

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

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## *Part One. Forgotten Sino-Japanese Contacts*

**General Historical Knowledge and Historical Research.** The general historical knowledge we possess is highly suspicious. I have been teaching history now for nearly 30 years, but when I think back over it I break out in a cold sweat. I frequently settle on a research topic when I locate some points of doubt in my own general knowledge of history and begin to pursue them. Right in the middle of proudly discussing a theme which I clearly understood in my office, I suddenly shudder as doubts rise to the surface. For example, one hundred years ago was about the time of the end of the Seinan War 西南戦争 (1877),<sup>2</sup> and one thousand years ago was roughly the time of Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027). We know that Saigô Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1827-77) and Fujiwara Michinaga were men from ages clearly different from our own, but do we really have a good sense of the difference of 900 years between Takamori and Michinaga? In the stone walls of the ruins of the private school in Kagoshima, the bullet holes remain fresh. The Byôdôin 平等院 temple complex built by Michinaga's son, Yorimichi 頼通, still arrests the eye with its great beauty. When I call to mind these two men via these two historical relics, the one hundred years from Takamori to the present strikes me as longer than the intervening 900 years between Takamori and Michinaga.

By the same token, though, the Han tombs at Mancheng 滿城 [Hebei], unearthed in 1968, were built around 112 B.C.E., but when you look at the Changxin Palace 長信宮 Lantern which was dug up at the burial site, it has the appearance of being from the same era as earthenware of Japan's Yayoi 弥生 era. Even though there are problems about the precise date of the birth of Christ, when I tell students that about the time of the first year C. E., when it is thought he was born, corresponds to the end of the Former Han dynasty about the time of the founding of the Xin 新 dynasty of Wang Mang 王莽, they look as they are learning this for the first time. There is even the possibility that one's perception of a historical era is created by a sense such as the illusion that page 100 of the high school Japanese history textbook and page 100 of the world history text cover the same era, or the illusion in which it might seem as though Japanese and world history, listened to as summer approaches and a languid atmosphere permeates the classroom,

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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.

<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Satsuma Rebellion, the Seinan War was the last significant revolt against the Meiji reforms. Led by Saigô Takamori, it lasted several months in 1877 before being quashed.

cover the same eras. I try to make a chronology and from there the sense of a historical era rationally emerges, yet still the frequency of events is greater in the modern era and far fewer in antiquity. Although I am interested in ancient Chinese history, I know almost nothing about ancient history--what I do know is extremely little. Among specialists in ancient history, particularly among scholars of Japan's Yamatai 邪馬台 era, many argue that their own points of view are correct and all others are absolutely incorrect, but ancient history is not something that is so clearly understood. It is natural to take with a large grain of salt people who, in comparing their own views with those of others, allot their own positions 100 to their opponents' 0. It is far more honest to hold a position of 51 to 49. There are many fans of ancient history because of all the novels set back then, but this has nothing to do with scholarship in the sense that there is ground for one to create as one wishes. The more I doubt my own general historical knowledge nurtured on fiction, soon nothing will be left. Thus, in my view, historical scholarship begins at the point that general historical knowledge is first demolished.

**Closed Country (*Sakoku* 鎖国).** If you ask about Japanese foreign relations of the Edo period, you will inevitably receive as an answer: *sakoku*.

The *sakoku* system in Japanese history textbooks appears as a string of events: 1613, Christian missionaries and Japanese believers were banished; 1616, foreign trade was limited to Hirado and Nagasaki; 1633, the *itowappu* 糸割符 system<sup>3</sup> was put into effect and overseas voyages for all but officially licensed vessels (*hōshosen* 奉書船)<sup>4</sup> were interdicted; 1636, the Portuguese moved to Dejima, near Nagasaki; 1639, the Portuguese withdrew; 1641, Dutch merchant firms at Hirado moved to Dejima. Thereafter, only Dutch and Chinese trading vessels were allowed to enter the port at Nagasaki. The better texts have "and Chinese trading vessels" written into them. The Shogunate only knew conditions in the world from the reports delivered by the head of the Dutch merchants. In the process of presenting what was written in these texts, perhaps some professors taught that Chinese vessels also presented the Shogunate with reports.

Many high school students make field trips with their classes to Nagasaki. As the buses take them to the Glover Mansion, to the Ôura Church 大浦天主堂, and to the baths at Unzen 雲仙, if they hear stories of Siebolt at Narutaki 鳴滝 [his private academy], the foreign atmosphere of Nagasaki they will learn to be a Dutch atmosphere as the rain falls on the Dutch Incline (*Orandazaka* オランダ坂).

