

# *Sino-Japanese Relations in the Edo Period<sup>1</sup>*

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## *Part Two. The Nagasaki Trade Was the Chinese Trade*

**Domestic Chinese Political Conditions.** The foreign atmosphere of Nagasaki was, in fact, a Chinese atmosphere. The festivals, annuals events, and foods were all closely tied to the Chinese trade during the Edo period. The China trade--more properly, Sino-Japanese trade--of the Edo period underwent a number of changes through the more than 260 years of that era, and it would be difficult to summarize in just a few words. For Japan's part, since Japanese ships could not leave to partake of trade, they had no choice but to wait for the arrival of Chinese vessels. Because of this circumstance, it was a passive trade for the Japanese in which they perforce considered domestic economic trends and planned strategies accordingly.

For China's side, domestic political circumstances and the international situation in East Asia caused changes in the trading vessels that set sail, and if Japan made changes in the manner in which they would be received in port, the Chinese had to adapt their policies accordingly. The most important element in domestic Chinese politics concerned the unity of the Qing dynasty. In 1644 when Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606-45) captured Beijing and the Ming dynasty collapsed with the suicide of Zhu Youjian 朱由檢 (Yizong 毅宗, 1611-44, the Chongzhen 崇禎 Emperor), it was the first year of the Shôhō 正保 in Japan under the rule of Shogun Iemitsu 家光. Until 1646, however, Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 (1604-61) supported the Prince of Tang 唐王, Zhu Yujian 朱聿鍵 (1602-46), and resisted the Qing in Fuzhou. His son Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624-62) made Xiamen 廈門 (Amoy) and Jinmen 金門 (Quemoy) his bases of operations and later brought Taiwan under his control; five times between 1648 and 1660 he sought assistance from Japan, and until [his death in] 1662 he fought at the head of an anti-Qing force.

During the Edo period, Japanese called Chinese people *Tôjin* 唐人 or "people of Tang" and Chinese ships *Tôsen* 唐船 or "Tang vessels." The reason for this appears to be that those who served in the Zheng Regime under Zheng Chenggong and others thought of themselves as men of the Ming who refused to follow the Qing; since they served the Prince of Tang, they were referred to as the "people of Tang."

Zheng Chenggong died in 1662, but his son Zheng Jing 鄭經 (1643-81), taking advantage of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in 1673, continued the fight from his

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\*Unless otherwise noted, all notes are the translator's.

<sup>1</sup> *Edo jidai no Nit-Chû hiwa* 江戸時代の日中秘話 (Tokyo: Tôhō shoten, 1980), pp. 9-27.

base on Taiwan. After Zheng Jing's death in 1681, his own son Zheng Keshuang 鄭克塽 (1670?-1707) succeeded him and continued the anti-Manchu movement of the Zheng family until he surrendered in 1683. The gains made in trading activities, including trade with Japan, proved to be a source of military funding for the Zhengs as well as the "Prince Who Pacifies the South" (Pingnan wang 平南王 [namely, Shang Kexi 尚可喜, 1604-76]) and the "Prince Who Brings Tranquillity to the South" (Jingnan wang 靖南王 [namely, Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠, d. 1682]), both of whom rose in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories.

During the years that the power of the Zhengs and the Three Feudatories remained strong, intermingled among those ships that came to Japan from the Xiamen area of Fujian and from the island of Taiwan were vessels under the authority of the Qing government as well as those that belonged to Shang Kexi, his son Shang Zhixin 尚之信 (d. 1680), Geng Jimao 耿繼茂 (d. 1671), and his son Geng Jingzhong. The Japanese did not ask if the ships were official Qing vessels or not, and as far as Japanese trade was concerned, the struggle going on between the two sides in China was off limits. They received equitable treatment, and both sailed to the port of Nagasaki.

In an effort to crush the Zhengs, the Qing government in 1661 (Shunzhi 18 in China, Kanbun 1 in Japan) promulgated the *qianjie* 遷界 (move the frontier) order. All Chinese vessels were prohibited from overseas travel, and the people living in the five Chinese coastal provinces of Shandong, Jiangnan, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong were no longer able to engage in trade with the Zhengs. Thus, aside from vessels given tacit official permission to leave port unofficially with the aim of buying Japanese copper, the order gradually produced results. In 1681, for example, the number of Chinese ships that entered the port of Nagasaki declined to nine, and among them there was not a single ship that had left from a mainland coastal Chinese city.

