

Nagasaki and the Importation of Chinese Books to
Japan in the Edo Period

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Part One

While Japan's sakoku 鎖国 policy of sealing off the country was in effect during the Edo period (1603-1867), Nagasaki was Japan's largest "window" for the inflow of foreign items. There was trade with Korea through the island of Tsushima and with the Ryukyu Islands through the domain of Satsuma, but the Nagasaki trade was the largest, and it consisted principally of trade with China. Of course, this trade fluctuated in volume at different times and cannot be completely summarized in a word. Yet, when one sees the explanation given to high school students on their school trips to Kyushu that the inflow of Western culture following the opening of the country can in fact be traced back earlier and that the influence of the Dutch trade and Dutch Learning were the very essence of Nagasaki in the Edo period, one senses that this is pure historical fabrication.

Among books that summarize the essential features of the China trade at Nagasaki, we should first mention was Yamawaki Teijirō's 山脇悌二郎 Nagasaki no Tōjin bōeki 長崎の唐人貿易 [Chinese Trade in Nagasaki] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkān, 1964), from which I learned a great deal. I happened to develop a interest in a section of this book: "The Importation of Books, Tasks for the Future." When I examined several actual cases of the make-up of the libraries in Edo-period domainal schools and private academies, I wanted to know when the books in them had arrived in Japan, what sorts of books they were, and the volume transported. During this period, the late 1950s and early 1960s, the public libraries which had taken over the collections from the old domains had still not prepared listings of their Chinese books. In Kyushu the topic of the prevention of the Shimabara Matsudaira 島原松平 Collection from nearly being lost was still current at this time. It was the era in which Professor Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦 and Dr. Nagasawa Kikuya 長沢規矩也 talked themselves hoarse calling for the preservation of Chinese texts.

How would one go about locating materials concerning imported Chinese books? Had no scholars in the past studied this body of material? Beginning with questions like these, it became clear to me that the relevant sources had not been adequately collected, and that I would have to undertake such a project myself. I should, however, note the work of one scholar who was concerned with and pursued research on this topic, albeit minimally: Mutō Chōhei 武藤長平, Sainan bun'un shiron 西南文

運論 [Historical Analysis of Cultural Development in the South-west] (Tokyo: Oka shoin, 1926). It was from this book that I learned of the "Shoseki motochō" 書籍元帳 [Ledgers of books], from the bakumatsu period, held in the Nagasaki Prefectural Library. Unfortunately, Butō's argument contains a fair number of misunderstandings, although he was without a doubt the pioneer in this area of research.

Among the few past scholars who have touched on the issue of books, I should next mention the late Itō Tasaburō 伊東多三郎 and Ebisawa Arimichi 海老沢有道. These two men did research on the subject of "banned books." They examined 32 works written in Chinese concerning Christianity which were banned in conjunction with the interdiction on Christianity in the Edo period. The centerpiece of this body of works was the Tianxue chuhan 天学初函 [Early Writings on Christianity {in China}], a collection [edited by Li Zhizao 李之藻] primarily concerned with the writings and translations of Matteo Ricci. Although [unlike I] they studied Chinese books banned from importation, since imported books were not covered by the ban, their work was extremely useful to me as the reverse side of those Chinese books that were imported. Furthermore, what should be noted with respect to these banned books is that, among scholars of Japanese history, there are those who are under the impression that all such works were written in European languages (Dutch or English or the like). I was startled to see this written in the work of a certain celebrated scholar whose name is known to everyone. It cannot be passed over as a simple misapprehension.

Important studies of these banned books, which we should note promptly, was that of the Mukai 向井 family, Inspectors of Books at Nagasaki; their work fell into the hands of two scholars resident in Nagasaki, Watanabe Kurasuke 渡辺庫輔 and Masuda Renkichi 増田廉吉. In the process of carrying out my research, the fact that I gained access to the Watanabe Bunko (Archives), which supplied Watanabe's former library to Nagasaki Prefectural Library, and the fact that over 3000 items in the Seidō Monjo 聖堂文書 (Documents in the Confucian temple [founded by Hayashi Razan 林羅山]) collection--namely, former records of members of the Mukai family--have been opened to the public in the Nagasaki Municipal Museum made it possible for me to corroborate the materials used by Watanabe and Masuda who had not clearly marked down the location of the source materials they consulted. And, I had the good fortune to discover this treasure trove of valuable documents.

On reflection, the opening to the public of these documents was part of the trend of the times, when national public institutions began publishing lists of the books in their holdings. It was an era in which the utilization of collections by the general populace was guaranteed and techniques of photoduplication had

improved, both of which, to our great joy, improved the efficiency of research. Although much depends on the nature of the items in a given collection, it seemed as though libraries were a few steps ahead of museums with respect to services for the general user. As I will mention later, because the materials with which I was dealing were books, I was able to investigate at will the former holdings of the Momijiyama 紅葉山 Bunko of the Tokugawa bakufu and the Shōheizaka gakumonjo 昌平坂学門所 which are held in the Naikaku Bunko 内閣文庫 of the National State Archives and the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency. Had the materials I wanted to see been held by museum agencies, I would probably still be in the middle of my research.