Textbooks describe how, with the advances in learning during the Edo period, Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 wrote *Ka-i tsūshō kō* 華夷通商考 (A Study of Commerce between the Barbarians and the Civilized) about the rise of Dutch learning, Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 wrote *Seiyō kibun* 西洋紀聞 (Chronicle of the West) and *Sairan igen* 采覽異言 (Strange Stories Acquired) from knowledge gained through interrogating Giovanni Battista Sidotti, and shogun Yoshimune 吉宗 had Aoki Kon'yō 青木昆陽 and Noro Genjō 野呂元丈 study Dutch, the ban of certain books eased, and tried to make use of

<sup>3</sup> In order to prevent a monopoly on profits in the raw silk thread trade with the Chinese and Dutch, the Edo shogunal authorities had a silk allotment system set up by selected merchants at Kyoto, Nagasaki, and Sakai (with Edo and Ôsaka added later); the shogunate would buy up all imported raw silk as a whole and then parcel it out to individual merchants.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, vessels carrying a letter from the senior councillors representing the shogun.

Western technology. Then, if it continues with Sugita Genpaku's 杉田玄白 translation [from the Dutch of] *Kaitai shinsho* 解体新書 (A New Work on Autopsy), one cannot help prevent the illusion from arising that the banned books were Dutch works. Furthermore, many of these texts add as an illustration at this point the Dutch New Year's Party at the Shirandô 芝蘭堂.<sup>5</sup>

Our general historical knowledge takes shape through an assortment of elements. In the present age televisions would seem to play an extremely important role in the process. Thus, when we think of Ôishi Kuranosuke 大石内蔵助, those of us who are middle-aged, call to mind a light-complexioned, round countenance, while younger people probably call to mind a clean-cut, oval visage. This is because those of us who are middle-aged have become accustomed to *Chûshingura* 忠臣蔵 (The Forty-Seven Rônin) with Hasegawa Kazuo 長谷川一夫 in the leading role, while younger folks are watching *Akô rônin* 赤穂浪人 (The Masterless Samurai of Akô) with Emori Tôru 江守徹. According to Ôta Nanpo 太田南畝, Kuranosuke was a small, darkly-featured man.

The fact that the larger historical current is learned in school has major influence. Aside from the small number of people who continue more specialized studies, those of us who are middle-aged know the errors of the Imperial view of history, but once that history we were taught recast to the Imperial view of history is denied, we know of nothing with which to replace it. Ultimately, the history we once learned remains fast within our minds unchanged, and that is a frightening thought.

**In the City of Shenyang.** On August 11, 1979, I was in the city of Shenyang, Liaoning province, in China's northeast. I was visiting China on an academic exchange as a member of the Delegation to China of Scholars of Sino-Japanese Historical Relations. Following the research reports of Professors Migami Tsugio 三上次男 and Aboshi Zenkyô 網干善教 in the city of Changchun, Jilin province, I was to give a similar report in Shenyang.

It is, indeed, a small world. At lunch the previous day, Professor Jerome Chen, whom I had met and become friendly with at a conference he sponsored on the history of East Asian legal institutions at Harvard University the previous August, happened by chance to walk before us in the restaurant; right after him Joan Cohen, who is active in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, came in with her characteristic smile. We all renewed our friendship after a year's hiatus. "I'm going on to Beijing, so let's meet there," said Dr. Cohen at breakfast as she departed. "I wish you luck on your talk." I was going over the content of my talk on "Issues in Qing-Japanese Trade" which was to be given in the meeting room on the second floor of the Shenyang Theater. The Liaoning Provincial Academy of Social Sciences had tickets with gold lettering, and I began to worry that expectations concerning my talk would be rather high. "Everyone is looking forward to your talk," I was told. "There will only be about 300 persons attending." I felt a little befuddled. They might start wondering if I prepared a talk fit for such a large crowd.

"Chinese friends," I began, "extraordinary entrance tickets have had prepared for my talk. Although it is not said that one may have beautiful tickets but give a trivial talk, yet I fear this is a poor talk. I will still do my very best." After breaking the ice in this

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<sup>5</sup> The Dutch Learning Academy of Ôtsuki Gentaku 大槻玄澤 in Edo.

manner, the three and one-half hour symposium commenced. I began my talk proper as follows.