**The Number of Chinese Ships to Japan.** Let me now say a few words about the numbers of Chinese vessels that arrived in Japan in the seventeenth century. There are no reliable Japanese-language documents for the first half of the seventeenth century, and we must rely on the diary accounts of British merchants in Hirado and Dutch merchants in Hirado and Nagasaki.

We know the following figures for Chinese vessels coming to Hirado: 30 ships for 1612; 60-70 ships for just the first six months of 1614; 70-80 ships for 1631; 74 ships for 1640; 97 ships for 1641; and 54 ships for 1644. Of the 97 vessels for 1641, six were owned by Zheng Zhilong, and seven more were vessels belonging to people in the Zheng Regime. Eleven of the 35 vessels that came to Japan in 1666 belonged to the Zhengs, and eighteen of the 36 vessels in 1670 were owned by Zheng Jing. Nine of the 29 ships of 1675, ten of the 24 ships of 1676, and seven of the 26 ships of 1678 were Zheng Jing's as well. All of the nine vessels in the case of 1681, mentioned above, came from Southeast Asia and appear to have belonged to the Zhengs.

When Zheng Chenggong was at the peak of his power, he had five warehouses--named Benevolence (*ren* 仁), Righteousness (*yi* 義), Ritual (*li* 禮), Knowledge (*zhi* 智), and Fidelity (*xin* 信)--in Xiamen and five warehouses--known as Gold (*jin* 金), Wood (*mu* 木), Water (*shui* 水), Fire (*huo* 火), and Earth (*tu* 土)--in Hangzhou. Within their sphere of influence along the Fujian coast, they collected taxes from the resident population, they made a practice of hiring merchants to engage in trade, and when ships came to port they

collected both principal and interest. It seems that the major item of merchandise transported en masse on Zheng ships for trade in the port of Nagasaki at the time was raw silk thread, and the *qianjie* order had the effect of hindering Zheng ships from collecting trade items as freight. The impact of the order was pronounced.

From 1635 to 1647, we have no records on either the Chinese or the Japanese side. On the basis of a study of the Dutch records for the decade 1634-1644, the average number of Chinese vessels coming to Japan was 57. Thus, the average number of 10 vessels for the period around 1661 marks a considerable reduction, again indicating the efficacy of the *qianjie* order.

**From the *Qianjie* Order to the *Zhanhai* Order.** In 1683 Zheng Keshuang surrender, and the Qing's conquest of China was complete. In 1684 (Kangxi 23 in China, Jōkyō 1 in Japan), the *qianjie* order was rescinded and the *zhanhai* 展海 (expand to the sea) order was promulgated. The results were astounding. The number of Chinese vessels that entered the port of Nagasaki in 1683 was 24 and in 1684 it was also 24. In 1685 the number rose to 85; 102 in 1686, 115 in 1687, and 193 in 1688. The year 1688 marked the high point in the entire Sino-Japanese trade of the Edo period for the number of Chinese ships, and the number of Chinese crew members who came to Nagasaki reached a total of 9,128. With the severe restriction put in place by the *qianjie* order now gone, Chinese merchants along the coast set off en masse.

The rapid increase in the number of Chinese vessels--from 24 in 1684, for example, when the *zhanhai* order was issued, to 85 the following year--represents more than a tripling, nearly a quadrupling. Japan, thus, had to come up with some sort of response. The Japanese side seems to have anticipated these changing circumstances in advance. In 1684 the government issued the *Jōkyō* order restricting trade activities. In order to prevent the outflow of gold and silver, the value of trading merchandise on Chinese ships was limited to 6,000 *kan* 貫 [roughly 22,500 kilograms] per year, and this was known as the *waritsukeshihō* 割付仕法 (allotment law). Ships were categorized by the sites from which they set sail and distinctions were imposed on the amount of traded merchandise each vessel brought in; the amounts were calculated as the ships came to port, and when the total amount reached 6,000 *kan*, subsequent Chinese vessels coming to port were not permitted to engage in commerce and were ordered to return with their cargo on board. As a result, ships that came to Nagasaki from late in the eleventh month of the lunar year through the twelfth month often had to leave Japan with freight intact.

