

Deshima, mon Amour

The Publishing of the Marginalia of the Deshima Diaries

The Deshima Diaries Source Publication Project (DDSPP) aims at a translation into English of the marginalia of part of the diaries which the personnel of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) kept during their stay in Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, 1641-1820.

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The moving in June 1641 of the Dutch factory from Hirado, where it had been established in 1609, to Nagasaki must be seen as the logical outcome of an internal policy which had for over forty years strengthened the power of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600-1868). In the course of its implementation, the relatively independent *daimyos* [feudal lords] had been stripped of virtually all their powers by such measures as: alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*) at court in Edo; military service; and a veiled tax in the form of required gifts to the Shogun. In 1635, the influence of the big overseas merchants had been reduced by the establishment of a state monopoly on foreign trade while at the same time Japanese were forbidden to leave the country. Furthermore, those foreign nations which were seen as a threat to the power of the Shogun, mainly because of their missionary activities, were banned from the country: the Spanish in 1624 and the Portuguese in 1639 (Fairbank, Reischauer, Craig 1973: 408-410).

Deshima within the Framework of the *Sakoku* ("closed-door") Policy

Why then were the Dutch allowed to stay? In the first place the Dutch had, throughout their time in Japan, proved very loyal to the Shogun. The most telling example was their naval support of the Shogunal forces in the suppression of the Christian-inspired Shimabara revolt in 1638. In the second place the Dutch refrained from missionary activities and proved very flexible on religious matters. When in August 1641 the governor of Nagasaki promulgated a series of restrictive measures concerning the stay of the Dutch in Japan, the reaction of the Dutch chief, M. le Maire, to the

prohibition on religious practice, was indicative. He told his fellow Dutchmen that it was a harsh measure, but in view of the Company's interests which were at stake they had no other choice than to obey the orders of the governor. Furthermore, he advised his subordinates to serve their God in their own manner (Heeres 1907: 357). With this combination of flexibility and loyalty the Dutch managed to secure for themselves a chink within the framework of the closed door.

Until 1853 all the news about the Western world and, vice versa, all information about Japan was sluiced through the tiny fan-shaped artificial island called Deshima (Seichi 1976, Valentijn 1726, Kaempfer 1729). As such, Deshima was regarded as a regular quarter of Nagasaki and so was under the control of a quartermaster. Nagasaki itself was one of the five big cities directly controlled by the central government. It was represented by two governors, who alternately resided in Edo and Nagasaki. A similarity can be noted with the Dutch chiefs of Deshima. Since they were only allowed to stay one year at a time on Deshima, two frequently alternated. While the one was chief of the factory the other kept a seat on the Council of Justice in Batavia (Jakarta), the headquarters of the VOC in the Far East. The chief, who always held the rank of merchant within the VOC hierarchy, had a limited jurisdiction over the Dutchmen and slaves who resided on the island. In their contact with the authorities in Nagasaki, the Dutch were wholly dependent on Japanese interpreters who formed a guild counting some 150 members. Apart from their Japanese women companions, the Dutch had informal contacts with a host of retainers such as cooks, servants and gatekeepers who were all on the pay-roll of the Company (Vos 1971). Thus many people in Nagasaki were dependent on the Company for their livelihood (Nachod 1897: 421).

The yearly routine at the factory was determined by the arrival of the ships from Jakarta (Batavia) in the middle of August. During the following trading season the Dutch sold their imports, which consisted of linen cloth from India, silk fabrics from China, and spices, while they bought copper, camphor and minor quantities of lacquer ware and porcelain from the Japanese. The ships left with the north monsoon for Batavia by the end of October. From November till February preparations were made for the court journey to Edo by the chief, the surgeon and the two other Dutch officials.

During this journey the chief was given equal rank to a minor *daimyo* and was treated accordingly. After the chief had been received in audience by the Shogun, the train returned to Nagasaki. Upon their return at the end of May the factory was gradually put in readiness for the arrival of the ships in August. The diaries bear testimony to this yearly routine.

The diaries kept by the chiefs average 300 pages, including the diary kept by the deputy while the chief was on the court-journey. Much space in the diaries is, of course, devoted to trade matters but fortunately events on the island and

elsewhere in the country receive a lot of attention too. The diaries were originally meant as reference works for the chiefs themselves. Furthermore, a copy was sent to Batavia and then to the headquarters of the VOC in Amsterdam. These are kept in the National Archive in The Hague. After forty-odd years, the diaries had grown into an imposing body of 12,000 pages. Therefore, it was decided in 1673 that the marginalia adjoining the original text should be copied in a separate list. From that year onward this list preceded the diaries as a table of contents which considerably facilitated the finding of the information the chiefs were looking for. These tables of contents, together with the diaries which are almost complete from 1627 until 1860 should be viewed as the keys to the rest of the archives of the Dutch factory in Japan.

The Archives of the Dutch Factory in Japan: Source Publications

The papers of the former Dutch factory in Japan cover a shelf-length of more than forty metres. This archival deposit, the only complete one that remains of all VOC factories in Asia, consists of the greater part of resolutions by the council of the factory, correspondence with Batavia and other VOC factories, account books, notary acts and, of course, the diaries kept by the chiefs and deputies, which alone run to 35,000 pages of text.