**Reflections on Sino-Japanese Relations.** “When Japanese think of the history of Sino-Japanese relations, they immediately call to mind contacts with the Tang dynasty and the comings and goings of the missions to the Tang court (*ken-Tô shi* 遣唐使). Or, what occurs to them is Sino-Japanese contacts from the beginning of the Meiji era. What do Chinese think of?” My talk then continued in the following vein.

The core of Japanese scholarship and education in the Edo period was Neo-Confucianism, and in a broad sense it was Chinese learning or what we in Japan call Kangaku 漢学. In the Meiji era, the Japanese introduced Western learning and advanced along the path of modernization. However, while the real world moved in this direction, earlier tendencies still prevailed in the study of and writing about history, and these tendencies gradually developed. Works of history at that time did not tend to chronicle everyday affairs, common knowledge, or general information. People became fascinated by the emerging Dutch learning, even more so than Kangaku which was the norm during the Edo period. Japanese in the early Meiji era read the works of Europeans in translations by Chinese. Because Kangaku knowledge was widespread among Japanese intellectuals, had this basis not existed it would have been exceedingly difficult to introduce European culture. The rapid modernization and Westernization of the Meiji government at the same time represented negations of the Edo Shogunate and of the Edo period. They gave rise to a sense as well that they were negations of Kangaku, Chinese culture, and indeed China itself. An underlying spiritual root of modern Japan and the militaristic invasions of China and Korea were based in this.

Having said this, I then went on to describe the intricate route that led to my interest in and study of the history of Sino-Japanese relations.

**From the *Kô-Mô yowa*.** Until I was twenty years old, I thought I wanted to study Japanese history. While a student in high school around the year 1944, Japan was engaged in its invasion of China, and we students were all acquiring an ultranationalistic education, known then as the Imperial view of history. My teachers too taught this view of Japanese history. I enjoyed history, so I joined a reading circle in which we were reading by turns a text called the *Kô-Mô yowa* 講孟余話 (Personal Views on the *Mencius*) by Yoshida Shôin 吉田松陰 who had been executed for resisting the Shogunate at the end of the Edo period. There were things, though, that I simply could not understand. I was by no means so advanced as to see that a progressive thinking person would oppose the Imperial view of history. They were simple, far more basic points. My older colleagues would nod with knowing faces, while I developed a complex of sorts and became despondent. And, then, suddenly it came to me. The *Kô-Mô yowa* was Shôin's discussions of the *Mencius*, and he had collected all manner of stories which he related in the text to the *Mencius*. As I thought about it, I did not understand how he moved from the *Mencius* to his “personal views.” It was only natural that I did not understand, because I had not yet read the *Mencius*. When I realized this, I saw that Shôin too, who was much praised as a devoted samurai to the emperor, had Chinese learning at the basis of his understanding of things, and I realized the great power with

which Chinese culture was rooted at the base of Japanese culture. Thus, I came to the realization that to know Japan I needed to know about China, and I decided to focus on Chinese history in college.

**Chinese Books Imported to Japan in the Edo Period.** About twenty years later I was in the teaching position I presently occupy, and on occasion my university (Kansai University) hosted joint research groups with several other universities on Kangaku in the private academies of the Edo period. At that time, I thought that the first step toward understanding the scholarly proclivities of these private academies would be to find out which books each of the academies had in their respective collections, and I began an investigation into this subject. About ten years earlier I had of necessity assisted in a survey of the collection of the Uesugi 上杉 family from Yonezawa 米沢 domain which was held in Yonezawa city, Yamagata prefecture. Thus, I had a bit of knowledge about the structure of a daimyo's library and about the book collection used in domainal education. I naturally compared the collection of domain schools with that of private academies, but the frank conclusion I drew from this comparison was that the number of *Tôhon* 唐本 (books published in China) held in domainal libraries was greater than that of private academies. The percentage of *Wakokuhon* 和刻本 (Chinese books published in Japan) was higher and that of *Tôhon* lower in private academies. The reason was easy to imagine. The domains had more money than the private academies, and *Tôhon*, being imported items, were more expensive.