However, despite the fact that vessels of this sort were forced to leave, the number of ships that came to Nagasaki by no means declined. Japanese authorities thus suspected that there was secret trade being transacted with smuggled goods and decided to restrict contacts between Chinese and Japanese. Until that point the arrangement was such that every Chinese vessel that entered the port of Nagasaki had a designated residence within a particular ward of the city of Nagasaki. Chinese resided in their ward which provided them with their food, received from them payment for residence and for food, and distributed their profits from trade. However, from 1689 a large residential area known as the Tōjin yashiki 唐人屋敷 (or Tōkan 唐館) was constructed with a mote dug around it, and Chinese were henceforth compelled to reside within. Among the Chinese who came to port the Tōjin yashiki was dubbed the *tuku* 土庫 (dirt storehouse).

Furthermore, from that year the number of vessels coming to Nagasaki was limited to twenty in spring, 30 in summer, and twenty in autumn, for a total of 70. A few years later the number had risen somewhat to 80. From this time forward the Nagasaki trade began to provide a source of revenue for the shogunate. In 1689 the Nagasaki Hall which was to manage all trade accounts that had hitherto been handled in a more decentralized fashion was opened. All import and export transactions were handled through this window, and it sent on all business taxes to the shogunate.

**The New Shôtoku Laws.** Later, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, copper, the principal Japanese export item, was in short supply and trade diminished, making the prices on *karamono* 唐物--items imported from China--rise dramatically and the quantity of smuggled good increase as well. Thus, Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657-1725), who played an important role in determining shogunal policy at the time advocated a restrictive program for Nagasaki trade, and in 1715 (the year Shôtoku 5 in Japan) the New Shôtoku Laws 新正徳令 were implemented. Accordingly, the number of ships that could call at Nagasaki was fixed at 30, and those permitted to engage in commerce at port were limited to merchants to whom the Japanese authorities had earlier provided trading licenses known as *shinpai* (*Nagasaki tsûshô shôhyô*) 信牌長崎通商照票. The upper limit on the amount of trade permitted remained at 6,000 *kan* of silver and the Japanese were permitted to spend annually 3,000,000 *kin* 斤 (1.8 million kilograms) of copper, the levels set by the Jôkyô order. In principal this did not change until the late Edo period, though the number of ships and the fixed limit did change in the following manner:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of vessels</u>	<u>Fixed limit</u>
1717	40	8,000 <i>kan</i>
1720	30	4,000 <i>kan</i>
1736	25	4,000 <i>kan</i>
1749	15	4,110 <i>kan</i>
1791	10	2,740 <i>kan</i>

From just looking at these figures, one might get the impression that the volume of trade was shrinking, but because of the change in circumstances which we shall examine later, the number of ships was decreasing but they were becoming larger in size. Hence, while the fixed limit was initially the overall volume of trade, it later became the portion of the total trade transacted in copper. It did not include other segments of trade and thus did not connote the overall volume of trade. We can see this from the following figures: in 1804 there were eleven vessels and overall amount of trade was over 7,345 *kan*; in 1840 there were nine ships with a total trading volume of over 9,217 *kan* (of which 920 *kan* were transacted in copper).

Let us look briefly now at the impact the new regulations concerning trade between China and Japan--namely, the *zhanhai* order and the New Shôtoku Laws--had on China. We have already noted that, as a result of the *zhanhai* order, the number of Chinese vessels coming to Nagasaki increased. These ships were dispatched by merchants, as the ban on trade was eased, from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and elsewhere, and as free trade effectively came into being, a large quantity of Japanese merchandise was imported back to China. Thus, in the 1689-1701 period, in the principal base of Japanese

trade around Shanghai and Zhapu (Ningbo) there was an excess of Japanese products, the prices on them dropped, and disposing of this merchandise became difficult. In addition there was a decrease in the production of white thread in Huzhou because of unseasonably bad weather, and the price on it rose drastically; they had to struggle to provide this commodity for export to Japan. We learn of these instances from the "Tôjin fûsetsugaki" 唐人風説書 (the reports of the Chinese) of the day.

The "Tôjin fûsetsugaki" were reports made to the shogunate. The Chinese-language translators spoke with the captains of the Chinese vessels that arrived in the port of Nagasaki and listened for information about domestic Chinese affairs, the situations prevailing in other countries, the conditions of maritime travel, and matters involving the captain and his crew members. These were submitted to the Nagasaki Administrator (Nagasaki *bugyô* 奉行) and then sent on to Edo. Together with the "Oranda fûsetsugaki" 阿蘭陀風説書 (reports of the Dutch), these were the only sources of intelligence for *sakoku* Japan. They were prepared every year on all the vessels coming into port. News of the Opium War, for example, was first learned about in this manner. We now have all together the reports for the period 1644-1727 with some lacunae, published by the Tôyô bunko 東洋文庫 under the title *Ka-i hentai* 華夷變態 (The Transformation from Civilized [China] to Barbarian [Manchu]).