Although these series are arranged in chronological order neither indices nor alphabetical registers exist. However, there is an inventory with an English introduction which enumerates the series mentioned above and to which dates have been added (Roessingh 1964). No wonder that most historians have been overwhelmed by the amount of material and by the inaccessibility of the archives. Nevertheless, determined scholars such as the German historian O. Nachod, the Dutch scholar J. Feenstra Kuiper, and the British historian C. R. Boxer have, not without success, tried their hand at it. Their books have become classics in the field of the history of Dutch-Japanese relations (Nachod 1897, Feenstra Kuiper 1921, Boxer 1950). They have clearly demonstrated how the Dutch played a crucial role in the transmission of Western technology and medical science to Japan during the *Sakoku* period.

One need not be surprised to find that from the outset Japanese historians have shown a keen interest in this rich collection of material which could shed a different light on their history (Blussé 1979). However the scientific interest only dates from the late nineteenth century when the reform of the educational system in 1885-86 by Mori Arinori was implemented. The basic tenets of this reform were academic freedom and a critical rationalistic approach to the subject matter. In respect to history, it paved the way for a break from the traditional Confucian approach. The appointment of the German historian L. Riess at the newly established department of history at Tokyo University in 1887, meant a reorientation

of Japanese historiography based on the teachings of Riess's teacher, L. Ranke. In his historiographical approach, which he based on extensive archival research, Ranke stressed the primacy of foreign policy as the determinant of national policy. While studying the *Sakoku* period Riess realised that it was absolutely necessary to copy the archives of the Dutch factory in Japan. The agreement which he negotiated with the Dutch State Archives in 1890 to copy documents held in The Hague pertaining to Japan did not materialise. Nevertheless, three years later he was able to copy some material from the archives (Numata Jirō 1971: 264-87). In 1899, one of Riess's students, Mikami Sanji, was appointed chief of the *Dai Nippon shiryō* (Chronological sourcebooks on Japanese history) source publication project. He created the opportunity for yet another student of Riess, Murakami Naojirō, to do archival research in Europe for a period of three years. Needless to say, he spent most of his time copying documents from the archives of the Dutch factory in The Hague. Then, for the next twenty years there was no follow-up.

In 1922 Mikami Sanji, by then one of the directors of the Shiryō Hensanjo (The Historiographical Institute) of the University of Tokyo, proposed a long term project to the imperial government which aimed at the copying of all foreign source material pertaining to Japan. In 1922 an agreement was reached with the Dutch State Archives in The Hague to hand-copy all the diaries of the Dutch factory in Japan. From 1923 until the outbreak of the Second World War, fifty diaries were copied by Japanese scholars of whom Iwao Seiichi and Itazawa Takeo are the best known (Itazawa Takeo, Tokyo 1929: 17-44). On the basis of this field-work Murakami Naojirō has translated the diaries of Deshima from 1641 to 1654 into Japanese (Murakami Naojirō 1965-68). The eight remaining diaries of the Dutch factory in Hirado have been translated into Japanese by Nagazumi Yōkō (Nagazumi Yōkō 1969-70). In 1974, the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo set in motion an ambitious project aimed at the integral publication of the Dutch text of the diaries, accompanied by a Japanese translation covering the period 1633 to 1860 (*Oranda shōkan-chō nikki* [Diaries kept by the heads of the Dutch factory in Japan] 1974-1984). If this project proceeds at the current pace, then by the end of this millennium two Japanese translations covering the period 1633-54 will be available: the translation of Murakami and Nagazumi on the one hand and the translation of the Historiographical Institute on the other. Another Japanese project which should be mentioned is that of the Nichi-Ran Kōshōshi Kenkyūkai (Society of Historical Research for Dutch-Japanese Intercourse) which, under the leadership of Iwao Seiichi, has produced a stencil edition of the diaries covering the years 1800-57 (Iwao Seiichi 1953-1967). The transcription is correct but lacks both annotation and indices.

Although the Japanese source publications have their weak points, the endeavours of both individuals and institutes in Japan are quite impressive, certainly when one compares them to the activities of the Dutch. Notwithstanding the fact

that several publications of source materials about the history of the VOC have been published by the Rijksgeschiedkundige Commissie (The National Historical Commission) in its prestigious series Rijksgeschiedkundige Publicatiën (RGP National Historical Publications), so far little has appeared about Japan.

However, one Dutch initiative should be mentioned. In 1943 the archivist of the Royal Institute of Tropical Research, G. K. Steinmetz, proposed to copy and annotate certain archival sources of the Dutch factory in Japan. A.N. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta and H.A. Daendels who were assigned to this project made extracts from diaries, memoranda, resolutions and correspondence of the 1620-40 period. At the same time, they added glossaries and indices of personal names and subject matter. The intention to publish their work in the series of the National Historical Commission failed to materialise for various reasons. The result of their endeavours, about 4000 typed pages, now rests unpublished in the first section of the State Archives (Aanwinsten 1965 / 1.2).