Then, what was the price of *Tôhon*? No, it was better to begin by asking: What sorts of *Tôhon* came to Japan, when, and in what quantities? Without coming up with answers to these questions, Kangaku in the Edo period would never be fully understood. As doubts of this sort brewed within me, I examined the research of earlier scholars and found that such issues had only been partially addressed. I was left with no alternative save doing it myself. The first product of this work was my book, *Edo jidai ni okeru Tôsen mochiwatarisho no kenkyû* 江戸時代における唐船持渡書の研究 (A Study of Books Transported from China in the Edo Period).<sup>6</sup> There was a fairly large number of materials concerning the importation of books from which to select, and I truly enjoyed doing this research. However, in preparing a collection of source materials, I tried to devise a way of arranging the various sorts of materials, and ultimately chose to categorize them by the eras in which they were prepared. By "the era in which they were prepared," I mean at what stage in the process of importation they were prepared. As I pondered a way of arranging the data, once again a layer of scales fell from my eyes. I had been treating books as the object of bibliographic research and intellectual history, but this arrangement clearly treated books as merchandise. My interests suddenly moved in the direction of the entire Nagasaki trade. What objects were imported and exported? What sorts of people were the Chinese who transported these objects? What sorts of ships transported this cargo? It is this story that I would like to deal with here.

**Nagasaki Christmas.** In late December 1965 I visited Nagasaki, after many such trips, to examine some materials. On Christmas Eve on the 24th, I paid a visit to the

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<sup>6</sup> (Suita: Kansai daigaku tôzai gakujutsu kenkyûjo, 1967).

Nagasaki Municipal Museum and asked to see the valuable materials there known as the Seidô bunsho 聖堂文書 or “Seidô documents.” Thanks to the kindness of the head librarian at that time, Koshinaka Tetsuya 越中哲也, I was able to borrow several documents and take them back to my lodging to copy them. As I was leaving, Mr. Koshinaka suggested that, since I was in Nagasaki expressly on Christmas Eve, I might want to go to midnight mass at the Ôura Church, a national treasure, but the documents were far thicker than I had expected, and I stayed up late into the night copying them. When the noise from a Christmas party of company employees quieted down, the silence was suddenly broken when an Angelus bell sounded in a nearby church. It was announcing the start of midnight mass. As I raised my head, listening to the bell and thinking that I would not be making it to the Ôura Church, I thought how interesting it was that this Christian bell should be ringing in Nagasaki, a city rich in foreign atmosphere. No sooner had that thought passed through my mind than I broke out laughing. People say that the atmosphere of Nagasaki is a Dutch atmosphere, but in fact the foreign atmosphere of Nagasaki was a Chinese atmosphere. This is what I meant earlier when I was being sarcastic about the student field trips. The snake dances of the Suwa 諏訪 Shrine and the former “Pêron” boat races are both Chinese customs.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, being a Protestant country, the Dutch were able to separate missionary work and commerce, and thus they replaced the Portuguese in the Nagasaki trade. The mass being performed was Catholic. There is no reason to expect that the Dutch performed mass at Dejima. I laughed at how silly these romantic notions were. General knowledge was genuinely unreliable.

The idea of *sakoku* in the sense of closing Japan off to foreign contacts is, of course, incorrect. What was most strictly forbidden in the Edo *sakoku* policy was Japanese traveling abroad. This fact made Sino-Japanese relations in the Edo period distinctive in the history of the two countries' ties. Chinese culture and Chinese produce were all brought to Japan by Chinese people. This was altogether different from interaction between the two until that point which had entailed Japanese coming to China and bringing things home with them.

**Foreign Relations in the Edo Period.** Only Dutch and Chinese ships were allowed to travel to Nagasaki to engage in trade; this is necessary to say from the start. If the Dutch vessels belonged to the Dutch East India Company, then the crew members need not all be Dutch; as long as they were Westerners in the employ of the Company, there would be no problem. C. P. Thunberg, for example, who came to Nagasaki in 1775 as the Dutch East India Company doctor and later became famous as a scholar of Japan, was Swedish. Also, P. F. von Siebold, who came to Japan in 1823 and became the best known scholar of Japan in Europe, was German. Japan in the Edo period paid little attention to national differences among the various Europeans, and the national

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<sup>7</sup> The Suwa Shrine in Nagasaki sponsors a festival in which dancers holding the different parts of a costume in the shape of a dragon move in a wriggling manner through the different sectors of the city. The term “Pêron” can be written with such Chinese character compounds as 飛龍 (*feilong*), 白龍 (*bailong*), and others: the boat races involved these vessels with pointed sterns from south China each carrying some 20 to 30 men.

consciousness of the sort we presently are so keenly aware, of course, did not exist at that time.