Part Two

It is impossible to know everything we would like about imported Chinese books for the entire Edo period. Unfortunately, source materials are extremely fragmentary, and there are many temporal gaps in those materials. Yet, in the process of putting the sources I have collected in order, I would like to announce that we have advanced to a new stage of research with regard to reference material.

As a whole, the collected materials fall into one of two sorts. First are compilations in which people from the Edo period with the same concerns as ours arranged the imported works according to the time of arrival and the nature of the work. These are, thus, secondary sorts of sources. By contrast, the primary materials were prepared in the process of the importation of the books. The latter are fragmentary, lack consistency, and many remain in existence out of chance. In considering how to group these primary materials, I decided not to do it by year or the content of the books, but rather to line them up by the order in which they emerged in the process of importation. Although these books had hitherto been treated in their relationship to bibliography and intellectual content, this meant that I treated them simply as commodities. This also meant that I would subsequently direct my attention to the people who carried the books to Japan, Chinese merchants, and to the vessels that brought them over, Chinese ships; as well as to the collections of materials aboard Chinese ships that drifted to Japanese shores [following shipwreck or inclement weather].

What sort of materials are to be found among these primary sources? First, we have the "Seirai shomoku" 齋来書目 [Lists of books imported]; these are catalogs or listings of the books held in the cargo of Chinese ships that entered the port of Nagasaki. Examples of this sort of work are: "Kyōhō shigainen

shomotsu kaibo" 享保四亥年書物改簿 [Ledger of books inspected in 1719] from the Seidō Monjo collection (item 210-3.1); and "Gaisen seirai shomoku" 外船齋來書目 [List of books imported on foreign vessels] from the Watanabe Bunko. The latter of these two is a transcribed text from the Meiji period of the pertinent portions of the "Kenbun shomoku" 見聞書目 [List of books personally observed], held in National Diet Library.

The next sort of source material are the "Taiisho" 大意書 [Summaries]. These are simple explanations written by the Inspector of Books, a subordinate of the Nagasaki Magistrate (bugyō 奉行), who investigated the the content of books brought in cargo. The object was to prove that the volumes has no relationship whatsoever to Christianity and thus could be allowed to be imported into Japan. As a result, these documents are also of value as commentaries on the imported books. Several examples would include: "Kyōhō sannen shichigatsu taiisho sōkō" 享保3年7月大意書草稿 [Draft summary for 1718, 7th month], item 370-73 in the Seidō Monjo; "Kyōhō jūnen otsushi yonban shoseki taiisho" 享保10年乙巳四番書籍大意書 [Fourth summary of books for 1725], item 210-3.8 in the same collection; "Bunka yonen taiisho danpen" 文化4年大意書断片 [Fragment of the summary for 1807], item 370-67 in the same collection; "Man'en gannen taiisho danpen" 万延元年大意書断片 [Fragment of the summary for 1860], item 370-67 in the same collection; and "In jūban sen mochiwatarisho kai mokuroku sha (Tenmei ninen)" 寅拾番船持渡書改目錄写 (天明2年) [Copy of the inspected list of books transported on ship no. 10 (1782)], held in the Matsuura 松浦 Documentary Library.

Summaries were prepared separately for banned books, books about which doubts were raised, and books concerned with official government business. An example of a summary of banned books would be: "Meiwa hachinen bō kyūban sen mochiwatari shōbai shomotsu no uchi Tengaku shokan taiisho" 明和8年卯九番船持渡南壳書物之内天学初函大意書 [Summary of Tianxue chuhan among the commercial books brought on ship no. 9 in 1771], held in Kyushu University Library. The same item is held in the Kano 押野 Bunko of Tōhoku University Library, although the text held in Kyushu is a manuscript edition from the period of original composition.

Next are the "Shoseki motochō" [Ledgers of books], mentioned above. These are the accounts books compiled by the Japanese of the names and quantities of volumes unloaded. Ultimately, they became registers for the basis of transactions in which were record the prices of books and whether or not a sale was concluded. One can find these for the bakumatsu period in Nagasaki Prefectural Library.

The Chinese supercargo (an agent for the shipper) would meet with a Japanese book connoisseur (shomotsu mekiki 書物目利) in

the Nagasaki Hall, an agreement concerning price would be concluded, and the price of books was then recorded in accounts known as "Negumi chō" 直組帳 [Ledgers of prices]. Prices for 1829-1830 can be found in the "Honbai negumi chō" 本売直組帳 [Ledger of prices at the present sale], held in Nagasaki Prefectural Library.