In 1964, M. Roessingh published a complete inventory of the Deshima archives. While he was working his way through the diaries, he conceived the idea of the publication of the marginalia of the Deshima diaries from 1680 to 1860. A colleague of his, Dr. M. van Opstall and the Leiden-trained sinologist-historian Dr. L. Blussé formed with him a triumvirate to carry out this task (Van Opstall 1986). Thanks to a large subsidy by the Isaac Alfred Ailion Foundation, the project was started in 1985. In addition, the Fukutake foundation of Japan also subsidised the project.

The Deshima Diaries Source Publication Project in Progress

As mentioned earlier, the marginalia of the original text were copied and added as a separate list to each of the diaries from 1673 onwards. Since the diaries were originally reference books for the chiefs of the factory, the tables of contents functioned as primitive indices. It appeared to the originators of this project that these succinct tables of contents could likewise provide today's historian with important information for his or her research. Therefore they drew the conclusion that research in the archives would be considerably encouraged and facilitated if these tables alone were published in an English translation supplemented by a personal name index, a ship's index, a subject index and a glossary of unfamiliar Dutch words. This was in view of the fact that it was in the first place meant as a research tool for *Rangaku* scholars, and historians of foreign trade.

Within this frame two volumes so far have been published by T. Vermeulen, who worked on the project from late 1984 to the end of 1987 (Vermeulen 1984-87). In the introductions to both volumes (1680-90 and 1690-1700) the author explains his working method to the reader. Vermeulen has steadfastly kept very close to the text of the

tables of contents although sometimes “Redundant information such as recurring place names during the court journey have been omitted and sometimes additional information has been added for reasons of clarity” (Vermeulen 1987: 3-5).

In the preface to every diary, Vermeulen reveals something about the main events which occurred during that year. These half-page introductions are preceded by the archival number, the year, and the names of the chief and his deputy. The latter kept a diary of what happened in Deshima during the absence of the chief. This means that every diary covers fifteen instead of twelve months. Because the diary kept in the chief’s absence lacks marginalia, Vermeulen has condensed the contents of this part of the diary to a couple of lines which have been placed between asterisks. The marginalia have been arranged chronologically according to their folio number in the original text. Three indices complete the text. The index on subjects refers to the table of contents but the indices on ships’ names and personal names are based on the integral text of the diary. Both Japanese and Dutch names are given according to the traditional Dutch spelling. The personal names index provides short biographical information on the persons in question as far as this could be gleaned from the integral text. Underlined terms and expressions in the text have been collected and explained in a glossary. The publication of the first two volumes has had positive reactions both from *Rangaku* scholars and from Japanologists. The fact that the first volume is now in its second printing proves that this project fills a basic need. However, many suggestions for improvement have also been made.

Major shortcomings were singled out: the absence of the dates of the journal in the margin; the somewhat inconsistent use of the present and past tense; the obscure meaning of some of the entries in the text; the frequency of underlined Dutch words; and the absence of characters of the Japanese names. To meet this critique, the following improvements will be made in future volumes. As of volume three, the date of every entry will be added in the margin. Many readers felt the absence of the exact date gave them no foothold in time. The marginalia constantly use different tenses. Since this is rather confusing, from the fourth volume the past tense will be consistently used. While the publication was originally just seen as a research aid for archival use, it has now been realised that many historians who have no ready access to the Archives in The Hague, actually use it as a source calendar.

Another suggestion for improvement concerns the clarification of obscure entries such as “reasons why”, “the story concerning X”, and “thoughts about the subject”. Even the most inventive historian is unable to fathom the meaning of these sentences. Therefore, it has been recognised that these kinds of expressions should be clarified. Hence as of volume four the “reasons why” will be summarised, “the story about X” will be explained and the “thoughts about the subject” will be expressed. Because more information has been added, the typographical nature of the text has gained a

more paragraph-like appearance. As the clarity of the text increases, the number of underlined Dutch words can be cut down. For this reason, the large glossaries which have been added to volumes one and two can be cut down in the following volumes. In any case, the glossary provided so far is virtually complete. Due to the cyclical and repetitive nature of the diaries it is improbable that many new unfamiliar Dutch words will surface. Only a few Dutch and Japanese words will be retained, this when difficult to translate or simply when they add a touch of local flavour to the text.

The frequent use of underlined words results from the working method of my predecessor who translated the marginalia from the table of contents. I soon discovered that by translating the marginalia which adjoin the original text instead, the underlined words denoted for the most part the roles of people who are explicitly named in the text such as *gouverneur* (governor), *tolk* (interpreter), *gecommitteerden* (delegates). Replacing the functions with the personal names has the advantage of significantly reducing the number of underlined words and at the same time increases the familiarity of the readers with the persons who figure in the diaries. I should also remark that I have added marginalia to the text of the diary kept by the deputy during the absence of the chief, because to leave this part out would mean to skip a lot of relevant information.