Among the Japanese produce that was oversupplied was *hyômono* 俵物, a term that meant dried marine produce packed into straw baskets. More specifically, it referred to three items of merchandise: sea cucumber, dried abalone, and shark fin. The shogunate assigned *hyômono* a status as an export item to supplement the insufficiency in copper, and as large quantities of it were exported from the late seventeenth century, it was used with increasing popularity in Chinese cuisine. One worthwhile study of the export of *hyômono* is Arai Eiji 荒居英次, *Kinsei kaisanbutsu bôeki shi no kenkyû* 近世海産物貿易史の研究 (Studies in the History of Trade in Maritime Produce in Early Modern Times).<sup>2</sup>

**On the *Shinpai*.** We next turn to the impact of the New Shôtoku Laws. Early on the shogunate made preparations for the implementation of this new system and in the spring of 1715 gave *shinpai* to captains of vessels about to return home. The basic principle of this system was that trade would be permitted only to those who consented to the conditions of Japan's strict control--beginning with the banning of private trade and restrictions on cargoes and the volume of transactions--and to them *shinpai* were issued. Chinese ship captains who obeyed the instructions of the Nagasaki Administrator naturally assented to these conditions and received *shinpai*, but the problem was that there were captains who had long been engaged in trade with Japan but who happened not to be in Nagasaki during that year--ordinarily the cycle for Chinese vessels was one trip every two years. Captains who had returned to their home ports in China during 1715 did not get *shinpai*. The Fujian area ship captains such as Zhuang Yunqing 莊運卿, Liu Yijiu 劉以玖, and Xie Xieyun 謝叶運 who had not been able to obtain *shinpai* appealed to the Yin county magistrate (Ningbo prefecture) that a number of ship captains had in their possession *shinpai* bearing the Japanese reign period and that fact was tantamount to honoring the calendar of a foreign barbarian (namely, serving a foreign barbarian), defying

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<sup>2</sup> (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kôbunkan, 1975).

the Qing court, and offering allegiance to Japan. The county magistrate passed the matter on to the governor of Zhejiang and the governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian, but a debate ensued between the governor-general and the customs officials and no decision was ultimately arrived at. By the same token, merchants who had received *shinpai*, such as Hu Yunke 胡雲客 from Hangzhou and Dong Yiri 董宜日 from Ningbo, made a counterclaim, and after a debate lasting more than three years, the Qianlong emperor issued his decision on the matter: it was only natural that every country used its own reign titles; *shinpai* were to be divided and kept in the care of the Ningbo and Nanjing customs authorities; merchants heading for Nagasaki would receive a *shinpai* at the time of departure; and merchants were to plan together wholeheartedly and work diligently for trade. In actual fact, though, the Fujian merchants were barred from carrying cargo and could not make the voyage.

In the midst of the dispute, the *shinpai* were placed in the care of officials. Thus, few vessels that had *shinpai* entered the port of Nagasaki in 1715-1716, and captains who had been unable to obtain *shinpai* made the trip without one, asking for permission to trade. When they were turned down, they planned to dock off the shores of Nagato and Kokura and engage in secret or private trade. The shogunate ordered the domains of Chôshû and Kokura to drive away the private trading vessels. A fuss was made over this issue every year through 1720.

**The Prize of a *Shinpai*.** When *shinpai* trade was back on track, however, merchants began to consider how they might serve the shogunate and thereby get a temporary increase in the use of *shinpai* as a prize. Yoshimune 吉宗 became shogun from 1716 and he worked actively to introduce Chinese culture, especially by importing Chinese books, from 1720. He issued all manner of orders to Nagasaki, and movement developed among the Chinese merchants to try to obtain *shinpai* by filling the shogun's requests. There are many examples, but as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the clearest such case was that of the ship under the command of Zheng Dawei 鄭大威 which entered the port of Nagasaki in 1728 without a *shinpai* and carrying two elephants to fulfill the shogunal order received in 1723; as a reward this vessel was given a *shinpai*. One of the elephants died in Nagasaki, and the other trekked the entire way to Edo where it was much admired by Yoshimune. There was a great commotion over the path to be taken by the elephant, and at least three works were written concerning elephants at the time. It was much like the great popularity enjoyed today by pandas in Japan.