We move next to works known as "Kenchō" 見帳 [Inspection ledgers]. These contain memos concerning freight which merchants wrote up while "inspecting cargo" (nimise 荷見也) and preparing to place their bids at the Nagasaki Hall. Once bidding commenced, merchants would record prices through the third bid; these account ledgers were then kept by merchant houses for future commercial reference. Although none of these Inspection Ledgers kept by merchants for books remain in Nagasaki, 110 volumes of them are held among the Murakami 村上 Documents in Nagasaki Prefectural Library; and I believe there are some in the collection of Nagasaki University as well.

There are also records known as "Rakusatsuchō" 落札帳 [Ledgers of successful bids]. These date from the bakumatsu period, one entitled "Gaisen seirai Tōsho Ransho nyūsatsuchō" 外船齋来唐書蘭書入札帳 [Ledgers of bids on Chinese and Dutch books imported on foreign vessels] exists in the Motoyama 元山 Bunko in the Institute for the Cultural History of Kyushu of Kyushu University, which forms part of the Murakami Documents.

The books for which these various and sundry documents were composed came into the hands of bidding merchants. What happened to them later, what route they followed in passing into the hands of readers--we have no sources on the process of circulation. This problem is not limited to books; it is a major research task for all imported cargo. In any event, I have now introduced the primary sources, noting where in Kyushu they remain extant.

The secondary materials need to be subdivided into two sorts for the purposes of explanation. First is the "Shō hakusai rai shomoku" 商船載来書目 [Lists of books imported on commercial vessels] in five extant volumes, compiled in the 8th month of 1804 by the then Inspector of Books at Nagasaki, Mukai Tomi 向井富 (or Mukai Motonaka 向井元仲). It groups all newly imported books for the period 1693-1803, on the basis of records kept by the Mukai house, divided into sections arranged alphabetically [namely, the Japanese syllabary] and chronologically within each section. Its scholarly value is immense. However, I should note that, because 1693 was the first year in which "Summaries" were composed, if a book arrived in cargo after that year, even if it had been imported earlier, it was treated as a new arrival. They can be found in the National Diet Library.

Second are "Hakusai shomoku" 船載書目 [Lists of books imported]. Forty volumes of these are extant in the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency. Sixteen

volumes of the same content, titled "Hakurai shomoku" 舶来書目 [Lists of books imported], are held in Tsurumai Central Library in the city of Nagoya. Both are transcribed texts. The former collection bears the imprint "Tannei saisho" 澹寧齋藏 [Tannei Library], thought to be that of Iioka Gisai 飯岡義齋, a Confucian scholar from Osaka. The latter collection bears the imprints of "Shirokawa bunko" 白川文庫 [Shirokawa collection] and "Kuwana bunko" 桑名文庫 [Kuwana collection], and come from the former library of Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信.

In addition, there is a work, entitled "Hakurai shomoku," edited by Ozaki Masayoshi 尾崎雅嘉. Although the location of the original is unclear, its content is retrievable from an incomplete eight-volume edition found in the National Diet Library and a transcribed text in eight volumes held in Kyoto University Library. On top of copying out two previous texts, it appears that Ozaki was trying to compile a catalog of imported books by adding to them the earlier "Niyūdō" 二酉洞 book list as well as his own personal knowledge.

The compilers of the "Hakusai shomoku" remain unknown to us, and these works are extremely difficult to use. The compilers collected and copied out the records of the Inspectors of Books, the Mukai family, more or less along chronological lines, replete with the disunity in style and content of the original records. Nonetheless, because the "Shō hakusai rai shomoku" and the "Hakusai shomoku" both made use of the Mukai family records, they are based on the very best source materials. There is no doubt that the item entitled "Setsu rei" 説鈴, the first listed in volume 29 of the volumes held in the Imperial Household Agency is based on item 930-34 of the Seidō Monjo held in the Nagasaki Municipal Museum. By the same token, for a study of the Seidō Monjo collection, the "Hakusai shomoku" are indispensable. Needless to say, every single item in the Seidō Monjo collection is a basic source for research on imported Chinese books.

Part Three

Even if we were to collect together all the sorts of source materials described above, one would still be unable to capture a complete picture of the Chinese books imported to Japan during the Edo period. There are, however, several points to be raised that can clarify matters a bit.

On the question of the sorts of books brought as maritime cargo to Japan, one would have to respond that every variety was represented. Books arrived without any order to them in every field--works of philosophy and thought (Confucian as well as other schools), law, medicine, military strategy, art, and novels. The reason for this was that books were loaded for

transportation at the discretion of the supercargo, and this was the basis upon which books were ordered. Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune 吉宗 and Maeda Tsunanori 前田綱紀 ordered through the Nagasaki Magistrate. The supercargo who received the order would bring the requested books on the next transport two years later. A number of shippers, however, responded more rapidly to orders such as that of Yoshimune for the transport of Chinese local gazetteers, and in a short time a large number of gazetteers were collected. These materials were deposited in the Momijiyama Bunko, and today they are kept in the Naikaku Bunko as a world renown collection of Chinese local gazetteers primarily of the Kangxi 康熙 period. This was made possible because Yoshimune's love of learning carried with it the highest authority in the land. It was not a general phenomenon.