Even though the procedure outlined increases the workload, I nevertheless hope to increase the publication output from one to three volumes a year. Another helpful suggestion was that characters be added to Dutch spellings of Japanese names. As a temporary measure, from volume three, the personal names index will be split into a Dutch and Japanese index. Japanese members of the Japan-Netherlands Institute in Tokyo have agreed to make such a list in the future. Minor changes which relate mostly to the layout of the text will be described in the introduction to volume four, available in January 1989 (Van der Velde 1989). With these improvements, we hope to meet the most important criticisms while at the same time keeping the project in motion. Of course, we do not foster dreams of attaining as wide a readership as J. Clavell did with his novel *Shogun*. Nevertheless one of the originators of the Deshima project, the late Marius Roessingh once said that: "The nature of the diaries as source evokes the traits of a classical play by its unity of time, place and action". As a newcomer in the Deshima project, I can only subscribe to his point of view.

The Closed Door Ajar?

Due to their loyal attitude towards the Japanese central government and their flexibility in religious matters, the Dutch were able to secure a place on the periphery of a society which was otherwise closed to Westerners. The archives of the Dutch

factory in Nagasaki, especially the diaries, are a unique eye-witness to the so-called *Sakoku* period in Japanese history which lasted from 1641 to 1853. At the end of the nineteenth century Japanese historians, under the influence of Ranke's teachings, realised the primary importance of these archives for the study of this period. All publications of the archival resources in question were initiated and executed by them. Until recently, Dutch interest in this archive remained low. However, in 1984 the DDSPP was set in motion. With the translation into English of the marginalia of the diaries kept by the chiefs in Deshima from 1680-1860, we hope to make up for years of neglect, and facilitate the access to what is one of the only foreign sources on Japan in the closed door period.

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Dutch Class: The Dutch Language as a Vehicle to Western Science

The precondition for the flowering of Dutch learning (*Rangaku*) was a thorough understanding of the Dutch language by Japanese scientists. In this article, the beginnings of the Dutch language instruction on a regular basis in the last quarter of the eighteenth century are unveiled. The Japanese historian N. Jiro has pointed out that during the Tanuma Era: “The economic developments and the Bakufu’s effort to cope with them resulted in an increased study of applied sciences and technology, a trend that had already started at the end of Yoshimune’s reign” (Numato Jiro 1992: 52).

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Because this study of the applied sciences was based largely on Dutch learning, it has a distinctive linguistic component. Only through the use of the Dutch language could the scientists gain direct access to Western technology, otherwise it came only indirectly via the Japanese translators working on *Deshima*. Up until the 1770s only a few translators had attained a level of proficiency in the Dutch language which could guarantee a successful transference of Western science. Most famous among them was Imamura Gen’emon Eisei (1681-1736) whom I consider, not only linguistically speaking, to be the founding father of *Rangaku*. He wrote a book on equestrianism (1736) on the basis of his intensive contact with the horse master H.G. Keijserling and he played a key role in the translation of wide-ranging questions of the Shoguns on topics such as law, botany, geography and military weapons (Van der Velde 1993 / 1995). The Dutch language had never been taught in a classroom at *Deshima*. Some interpreters did receive individual instruction from VOC servants, mostly physicians. Therefore, only interpreters with a talent for languages, such as Imamura, could attain a high level of fluency and comprehension.

However, most interpreters had only a vague notion of the Dutch language. The lack of knowledge was noted over and over again by Dutch chiefs in their diaries. Nevertheless, Japanese scholars wanting to gain access to Western science were dependent on the few interpreters who had mastered Dutch. With the increase of interest in the applied sciences, the need for direct access to the Dutch language became self-evident. Scholars must have welcomed the news that the interpreter

Sensabro (Nishi Zensabūrō) had taken the initiative in compiling a dictionary. The list of Dutch-Japanese words compiled by Immura in the later years of his life must have come in handy for Zensabūrō. In the 1767 diary of the Dutch chief H.C. Kastens, it is noted on July 13th, that: “Sensabro has not visited our island in months. Neither has he left his house. He says he is ill and no longer fit to act as an interpreter. All other interpreters say that he is feigning his illness and are making jokes about him. They say that he is compiling a Dutch-Japanese dictionary and will tender his resignation. It seems that he is quite wealthy” (Van der Velde 1994: 1767/112-3). Nishi Zensabūrō was working from P. Marin’s *Nederduitsch en Fransch Woordenboek* (Dutch-French Dictionary) but he only reached the letter B. It would be another thirty years before a Dutch-Japanese dictionary was printed in Nagasaki which would facilitate the independent study of Western science by Japanese scholars.

The First Language Instructors

In 1777 an important development occurred which was bound to increase the language proficiency of the interpreters, some of whom would become scholars themselves. Imamura Daijūrō, one of the interpreters, told the Dutch chief A.W. Feith that the apprentice-interpreters had received permission to stay on the island for a couple of days a month, so that they could be taught Dutch by VOC assistants in the house of the *ottonas* (guardians who controlled access to the island). Feith objected on the grounds that he could not do without them in view of the pressure of company business, although he must have been aware of the great advantages that the increased language skills of the interpreters would bring.

