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I am Inoue Kaoru. I was born at Yudaonsen, Yamaguchi City in 1836.

It was the times that foreigners should be excluded from Japan.

Going abroad was prohibited under the Tokugawa Government's National Isolation Policy.

Choshu Clan Government, however, realized that Japan could learn from western countries. So, they decided to let young men to study advanced technology and navy in the United Kingdom thinking of the future of Japan after the exclusion of foreigners.

I was ordered secretly to visit University College London for study as a member of so-called "Choshu Five" in 1863, 5 years before the Meiji Restoration.

As 1,000-Ryo was paid for each student to Jardine Matheson, an English trade company, we must be high-class passengers, .but Itoh Hirobumi and I in the same ship were trained for sailors to keep deck clean, lift masts etc. during the voyage. It was because I wrongly told them in English that our purpose of visit was "Navigation" instead of "Navy" Very sorry for Itoh.

Professor Alexander Williamson of UCL took care of us during our stay in London. All of us stayed first at his house and studied at his Chemistry class. He arranged study tours to various factories to show new technology.

Everything was new and exciting.

Itoh Hirobumi and I, however, returned to Japan in 6 months after we arrived in London, because the newspaper reported that the allied fleet of 4 countries planned to attack Choshu. We tried hard to persuade Choshu Clan Government not to fight against them, but in vain.

Choshu Clan was divided by two groups of different opinions, and I was attacked near Sodekibashi Bridge on my way home by my opponent group. I asked my elder brother to kill me as I was almost dead, but my mother covered me with her body and asked him not to kill me. Tokoro Ikutaro sewed 6 deeply wounded parts with Tatami needle. I recovered miraculously.

When Takasugi Shinsaku organized Kihei-tai, I joined as the leader of Kojyo-tai and fought for realization of the Meiji Restoration.

As expected earlier, we of Choshu Five contributed to laying the foundation of the modernization of Japan after our return to Japan during Meiji Era.

I became the first Minister of Foreign Affairs and other Ministers of Meiji Government, and worked for development of the financial and industrial worlds.

My birth place is now open to the public as Inoue-Koen Park.