Yoshimune requested of the Chinese ship captains that they bring to Japan physicians, horse doctors, and people talented in equestrian archery, and he order them to gather together horses as well. The ship captains filled the shogun's orders from 1720 through 1726 or 1727. As rumors became current in the Zhapu area that doctors would be sailing for Japan, Governor-General Li Wei 李衛 (1686-1738) stiffened precautions from 1728 by strictly overseeing vessels headed for Japan. A fascinating piece of research would result from a comparison of Japanese documents of this time and Li Wei's memorial in the *Yongzheng zhupi yuzhi* 雍正硃批諭旨 (Vermillion Edicts of the Yongzheng Reign). Li Wei appointed an influential merchant to be director of commerce and take over management of the Japanese trade which had been completely free until that point; he thus adopted a system of autonomous control through the director of commerce. This system may be thought of as the Chinese policy response to Japan's New Shôtoku

Laws. The highest responsibilities of the director of commerce were to supervise trade in copper and to fulfill the amount of copper subcontracted out.

The amount of copper exported by Japan gradually diminished thereafter, and private Chinese merchants found themselves in a serious bind. In 1740 a fixed number of private merchants known as the *eshang* (J. *gakushō*) 額商 emerged who were making a profit on Japanese copper; in 1755 with the fixed number at twelve, they became known as the "twelve *gakushō*." They bore the responsibility for setting sail each year in twelve vessels, buying up Japanese copper with their own capital, and then delivering half of the copper to Jiangsu and Zhejiang at a fixed price. They were free to sell the remaining half of the copper as they wished. In addition, from 1745 a group of official merchants to deal in copper came into existence. The government lent them capital, and they contracted for stocks of Japanese copper with the five provinces (Jiangsu, Jiangxi, etc.) that needed it; if there was any copper left over, they were free to dispose of it. From the middle of the eighteenth century, the Japanese trade was thus monopolized by *eshang* and official merchants, and it was handled in this manner until the port of Nagasaki was opened in 1859. In this way, the reason copper was needed in China was that the Qing dynasty used copper for making coins and there was no copper production in China; even after copper was being mined in Yunnan later, there was still insufficient quantities of it domestically.

**Points of Departure for Chinese Vessels.** Let us now look briefly at the ports from which *Tōsen*, namely Chinese ships, left China to sail to Nagasaki. The era in which the official merchants and *eshang* dominated trade corresponded with the latter half of the Edo period, and all vessels left from Shanghai or Ningbo. From about 1720, vessels departing from Ningbo in particular outnumbered those from the port of Zhapu (Pinghu county, Jiaying prefecture, Zhejiang province). Warehouses of merchandise to be shipped to Japan--known as "Japanese merchant warehouses"--were concentrated among Japan who had been shipwrecked and drifted to China. The Liangju Hall 兩局會館 for Japanese shippers in China was located here and it was the center of the Japanese trade.<sup>3</sup>

The ports of departure for Chinese ships in the first half of the Edo period, when trade was freely carried out, were highly diverse places. The Japanese divided them overall into three classifications. The first was called *kuchibune* 口船 (port ships), implying vessels that came from the two provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Vessels from Shanghai and the mouth of the Yangzi River were called "Nanjing ships" and those from Ningbo were dubbed "Ningbo ships"; both were considered *kuchibune*. The second were called *nakaokubune* 中奥船, indicating vessels from Fujian and Guangdong provinces. Those from Fujian province included "Fuzhou ships," "Quanzhou ships," "Xiamen ships," "Zhangzhou ships," "Taiwan ships," and "Shacheng ships." Those from Guangdong province included "Anhai ships," "Chaozhou ships," "Guangdong ships," "Gaozhou ships," and "Hainan ships." The third group was called *okubune* 奥船, indicating vessels that came from Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula, Java, Thailand, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. These ships bore such names as Tonkin 東京, Annam 安南, Zhancheng 占城 [southern Annam], Cambodia 柬埔寨, Siam 暹羅, Ligor 六崑, Singora 宋居勝, Patani 太泥, Malacca 麻六甲, Calapa 咬啣吧 (Batavia), and Banten 萬丹.