Imamura Daijūrō’s fellow interpreter, Gisabro, tried to counter Feith’s objections, suggesting that it would be better if the apprentice interpreters were taught Dutch in the houses of the VOC assistants because there were many objects of Dutch origin at hand (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/4). He also told Feith that the edict forbidding the apprentice-interpreters from coming to Deshima, which had been issued in 1774, would soon be revoked. This must have happened before 4 December 1777. Because on that very day they assembled for the first time in the house of the *ottonas* to attend lectures in Dutch. By this time, Feith must have given in to the Japanese demands either under pressure or of his own accord. The assembly marked the beginning of Dutch language instruction for the interpreters on a regular basis (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/7). The diary does not state who taught the first lesson, but it must have been one of the following four persons whom Feith had assigned to the job: A.M. Groenenberg, J. van Vlissingen, F.W. Schindeler or D. Moyer. These four assistants can be considered the first Dutch language instructors in Japan (Van der Velde 1994: 1779/23). So far little is known about their background apart from the

fact that Schindeler assisted the famous physician C. P. Thunberg, who spent the year 1778 on Deshima, collecting herbs in the vicinity of Nagasaki.

Nature and Frequency of the Lessons

According to the diary, language instruction was continued on 13 February 1778. Other entries in the 1778 diary mention instruction on February 17, 21, 25 and 28; on March 3, 7, and 23; on April 22, 28; on May 27, 28, 29; on June 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23. On 19 February a language examination took place at the governor's residence but, to the amazement of the Dutch, they were not allowed to be present (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/41). If this situation persisted later on remains uncertain, but it seems that at that time the examinations remained a prerogative of the interpreters themselves. As to the nature of the language instruction, one can assume that it was partly teaching by demonstration either by showing objects of everyday use and other objects on Deshima or from engravings in books. We can infer this from the remark made by Imamura Daijūrō who as mentioned above, thought it would be better to teach in the houses of the Dutch where many objects were at hand. Into this category one can also place the use of illustrated alphabet lists which seem to have been available in Japan (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/43).

We also have a written source about the nature of the language instruction. It is a statement by Van Groenenberg, one of the language instructors, which is included in Feith's diary (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/78-9). From this statement, it becomes clear that the Japanese had to write letters and make translations which were corrected by Van Groenenberg. The latter wrote the statement on the order of Feith, who had put him under house arrest after he had refused to copy Feith's diary (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/75). Van Groenenberg bluntly told Feith that he had more important things to do than copying the latter's diary. These more important matters referred to his teaching Dutch to the interpreters and he told Feith to have someone else do the dull and boring work (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/82). It was clear that Van Groenenberg derived a degree of self-confidence and status from his profession as a language instructor. He remained under house arrest for 31 days and was released on 25 May. Four days later the lessons were postponed so that, according to Feith, the assistants could occupy themselves with Company business. The interpreter Kozaemon protested the suspension of the lessons. Feith gave in and the lessons were continued in June according to his diary (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/92). Probably, the lessons were suspended during the trading season lasting from August till October because that was really a busy time on the island.

According to the diary kept by the chief Isaac Titsingh (who arrived 15 July 1779), the language instructions recommenced on 30 January 1780. On 28 February

they were suspended once more during the so-called *Stille Tijd* (Quiet Season) when the chief was undertaking the yearly court journey to Tokyo because it had caused trouble in the preceding year. Here we see a telling example of the nature of a society which was ruled by precedents. It is obvious that during this period the assistants had virtually nothing to do (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/31). The last entry on language instruction in Titsingh's diary is dated 11 July when he and the interpreters agreed that language instruction should take place at a frequency of eight times a month (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/94). Whether the language instruction was continued during the trading season and the Quiet Season remains unclear. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the interpreters received instruction between sixty to a hundred times a year. Unfortunately, nowhere is there any indication of how many hours the sessions lasted.

The Impact of Dutch Language Instruction

In his statement, Van Groenenberg remarked that the lessons considerably improved the interpreters' mastery of the Dutch language (Van der Velde 1994: 1778/78). This improvement in the mastery of both spoken and written Dutch certainly made day-to-day communication easier and must have stimulated mutual understanding between the Japanese and the Dutch. This is exemplified by Isaac Titsingh, who even engaged in correspondence with Japanese scientists in Dutch (Lequin 1990). Although it never became an official policy, an open attitude towards the West was entertained by a lot of influential Japanese during the Tanuma Era. There were even plans to send 150 Japanese to Batavia to learn the craft of seagoing ships. The improved mastery of the Dutch language (which would remain the language used by Japanese diplomats until 1890) also laid the foundation for *rangaku* to become a scientific movement from the 1780s onwards. Gradually Japanese scholars became acquainted with Western thought and equally importantly technology, which would pave the way for Japan to make a relatively easy transition from an agrarian society to an industrial power at the end of the nineteenth century.