Because shipments of books were at the discretion of the supercargo, if there were many newly published books at the warehouse, the point of departure [in China], many copies of the same book might be transported to Japan. For example, from 1837 on, one is struck by the import of Chunhua ge fatie 淳化閣法帖 [Model for Calligraphic Practice from the Chunhua Pavillion], probably because this book was printed in China in 1835. Similarly, in 1846 one vessel brought to Japan twenty-four copies of the poetry collection Zhapu jiyong 乍浦集詠 [Zhapu Collection], its time of departure in China coinciding precisely with the time of this work's publication.

The port of Zhapu, near Pinghu county in Zhejiang province, came under British attack during the Opium War in 1842, and the Vice Commander-in-chief of the Naval Forces, as well as many of the Commandant's troops and local commoners were killed. Thus, the Zhapu jiyong is a collection of shi 詩 describing the anger of Zhapu gentry against this. Printed in 1846 in sixteen juan and three string-bound volumes, it was imported to Japan that year immediately following its appearance in China. Three years later, in the eleventh month of 1849, an excerpted Japanese edition of the work, entitled Saho shūei shō 乍浦集詠鈔 [Selections from the Zhapu jiyong], was published. The period of import following original publication and the time before the appearance of a Japanese edition are the shortest examples we have. It would seem that the supercargo aboard the transporting vessel, conscious of current events and anxious that this work be carried overseas, was of a rather romantic frame of mind.

With the arrival of news concerning the Opium War, when Wei Yuan's 魏源 two works, Shengwu ji 聖武記 [Record of Manchu Military Victories] and Haiquo tuzhi 海國圖志 [Illustrated Gazetteer of the Sea Kingdoms], arrived aboard ship in Japan, these works were immediately conveyed to the office of the shogunal Councillors. Without a moment's wait, Seibu ki saiyō 聖武記探要 [Essential of the Shengwu ji] and the section on

the United States from the Haiguo tuzhi were promptly prepared in Japanese editions. This would indicate that news of world affairs came to Japan via China and that Japanese of that time gained their knowledge of it through writings in Chinese. Add to this the fact that even knowledge of international law in the early Meiji period was learned through the work Elements of International Law in a Chinese translation (entitled Wanguo gongfa 万国公法) by W. A. P. Martin, and I think one can see an aspect of the reception of Chinese culture in the Edo period.

Books were imported from China and they fell into the hands of readers, but it is hard to say if readers understood them or to assess what influence such works may have asserted. For one like myself who often buys books and lays them aside without reading them, influence is an extremely difficult matter to corroborate; with all the many kinds of works imported, their influence goes beyond the limits of what any one individual can ascertain. I thus aimed at publishing the documents I had collected and leaving it for other interested scholars to pursue research in this area. The documentary collection in my Edo jidai ni okeru Karafune mochiwatarisho no kenkyū 江戸時代における唐船持渡書の研究 [A Study of Books Brought on Chinese Vessels in the Edo Period] and Hakusai shomoku, mentioned above, were published by the Tōzai gakujutsu kenkyūjo 東西学術研究所 (East-West academic institute) of Kansai University. My study of the former, as well as subsequent research, was published by Dōhōsha 同朋舎 under the title Edo jidai ni okeru Chūgoku bunka ukeire no kenkyū 江戸時代における中国文化受容の研究 [A Study of the Reception of Chinese Culture in the Edo Period].

As for books on law, I have done some research focusing on Tokugawa Yoshimune and Maeda Tsunanori. The reason is that Yoshimune was responsible for enriching the bakufu's Momijiyama Bunko collection, as was Tsunanori responsible for the Sonkeikaku 尊経閣 Bunko in Kaga. These two collections had their ups and downs, but the Momijiyama Bunko has been preserved by the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency through the Naikaku Bunko, and the Sonkeikaku Bunko is kept up in name by the Maeda Ikutoku 前田育徳 Association. Their respective catalogs have been organized, and one can now determine the books that appear in the sources on imported materials from the classification number in the catalog. In particular, the Momijiyama Bunko has an account of books held by the bakufu that was kept by that collection's supervisor, the Magistrate for Books, and it contains a complete record of cash disbursements and allocations. Verifying the actual materials is now easy. Because of the exceptional quality of this collection, a study of imported Chinese books would in part be a study of the Momijiyama Bunko.

As I touched on briefly above, my interests have expanded