<sup>3</sup> The term "liangju" means literally "two offices" and apparently implies Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

**Ships Entering the Port of Nagasaki in 1688.** The ports of origin of the 193 ships that came to Nagasaki in 1688 are as follows: 45 Fuzhou ships, 32 Ningbo ships, 28 Xiamen ships, 23 Nanjing ships, 17 Guangdong ships, 7 Quanzhou ships, 6 Chaozhou ships, 6 Guangnan ships, 5 Putuoshan ships, 4 Taiwan ships, 4 Gaozhou ships, 4 Calapa ships, 3 Hainan ships, 2 Shacheng ships, 2 Malacca ships, 2 Siam ships, 1 Wenzhou ship, 1 Anhui ship, 1 Zhangzhou ship, and 1 Annam ship. The distribution of these ships was: 86 from Fujian province, 40 from Zhejiang, 30 from Guangdong, 23 from Jiangsu, and 14 from areas to the south of China.

In 1715 when the ship allocation permitted 30 vessels to enter port, the numbers broke down as follows: 10 Nanjing ships, 11 Ningbo ships, 2 Xiamen ships, 2 Taiwan ships, 2 Guangdong ships, 1 Guangnan ship, 1 Siam ship, and 1 Calapa ship. The number of vessels from Fujian had come down drastically, while those from Zhejiang and Jiangsu now outnumbered those from elsewhere. This development was due to the fact that Fujian merchants were gradually declining in power or were moving to Zhejiang and Jiangsu where merchants were clearly increasing in strength.

Did these Chinese vessels simply ply the waters between their ports of embarkation and Nagasaki, or did they travel to other places as well? As will be discussed below, some did simply go to and from Nagasaki, while others voyaged among the ports of Ningbo, Calapa, Guangdong, Patani, Guangnan, and Nagasaki. As I pointed at the start, we can establish links in coastal trade in the eastern sea and the south seas.

Next, let us look at the amount of time that was required to travel between representative Chinese ports and Nagasaki. For 1688 we have the following figures:

Putuoshan	5-14 days	Chaozhou	10-19 days
Nanjing (Shanghai)	6-20 days	Guangdong	16-25 days
Ningbo	8-14 days	Hainan	15-18 days
Fuzhou	6-14 days	Guangnan	28-63 days
Xiamen	5-15 days	Calapa	48-58 days
Quanzhou	8-17 days	Siam	46-50 days
Taiwan	16-19 days		

There is no way to say with precision just how long a trip took, because some ships had favorable winds and others struggled against headwinds, but this should afford a general sense of the time required.

**The Cargoes of Trading Vessels.** What sort of merchandise did these ships carry to Japan and what did they take from Japan? This question concerning the items traded between China and Japan deserves some attention. The most important item transported to Japan, namely imported by Japan, was raw silk thread. Among the varieties of silk thread were white thread, yellow thread, artificial thread, and reeled thread. White thread was closely associated with Huzhou prefecture (Zhejiang), the area famed for producing it, and was thus also called Hu thread (*Koshi* 湖糸). Yellow thread was produced in both Guangdong and Shanxi provinces, though Tonkin yellow silk thread was consistently first-class. Artificial thread was apparently a kind of twisted thread. In the early years of the Edo period, the volume of imported raw silk thread was large and was handled by Japanese *itowappu* 糸割符 merchants.<sup>4</sup> It was much used in the military for sword knots,

<sup>4</sup> See *Sino-Japanese Studies* 8.1 (October 1995), p. 41, especially note 2.

braided armor, and a kind of military undergarment. From 1715 the volume of imported raw silk thread diminished.

The next most popular imported item from China was textiles, especially silk goods, gossamer silk (*saya* 紗綾), crape, figured satin, damask silk, gauze, and satin. Although cotton cloth was also imported, there was both printed cotton as well as undyed cotton cloth, and the former entailed a batik textile printing, the specialties of the Coromandel area of South India and Java, imported to Guangdong.

Medicines were also an important import item, and their volume rose over time. Most valued was jinseng which was said to be able to cure all diseases. In addition, other products imported in large quantities included smilax, chaulmoogra, betel nuts, rhubarb, the root of a large-flowered skullcap, apricot stones, licorice root, fennel, rhizoma *atractylodis*, myrrh, and frankincense. Among Confucian scholars of the Edo period, even those who argued that imported merchandise were luxury items and should be reduced in the interest of frugality recognized the necessity of pharmaceutical items.