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The Zealander Jan van der Cruijse's "Japanese" Diary (1736-37)

In this article an idea is given of the daily life on the island of Deshima in Nagasaki Bay and the court journey to Tokyo by the Dutch chief Jan van der Cruijse. It is based on the diary kept by him from October 1736 to October 1737.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 2000. "Jan van der Cruijse (1700-1738). Het Japanse dagboek van een Fliplander". *Zeeuws Tijdschrift* 50-3. 18-23. This article is translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop. I am grateful to the archivists S.F.M. Plantinga, J.P.B. Zuurdeeg and H. Uil for their useful comments.

From 1641 to 1853, Deshima, the Japanese trading-post in Nagasaki Bay, was the point of contact where Dutchmen and Japanese could meet each other. Until the dissolution of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) in 1799, the men-in-charge were senior merchants in the VOC hierarchy. A number of them, including Daniël Six, Isaac van Schinne, Hendrik van Buytenheim, Nicholaas Johan van Hoorn and Gideon Boudaen, were born and bred in Zeeland. From time to time they are still mentioned sporadically in studies, however one will seek in vain in historical studies for our Zealander, Jan van der Cruijse. This is precisely the reason I feel prompted to present a short sketch of his life and cite extracts from the Diary which he kept on Deshima from October 1736 to October 1737. Before I commence, I shall sketch the historical background to Japanese-Dutch relations and life on Deshima.

In Japanese-Dutch relations, the period 1641-1853 can be roughly divided up into two periods: 1641-1715 when trade dominated the picture and the period 1715-1853 when the transference of scientific knowledge began to play an ever-increasing role. The diary Van der Cruijse kept between 1736-1737 was written in a period in which scientific knowledge and its accoutrements were unequivocally beginning to steal the limelight. This was during the reign of Shogun Yoshimune who paradoxically was responsible for the trade restrictions proclaimed in 1715 and the lifting of the ban on the importation of Western books. Hence, it is also the period which heralds the beginning of Dutch Studies or *rangaku*, although these only really took off at the end of this century. This burgeoning transfer of knowledge would prove to be of inestimable value in the transformation of Japan from a feudal state to industrial power in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Daily Life on Deshima

Deshima, that tiny, fan-shaped, artificial island in Nagasaki Harbour, was the VOC conduit through which a reciprocal stream of Western and Japanese knowledge flowed. It was connected to Nagasaki by a heavily guarded bridge. The dwellings and warehouses of the VOC employees were strung out along its only thoroughfare, Cross Street. Nagasaki was one of five cities in Japan which fell under the direct authority of the Shogun. It was under the authority of two governors, who changed places with each other every year. One resided in Tokyo, the other in Nagasaki. The VOC paralleled this dyadic administrative structure by having two chief merchants change places with each other on an annual basis. The Dutch chief invariably held the rank of merchant in the VOC hierarchy and exercised a limited jurisdiction over the ten to twenty Dutchman and twenty to thirty slaves on Deshima. The latter came from what were to become the Netherlands East Indies and India and spoke Malay, Portuguese or one of the Indian languages. They sported colourful names like Cupido van Bengalen (Cupid from Bengal). The slaves usually spoke Dutch or one of its dialects and, even when they pronounced it with a strong Strasbourg accent, they were consistently disparagingly referred to by the Japanese as “Mountain Dutch” (*Berghollanders*). In a nutshell, Deshima was a multi-cultural, multi-lingual island in the closed Japanese empire.

In their contacts with the Japanese, the Dutch were largely dependent on one interpreters’ guild which consisted of 150 people. Membership was hereditary. The interpreters had their own house on Deshima, close to the water-gate through which the goods were brought ashore. The guild was divided up into eight ranks, within which the Dutch distinguished four main categories: apprentice interpreter, junior interpreter, interpreter and chief interpreter. The Deshima Diaries clearly reveal that a small group of chief interpreters controlled and manipulated the exchange of information between the Dutch and the Japanese.

Besides these official channels, the Dutch had informal contracts with suppliers and personnel like cooks, servants, guards and so on, all of whom were on the payroll of the VOC. It would not be an exaggeration to say that a portion of the population of Nagasaki was dependent, directly or indirectly, on the VOC. The Dutchmen also enjoyed a more intimate contact with the geishas or “keesjes”. Even though they played an enormous role in the daily lives of the VOC employees for whom the fairly free and easy sexual morals in Japan must have been an eye-opener, these ladies rarely appear in the diaries which were kept for official administrative purposes. Only in the private correspondence are we able to catch a glimpse of these ladies of the “Flower and Willow World”. Their lucrative earnings afforded these “housewives” of the Dutchmen an influential position in the society of Nagasaki and elsewhere in Japan. This was also because the profession they exercised was

completely respectable in Japanese society. The network of these ladies, whose children often had piercing blue eyes, is one of the topics which is still awaiting in-depth research.