By contrast, Chinese ships were not asked who had sent them. It was fine as long as their crews were Chinese. We shall look at this in more detail later, but there were vessels sent by the Qing government, and there were vessels sent by the anti-Qing forces of Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 and the rebellious Three Feudatories; there were ships sent by the king of Siam, and there were ships from Jakarta (Indonesia) known as Calapa 咬囉吧 ships chartered from Batavia by the Dutch East India Company. A wide variety of sponsors dispatched ships, and all of their crews were Chinese. In the context of Edo period foreign relations, we must not forget that Korea and Ryûkyû also carried on diplomatic relations with Japan through Tsushima domain and Satsuma domain, respectively.

Even more important is to trace the routes taken by the Chinese and Dutch ships at the time. Dutch vessels arrived in Nagasaki after having called at ports in Siam and Jakarta, while Chinese vessels came to Nagasaki only after going from Ningbo (Zhejiang province) to Southeast Asia; they was never simply shuttling between the ports of departure and Nagasaki. It was probably the same for ships once they departed from Nagasaki. Thus, no matter how much Japan assumed a *sakoku* stance, Dutch and Chinese vessels moved freely, and Nagasaki was the northernmost port within the coastal trading area of the East China Sea and the South China Sea. The idea of Nagasaki in the Edo period as the sole window open to the outside world in *sakoku* Japan only applies to domestic Japanese history. Such a designation is far from appropriate from the perspective of world history. To the extent that we fail to consider these facts in examining history, we remain today fixed in a *sakoku* consciousness.

For Japanese of the Edo period, *sakoku* was the law, and they could not know the places to which the items transported from Japan were ultimately headed nor what became of them. And, they did not care to know. We are not like this anymore. If we try to know, we can do so. I am not saying that people have not tried to acquire this knowledge. I think, though, that to remain unaware of the fact that if you try to know you can do so, is a *sakoku* consciousness. I find it equally fascinating when one knows that one can know and still shows no interest, though I do not think I will go into this problem here.

**Research Experiences in Europe.** I am not one to shoot my mouth off, a fact I became aware of in 1972. In late March of that year, Japan was caught up in all the excitement generated by the news of the excavation at Takamatsuzuka 高松塚, and in the midst of it I took a flight from Ôsaka International Airport. I remember clearly that in my hand I had a copy of that morning's newspaper which carried a photograph of the wall at Takamatsuzuka printed in color. I was on my way eventually to Cambridge, England. I was going to an on-site investigation of the Han wood strips (*Hanjian* 漢簡) unearthed near Dunhuang 敦煌, China in 1907 by Aurel Stein and held in the British Museum and the Jin wood strips (*Jinjian* 晉簡) unearthed near Loulan 樓蘭 in 1901 by Sven Hedin and held in the Ethnographic Museum (Etnografiska Museet)<sup>8</sup> of Stockholm, Sweden.

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<sup>8</sup> Now better known as the Folkens Museet Etnografiska (People's Museum: Ethnographic).



Fellow wood strip scholar, Professor Michael Loewe, had invited me as a visiting scholar to his college, Clare Hall, and he was waiting for me at Cambridge University. I later lived at Clare Hall and commuted to London to do my work on the wood strips. In any event, since this was my first overseas trip, in connection with work as an overseas research fellow of Kansai University, en route I traveled to Hong Kong, Macao, Cairo, Athens, Lisbon, Madrid, Andalucia, and Leiden, arriving in Cambridge in the third week of my voyage. Each of the places I visited had either historical ruins or a museum. In Athens I walked around the Parthenon and the Theater of Dionysius and visited the National Museum; then, with a guidebook I found the Benaki Museum. A mansion converted into a museum had an exhibition hall showing rare apparatus from a Greek church which I found very impressive. I then went upstairs and there Chinese pottery had been laid out. I quite like pottery, and I did not think I would be examining any that day. It was a great shock for me to run into such a large array of Chinese pottery in the first European city in which I set foot. They had superb items on show from the Han through Tang dynasties, as well as several *tianmu*<sup>9</sup> 天目 from the Song era. There were also many pieces from the Ming and Qing. The simple question of how such a large number of pieces of Chinese pottery could be here just as I was setting foot in Europe arose in my mind and exerted a profound influence on me during my six-month research sojourn there.

Cambridge University Library was convenient to use. They had an open stacks system on the third and fourth floors of the north wing, where the Japanese and Chinese books are held, and I could select books myself and take a seat where I occasionally met Professor Joseph Needham who would plant himself at a desk by the window or Professor Piet van der Loon who would be preparing reviews of the new acquisitions; there were rarely others there. In addition to reading documents in Han history, I also checked out the *Tōki zenshū* 陶器全集 (Complete Writings on Pottery)<sup>10</sup> and rather unexpectedly began to study it. In London I went to see the showroom of the Pervical David Foundation of Chinese Art, the British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington. At the nearby Fitzwilliam Museum, I was naively stunned at how many *tianmu* teacups of the Song period they had.

