi hyōron*, vol. 710, June 2009, pp. 4–11.

Ishii Masako. *Kumamoto Yōgakkō kyōshi Capt. L. L. Janes kenkyū: ashiato to kōseki.* Yūkeidō, 2013.

Janes, L. L. *Kumamoto: An Episode in Japan's Break from Feudalism.* Edited by Ono Noriaki, Dōshisha shashi shiryō hensansho, 1970.

Kozaki, Hiromichi. *Reminiscences of Seventy Years: The Autobiography of a Japanese Pastor.* Translated by Nariaki Kozaki. Christian Literature Society of Japan, 1933.

Kyūshū bungaku kisha, editor. *Nihon ni okeru taii Jensu shi*. Keiseisha, Meiji 27, 1894.

Notehelfer, F. G. *American Samurai: Captain L. L. Janes and Japan.* Princeton University Press, 1985.

Sekioka Kazushige. *Ebina Danjō: sono shōgai to shisō.* Kyōbunkan, 2015.

Watase Tsunekichi. *Ebina Danjō sensei.* Ryūginsha, 1938.