The annual routine of the trading-post was determined by the arrival of the ships in the middle of August. The months of September and October were dominated by active commercial dealings when the goods imported, such as sugar and cotton, were traded for copper and camphor. The ships sailed at the end of October. The month of February was taken up with preparations for the court journey to Tokyo which the Dutch chief was obliged to make each year. The journey usually lasted three months, from the middle of February to the end of May. The chief was received in audience by the Shogun and he distributed the mandatory gifts to the former and to other high-ranking officials. During its time in Tokyo, the delegation was visited by all sorts of Japanese scientists who deluged its members with questions. During the chief's absence, he was replaced on Deshima by the second-in-command of the trading-post, who used the time to take care of repairs to the warehouses and lighters. The time between the return of the chief and the arrival of the ships in August was known as the "Quiet Season" and that says it all. This was the world in which Van der Cruijse made his debut in August 1728, after having already worked in Batavia, the Asian headquarters of the VOC, for ten years.

From St Philipsland to Batavia

Jan van der Cruijse was born in St Philipsland in Zeeland around 1700. Because the baptismal register of this village for the years 1659-1780 was burned in 1940, we shall never be able to establish exactly when he was born. Jan was the son of Johannes van der Cruijse who was the Dutch Reformed minister in St Philipsland from 1695 until his death in 1711. After the death of his first wife in 1697, he remarried Margaretha Dibbets, who like himself was a native of Middelburg. From the scant data available, it would seem the minister was not a poor man as he owned several houses in St Philipsland and a farm in its environs. In 1717, Jan sold this on behalf of his mother. He will also certainly not have done too badly out of this deal. What enticed him to the East is shrouded in the mists of history but I think it was more a sense of adventure than the lure of money.

At the beginning of November 1717, he sailed for the Indies on the ship the *Raethuis van Vlissingen* as a midshipman in the service of the Zeeland Chamber of the VOC. He arrived in Batavia in the middle of July 1718. Until he left to take up his appointment on Deshima, Jan worked as a clerk in the VOC office there. Very little is known about this period of his life. He probably led the dreary life of a clerk who had little else to do but produce copies of the host of reports and letters which the

VOC generated. By whom and why he was appointed to Nagasaki is just as much a mystery. Perhaps he had been lured by the stories which were told about this closed kingdom and he also very probably enjoyed Zeeland patronage.

The Tower of Zierikzee

At the beginning of May 1728, Jan left for Deshima on board the *Reijersbroek*. As they made landfall, the sailors will no doubt have pointed out to him the mountain in the bay which closely resembled the Tower of Zierikzee, the 62-metre-high tower of the former church of St Livinus in that Zeeland city. After an eventful voyage, they dropped anchor off the Papenburg (a hilly island at the entrance to Nagasaki Bay) on 23 July 1728. On 25 July they were granted permission to disembark and Van der Cruijse moved into his quarters on Cross Street, the only street on Deshima. Jan arrived in Japan at a time when this country had been hit by an economic crisis. This manifested itself in famines and numerous arson attacks perpetrated by discontented farmers and labourers. In the absence of weapons which were the monopoly of the samurai class, arson was their only means to make their voices heard. These fires were recorded in the diaries by the Dutch chiefs. A closer study of the number of fires noted in this source could lead to an indicator of the social unrest in Japan during the period in which the country was closed off from the world.

Despite or perhaps because of this crisis, the period which Jan spent on Deshima saw a big leap forward in interest in Rangaku (Dutch Knowledge). This upsurge is largely attributed to Shogun Yosimune, who had even appointed a special person to gather this knowledge and make it accessible. This person was Imamura Gen'emon with whom Jan must have had regular dealings. He met Gen'emon in Tokyo during his first court journey in 1729 when the latter was serving there as interpreter for the German horse-master J.G. Keijser. The fact that Jan had been allowed to make this journey was a sign that his career was certainly going in the right direction and, in 1735, he was indeed appointed chief. However, he had to be patient for a year as the ship on which he was sailing to Japan ran aground off Canton. After various vicissitudes, he arrived in Batavia in June just before the ships were about to depart for Nagasaki. He arrived on Deshima as the newly elected chief on 11 August and on 24 October was officially installed as his successor by his predecessor Bernardus Coop à Groen. This is the day on which his diary entries begin. Below is a small anthology from what is, for the sake of convenience, called his diary. In fact, it was called *dagregister* or journal containing notes on events which was primarily used as a reference work by the chiefs.

Diary Kept by Jan van der Crujsse 1736-1737

1736, *October* (Days in brackets) [26] The Shogun wants the following items: one Persian stallion, a Dutchman who is expert in compiling almanacs as Kyūdayū wants to master this skill, gold and silver curios, 10,000 catties of premium steel, two small telescopes, 25 paintings depicting flowers, birds and landscapes, eight turkeys, 10 crystal bottles, 80 rice-birds, six big telescopes, two small ivory spy-glasses, engraved multifaceted glass, 150 pairs of spectacles, three rosemary bushes, three surgical cylinders, four catties of red ochre pens and 200 toothpicks.