**The East India Company Museum in Sweden.** After about 40 days in Cambridge, I began a three-week trip around the European continent. Colleagues in Cambridge who happened inadvertently to hear that I was going on a three-week trip to Europe would laugh and say: “You really have become an Englishman. Only the English would say that going to the continent is going to Europe.”

When I later told Professor Hulswé of Leiden University with whom I had set up an appointment by previous arrangement in my research plan that I was planning to visit Gothenburg in Sweden, he replied with a mysterious look on his face: “I’ve never been to that strange town myself.” From Athens on, I had seen numerous collections of East Asian pottery, but I did not know if they had been transported to the West in the eighteenth century when certain of the items were made or if they had been recently purchased in Tokyo to fill out museum collections. There was a Swedish East India

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<sup>9</sup> Teacups originally crafted in the the Tianmushan 天目山 area of Zhejiang.

<sup>10</sup> Edited by Koyama Fujio 小山富士夫 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1958-1966), 32 volumes.



Company Museum in Gothenburg, and I had been told that they had an exhibition there of Chinese pottery drawn from the *Gothenburg*, a Company ship, that had sunk near this port city in 1745. The year was precise and when I told Professor Hulsewé that I really did want to see it, he said to his wife: "This wise young Japanese scholar says he's discovered a new research topic."

Before boarding an airplane for Gothenburg, I underwent a rigorous frisking and was asked such bizarre questions as: "Are you carrying any weapons?" My first thought was that Sweden was going to be a bothersome country, but I later learned that the previous day the Japanese Red Army had carried out its terrorist raid on Lod Airport in Tel Aviv.

I received excellent treatment at the Gothenburg Museum. To my casual question asking if they had a reference work for the examination of Export Porcelain, a student intern promised me that if I returned the next day the curator of the museum would personally show them to me. The next day reference works were lined up in a row on a desk in the museum book room. I thanked them for their kindness and spent half a day borrowing them to prepare a list. In addition to meeting people and visiting universities during the rest of my trip to the continent, I found great joy in looking through these books that day. While looking at pictures in Danish-language works I found in Copenhagen, I learned that the building of the Danish East India Company might still exist. Having my English translated into Danish, I explained to the concierge at my lodgings that I wanted ever so much to be able to visit this site.

**Chinese and Japanese Porcelains Exported to Europe.** Finally, the story has come to this point. The East India Companies from the various countries in Europe which expanded into East Asia transported back to their home countries spices, tea, and other rare items of merchandise from East Asia, among them porcelains. Of these nations, the Dutch East India Company was particularly enthusiastic in their importation of porcelains; a bid put forth in 1602 in Middleburg is considered the beginning. The porcelains were cargo which such Dutch vessels as the *Zeelandia* seized at Santa Helena Bay from the Portuguese vessel, the *San Yago*. This would indicate that Spain and Portugal had been transporting porcelain from earlier. Thereafter, Chinese porcelains were imported in large quantities into Europe by the Dutch East India Company. Eventually, the custom of drinking East Asian-produced tea and coffee in East Asia-produced porcelains became all the rage in Europe.

During the Ming-Qing transition in China, the amount of pottery produced at Jingdezhen 景德镇 dropped off sharply, and the Dutch East India Company, worried about the insufficient quantity of merchandise, set their sites on Arita 有田 ware as a substitute for Chinese pottery. Business dealings commenced at Dejima, near Nagasaki, and with a peak period in the 1680s over 600,000 articles of Arita ware were transported overseas. There has recently been a boom in Arita ware in Japan and with it renewed interest in Imari 伊万里. Items exported overseas are being brought back to Japan for exhibitions and attracting considerable interest, but when I first when to Europe in 1972 no such plans had yet been set, and it was really only from that time that Japanese began traveling overseas. Like myself they were probably surprised to find East Asian porcelains

overseas, and a trend became popular as the yen increased in value to collect old Imari ware for study.

Europe first began producing Chinese-style porcelains around 1710 with the baking of Johann Böttger's pottery under Augustus II, the elector of Saxony;<sup>11</sup> until then, it was not produced in Europe. Eventually, they began making porcelain in the kilns of Meissen, but the porcelains produced followed the designs exactly of Arita ware. Items that copied the Kakiemon 柿右衛門 style are explained in Western museums as "Kakiemon Style."