A great deal of sugar was also imported. Chinese ships transported white sugar, unrefined sugar, and rock sugar as ballast. Among minerals, large quantities of zinc and alum were also imported to Japan. Zinc was used as raw material for brass; alum was used in giving the color of Sappanwood, and was thus also known as a dye. In addition lead, mercury, and tin were imported from China. Sappanwood and *enji* 燕脂 [a bright red dye] were imported as dyes, *chawangusuri* 茶碗藥 [a pottery glaze] for use in painting on porcelain [in cobalt blue], deer and shark skins as hides, and bamboo paper, pearl gauze paper, florid paper, and sandalwood paper as kinds of Chinese paper. Lacquers were also imported to Japan.

The centerpiece of my own research has been the importation of Chinese books, which will become central to this work as well. Books were for cultural dissemination and thus were enormously important, but their relative importance in the overall volume of trading items was low. Nanjing ships and Ningbo ships brought books as their cargoes, and in the first half of the Edo period few vessels brought books with them. Because any written work concerned with Christianity was banned in Japan, books were first inspected and then permitted for importation. This procedure was required and thus we now have materials on it making study possible. Also, unlike items of consumption, such as textiles or sugar, books were kept until the end of the period and thus we know specifically when individual books were imported.

**Items Transported Back on Chinese Vessels.** Let us now look at the merchandise brought back to China from Japan on Chinese ships. The export of gold from Japan began in 1664. China did not need the gold but carried it primarily to India. Vessels belonging to the Zhengs and *okubune* transported it, and when they arrived at the coast of Coromandel, they reportedly earned 20-40 percent profit. Thus, when unification of the Qing dynasty was complete, the export of gold ceased.

Silver was the commodity primarily exported by Chinese vessels from before the time of *sakoku*, but as the Japanese gradually came to adopt a policy of embargo of shipments of silver, export of silver came to a complete stop in 1763.

Copper was the most important item brought back on Chinese vessels from Japan. Despite the fact that during the Qing era the monetary system was based on copper and used copper coingae, China produced no copper of its own. Thus, the transport of copper

became the core element of trade with Japan. In addition, Japanese copper was of especially high quality, and in the first half of the seventeenth century Dutch ships also purchased it. In conjunction with a decline in the production of Japanese copper, the shogunate limited the amount of copper for export, but until the early Jiaqing era when the value of copper currency plummeted and it was replaced by silver coinage, the importance of the copper trade remained immense. During the Qing era, Japanese copper was called *yangtong* 洋銅 or “Western copper.” In Japan it was called *saodô* 棹銅 or “pole copper”; the coins used for export fashioned copper into long, slender pieces that took on the shape of poles. The export merchant house that produced *saodô* was Izumiya 泉屋, namely Sumitomo 住友. The firm centrally active in the importation of textiles was Echigoya 越後屋, namely Mitsui 三井.

These were the principal export items, but there was really no limit to the many and sundry other items of merchandise exported. To get at precisely what the volume of business was in a given year or what each vessel brought in cargo to Japan or, for that matter, what each vessel carried off, extant documentation is scarce. The only year for which we know all the items of freight in the overall trade for the year and the content of each vessel at the time they left port is 1711. Information for that period can be found in the documents in the *Tôban kamotsu chô* 唐蛮貨物帳 (Register of Chinese and Barbarian Cargo), published in photocopy form by the Naikaku Bunko. Concerning the China trade in Nagasaki, the finest work we have is Yamawaki Teijirô 山脇悌二郎, *Nagasaki no Tôjin bôeki* 長崎の唐人貿易 (Chinese Trade in Nagasaki) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kôbunkan, 1964).

**The Arrival of Chinese Vessels.** What procedures did Chinese ships undergo when they arrived in the open sea off Nagasaki? There were officials known as the *tômban* 遠見番 or observers stationed at Nomo 野母 promontory at the tip of Nagasaki bay. They kept watch on the nearby open sea and when they observed a Chinese vessel, they reported it by post horse. As a preliminary step, the Chinese ship would lay anchor at a specified site in the sea by the harbor. The Nagasaki Administrator’s office would then have one of the *tômban* row out to greet it. He would attach a towline to the Chinese vessel, and then several dozen boats would tow it into port. If it was prior to four o’clock in the afternoon, an inspector from the Nagasaki Administrator’s office would board the vessel together with the Chinese translators, the head of the Chinese community in Nagasaki, a representative of the city ward taking responsibility for the ship, and the head of the local ward. A translator would attach to the mast of the Chinese ship a placard on which had been written regulations proscribing Christianity and read it aloud. After questions about members of the crew and the port of embarkation, the Chinese were expected to present their *shinpai*, their promissory note for copper allocation, their freight list, their registry of names (list of crew members and a document of signatories accepting the laws as read), and their written pledge of principles to abide by the bans observed in Japan, together with their “reports” (*fûsetsugaki*). They would then carry out the *fumie* 踏絵<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> *Fumie* or “treading over the picture” was a procedure required of all foreigners who came ashore at Nagasaki. They were required literally to step on a picture of Jesus or Mary and in so doing openly commit a blasphemous act against Christianity.

Unloading of cargo would begin the following day. With the ship captain present, the cargo would be confirmed in comparison to the cargo list, and the inspector would then affix his seal. The freight would then be placed at a licensed site. This process was known as *maruniyaku* 丸荷役. Next, they would bring on land the bodhisattva of Chinese vessels, Tianhou shengmu 天后聖母 (Empress of Heaven, saintly mother) or Mazu 媽祖<sup>6</sup>--the deity who protected them throughout their voyage--and forming a line bring it into the Chinese temple in Nagasaki. Then, after the Chinese had moved to the Tōjin yashiki and the inspector had affixed his seal to the cannons on the empty ship, the ship guards would assume their job guarding the vessel.

From the third day after arriving in port, the *seiniyaku* 精荷役 would take place. Officials from the Nagasaki Hall would observe the items of freight and their quantities, weigh each and every item, record the weight, and then confirm the total weight.

This was followed by what was known as *ōaratame* 大改め in which the Nagasaki Administrator had bidding merchants "show their wares"; he would look over a sample of the cargo and then give his permission to engage in business. Once a merchant was in agreement to commence business transactions, they entered into the task of fixing a price at the Nagasaki Hall, and a selling price was decided on between the appraiser (*mekiki* 目利) of the various items and the Chinese ship captain. If they did not agree on a price, they returned to negotiations, and if they ultimately failed to reach accord, then the ship captain could return home with the merchandise. When the establishment of a price was completed, a register of prices was prepared, and the day following the completion of price fixing, or perhaps one or two days after that, bidding began, and freight was handed over to the highest bidding merchant.

**Problems in the Study of Sino-Japanese Trade.** Merchants entering the bidding were limited to specified tradesmen known as the Five Main Merchants (*gokasho honshō* 五ヶ所本商). We have no clear idea at all by what route merchandise, claimed after a successful bid had been made, would travel out of the domestic market. This will await future research, but I am doubtful that we shall ever know the answer to this question.

How was merchandise bound for Japan collected as freight in or near Zhapu? How was merchandise coming from Japan disposed of in China? I would like to know more about these issues which will require the help of Chinese scholars to elucidate.

Because, as noted earlier, during the *sakoku* era Japanese were prohibited from making overseas voyages, China's spiritual culture as well as its material culture was transmitted entirely by Chinese who traveled to Japan. Thus, what sorts of Chinese came to Japan is highly important, although we have the names of an extremely small number. Zhu Shunshui 朱舜水 (1600-82) took refuge in Japan at the time of the collapse of the Ming; Chan master Yinyuan 隱元 (J. Ingen, 1592-1673) transmitted the teachings of the Huangbo (J. Ōbaku 黃檗) sect to Japan; Chan monks, such as Mu'an 木庵 (J. Mokuan) and Jifei 即非 (J. Sokuhi), preserved the Ōbaku tradition after him; and Shen Nanpin 沈南澗 is remembered as a famous painter who conveyed a technique of sketching that gave rise to the Nagasaki style of painting. Nor, for that matter, will the name of Yi Fujiu 伊孚

<sup>6</sup> Sometimes also written as 媽祖. See James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ('Empress of Heaven') Along the South China Coast, 960-1960," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 292-324.

九, ship's captain and talented literati painter and calligrapher, be soon forgotten. Aside from these famous figures in Japanese history, though, there were many persons whose names are lost to Japanese and, of course, Chinese history. Even in the few documents that I have assembled, there are over 400 names listed. These are only the names of ship captains and the richest men aboard the vessels; the list would grow considerably longer if it included ordinary sailors (known then as *gongshe* 工社). Locating the names of these people is an important task in the history of Sino-Japanese relations.