While there was porcelain being produced in the kilns of Europe, East Asian porcelains continued to be imported in increasing quantities as before, and orders for production with specific designs from Europe were executed in China. European aristocrats ordered sets of tableware with their coats of arms on them, for decoration as well as for use. Among export porcelains this was called Armorial Porcelain, and as I was looking at these I became interested in Western heraldry. Recently books on Western heraldry have been published in Japan, too, but at the time I returned to Japan, few of my colleagues in Western studies showed much interest in the subject. As I noted earlier, since I knew none of this before I went overseas in 1972, I was in no position to sound off on the topic. With the experience of overseas travel, I was able to acquire this knowledge. In that sense, although there are various criticisms that have been raised about Japanese traveling overseas, for the many Japanese who are now able to gain the experience of living abroad, it is by no means a bad thing. The actual number of Japanese who have been able to go abroad since the opening of the country in the Meiji period had been limited, and after returning home they have wielded their overseas knowledge to control the general populace. Thus, one might actually say that the boom in Japanese travel abroad to a certain extent began the opening of the country and brought *sakoku* to an end at long last.

**Studies of Export Porcelain.** Export porcelains themselves are extremely rare in China and Japan. Imari-dyed shards bearing the VOC mark of the Dutch East India Company have been unearthed from the Hikoba 稗古場 kiln site at Arita. We now know at which kiln these were fired, for it is perfectly natural that export items would no longer exist at the site of export but still be left at the site of importation, and research on the import side is now flourishing. By contrast, however, scholars in the field of artistic handicrafts who are pursuing their work while doing comparative work on the documents of the Dutch East India Company seem to be limited to Professor Christian Jörg of the Gröningen Museum and Professor Oliver Inpey of Oxford University. In other words, there is still much unexplored terrain.

After cramming in Cambridge, I saw a number of objects in the museums of Europe and bought a number of reference works, and I too was able to appreciate what I was seeing a bit. When I was in my final stop in Europe, about to fly to the United States, there were about twenty pieces of export porcelain in an art dealer's shop. I went in, looked around, selected three pieces among them, and asked the prices. "You've picked

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<sup>11</sup> The text has a misprint here, giving Augustus I instead of Augustus the II (1670-1733). The latter was also known as Augustus the Strong and he was as well the King of Poland.

the very best pieces," said the proprietor as he told me the prices. If I abandoned the next two weeks of my trip, I could have afforded one of them. I had to be satisfied with just seeing these pieces, and I left for the United States.

There was no way I was going to become a collector. My interests were rather in learning more about the organization and productive capacity which enabled either Jingdezhen or Arita to produce items in response to orders from overseas. These are important issues in studying the economies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China and Japan of the Qing and Edo periods, respectively. This could provide important data in analyzing where the sprouts of capitalism might be seen when considering the periodization of Chinese history.

Such a study, though, did not work out as hoped. It is as true of exported items as it is of imported items. I had no idea what route *Tôhon* imported to Nagasaki and bid for passed through as they entered domainal schools or private academies. In his review of my book, *Edo jidai ni okeru Tôsen mochiwatarisho no kenkyû*, for the journal *T'oung Pao* 通報, Professor Soymié of France pointed out that the analysis of economic issues in the book was insufficient, but when I happened to meet him later and told him that I did know the answer to his question, he surprised me by saying that such things are not that easy to understand. Transportation routes are probably difficult to know in the past and in the present.

**Studies of Edo History.** Historical research on the Edo period is one of those fields that has remarkably advanced since the end of World War II, because of advances in the preservation, publicizing, and publishing of historical materials. Soon after graduating college and taking up a teaching position at Mita Senior High School in Hyôgo prefecture in 1950, I was asked by my school principal to attend a meeting of the "Hoku-Setzu kyôdo shi gakkai" 北摂郷土史学会 (Northern Setzu Local History Association). The head of the association, Professor Awano Yorinosuke 粟野頼之祐 of Kansai Gakuin 関西学院 University, delivered a fiery talk about the present need to preserve early modern historical documents or they would be destroyed for all time. I was moved by his speech, and during the subsequent roundtable discussion I announced that I fully understood the significance of what he had said, but in any event my field was East Asian history. Professor Awano promptly replied: "My field is Western history, particularly Greek history, so your period is more recent than mine, isn't it?" My hesitation dissolved. A college graduate then recalled: "Sensei, you used to take us with you to ancient burial sites and to examine the waste paper in village storehouses." I, too, was concerned about this. The movement to preserve village documents was going on nationwide at the time, and certainly documents that would have been destroyed with the garbage were being saved and put to good use for scholarship.

Next in importance is publicizing the existence of documents so that they can be used. Reading and use of documents held in the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency, the government's Naikaku Bunko 内閣文庫, and the various daimyo houses used be highly restricted or disallowed, but they have become available for use under far easier conditions now. Scholars may have been allowed to read these materials, following the proper procedures, but there was never such access as there is, for example, now for undergraduates to use the reading room of the Naikaku Bunko.

Third, important documents are being published. Perhaps representative of this endeavor is the publication of the *Dai Nihon kinsei shiryô* 大日本近世史料 (Historical Materials on Early Modern Japan) by the Shiryô hensanjo 史料編纂所 (Historiographical Institute) of Tokyo University.<sup>12</sup> My own work has benefitted in this vein through the publication of such works as *Tô tsûji kaisho nichiroku* 唐通事会所日録 (Chronicle of the Chinese Translators' Hall),<sup>13</sup> the diary of the business office of the "Tô tsûji" 唐通事 who were the Chinese language interpreters in Nagasaki, and the *Bakufu shomotsukata nikki* 幕府書物方日記 (Diary of the Shogunal Library),<sup>14</sup> a diary kept by the official Book Administrator who was charged with supervision of the Shogunate's Momijiyama Bunko 紅葉山文庫. In addition I can only enumerate a few others: the *Tôban kamotsu chô* 唐蛮貨物帳 (Register of Chinese and Barbarian Cargo)<sup>15</sup> held in the Naikaku Bunko, the *Hanka chô* 犯科帳 (Register of Legal Transgressions)<sup>16</sup> held in the Nagasaki Library, and such documentary collections as the *Nagasaki ken shi* 長崎県史 (History of Nagasaki Prefecture).<sup>17</sup> Happily, one can now make use of these historical materials without difficulty. The fact that I appended a section of documents to my *Edo jidai ni okeru Tôsen mochiwatarisho no kenkyû* was due to the recognition that early modern Japanese history was at a stage at which it was necessary to share historical documents. At the time of publication, I can well remember the comments of two senior colleagues: "If you stash it away, you'll never run out of research topics for your entire life... You are indeed a generous man." I think this recognition on my part was correct. At the root of this notion was the injunction of Professor Awano who is no longer with us.

The discussion has thus far jumped all over the place. It comes down to this. Our general historical knowledge is highly dubious. The Edo period is recent and yet it is not at all well known. Research in the history of Sino-Japanese relations has been too biased toward the ancient and modern periods, and little research has been carried out in the field of early modern Sino-Japanese history. However, it was because of Kangaku learning nurtured during the Edo period that the foundations for Japan to modernize and Westernize from the Meiji period were created, and we must clearly see Sino-Japanese relations of the Edo period in this light. In addition, when it is said that Edo-period Japan was *sakoku*, this is only looking at history from the side of Japan which had closed itself off, but this perspective is no longer adequate. It must be placed within the context of world history.

I would like now to discuss the history of Sino-Japanese relations from the position I have outlined. The object of this work is not a systematic narrative. Instead, I have gathered together unknown tidbits from here and there. If you find a particular story

<sup>12</sup> A series in numerous volumes that began publication in 1953 and continues to this day.

<sup>13</sup> Published by the Shiryô hensanjo, Tokyo University Press, 1955-1968.

<sup>14</sup> Published by the Shiryô hensanjo, Tokyo University Press, 1964-.

<sup>15</sup> (Tokyo: Naikaku Bunko, 1970), 2 volumes.

<sup>16</sup> Edited by Morinaga Taneo 森永種夫 (Nagasaki: Hanka chô kankôkai, 1958-61).

<sup>17</sup> Edited by the Nagasaki ken shi henshû iinkai 長崎県史編集委員会 (Nagasaki: Yoshikawa kôbunkan): "Kodai, chûsei hen" 古代中世編 [Ancient, Medieval Section] (1980); "Kindai hen" 近代編 [Modern Section] (1976); "Taigai kôshô hen" 対外交渉編 [Section of Foreign Relations] (1986).

interesting, please dig more deeply into it. I have noted that we are at a stage at which we need to sponsor the publication of historical documents, but it is necessary at the same time to broaden and deepen the ranks of scholars.