November [1] The two junks hauled into mid-stream have been loaded and the Chinese are taking their idols aboard. [6] At night we heard cannon shots from which we concluded that the ships had left. In the morning we saw that the ships had sailed. [9] I told Hachizaemon that the physician Hendrik van Haaster and the calendar-expert Dirk van Horbag would join me on my trip to Edo. I asked him if the watchmaker, Anthonij Kluijt, and the musicians were also to join us on our trip. If so, clothes would have to be made for the musicians because they walk around stark naked. Hachizaemon said that there was still a possibility that Kluijt might go to Edo, but the musicians will certainly have to remain here. I talked to him about the extra presents. I assured him that they were not given because we felt obliged to do so and added that, during the 138 years of our trade with Japan, we had never done anything which might damage relations. [16] On behalf of Hachizaemon, who is ill, Chūjirō asked for butter and smoked meat which has been given to him. [27] On behalf of Sakuieimon, Gohei told me that the biggest horse has to be taken to Sakuieimon's residence because it will be sent to Edo. [30] I asked Chūjirō to invite the porcelain-makers and the lacquer-workers to come on to our island.

December [12] Namura Gohei told me that Hizen, the mayor of Nagasaki, will leave for Osaka tomorrow to find out whether he can buy more copper. Every day there are rumours about the low production and rising prices of copper. I replied that there is no shortage of copper but that there is not enough money to pay the labourers. [13] Gohei told me that if Hizen turns out to be successful, we shall receive more copper. However, if the mission fails, we shall have to pay more for the copper to the detriment of the Company. Furthermore, Gohei told me that the wages had gone up and that the miners had to dig deeper to reach the copper deposits. [15] A fire broke out five streets from our island. Gohei told me that six small houses had been destroyed in the blaze. [22] On behalf of Sakuieimon, Gohei asked for medicine which is intended for the Shogun. I told him that we could not give him the full amount. He replied that it would do. [24] We were told that, in view of the many fires breaking out in town, we should be vigilant that no fire broke out on our island. [27] Hail and snow. It is freezing.

1737, *January* [1] I have been congratulated upon the occasion of New Year by my compatriots and the Japanese servants, who gave me presents. I thanked them and we partied until the evening. They were delighted with the treat. It seems as if we are friends rather than enemies. [16] On behalf of Hizen, Hachizaemon told me that, among the additional presents, two clocks and the blood corals will be acceptable to the court. However, Kluijt does not have to come to Edo. I replied it would be necessary to take Kluijt along; on the one hand, should something happen to the clocks, which is not unlikely, he can repair them, and, on the other hand, because Your Lordships have ordered it. [17] Hachizaemon told me that, apart from the two clocks and the blood corals, two of the four hunting dogs, named Hannibal and Veetje, will be sent to Edo in advance at the expense of the Shogun. [23] Since he had not been given permission to visit our island, Van Haaster had to examine the patient just outside the land gate. Van Haaster thinks he can cure him. He is not a leper. He has boils and his blood is infected. Van Haaster told me that Hachizaemon told him not to tell the patient that he can cure him, since this would cause the interpreters a lot of trouble if that were not the case.

February [1] Japanese New Year. I conveyed my congratulations upon the occasion to Hizen. [2] He conveyed his thanks. Hizen has asked the interpreters about my health and if I were ready for the court journey. The interpreters have given an affirmative reply. Several Japanese have congratulated me upon the New Year. One of the interpreters told me that Brasman will replace Hachizaemon, who is ill at present, as an escort. This is an unfortunate development since Brasman is an incompetent, rude, stubborn and malicious interpreter. Especially when he is drunk. [5] The presents and other goods have been packed. [6] Our luggage consists of 12 *nagamochi* and 36 trunks. [7] The lacquer-workers paid me a visit. I have ordered 96 pieces amounting to 1,211 *taels* or 4,241 guilders. [8] We went to the residence of Hizen. I asked that he intercede at court on our behalf and offer us his protection, which he promised. I wished him a prosperous term of government this year. [10] I tried to order porcelain, but I did not place the order because the prices turned out to be 150 percent higher than those Your Lordships had in mind. [13] Gohei told me that the Persian stallion had arrived safely in Edo. I have handed the keys of the warehouses and a memorandum to Van Poot and told the other Dutchmen to obey Van Poot during my absence.

Court Journey [14] After I had taken receipt of 600 *kobans*, we left Deshima. My cook reported that our meat had been stolen by the coolies. [20] Arrival in Shimoneski. [21] The governor paid me a visit. We visited several temples.

March [4] Arrival in Oskaka. The landlord picked us up in his pleasure barges which were decked out with Dutch flags. [6] We have delivered our presents to the governor. A Japanese told me that the new *kobans* had not yet been put into circulation and that foreign piece-goods fetched low prices. I put out a contract to

hire 113 coolies and 53 horses at last year's prices. [8] Departure from Osaka. Arrival in Miyako. [12] Departure from Miyako. [22] The retinue of the lord of Odawarra passed by. We saw many soldiers and 20 horses. [24] Arrival in Edo. [25] The secretaries of the commissioners of foreigners welcomed us. Kyūdayū paid us a visit. He asked various questions about the book on herbs by Rembertus Dodonaeus (Dodanaeus, famous botanist and writer of the *Cruydt-boek*, a well-known treatise on herbs first published in 1554). Around 11 o'clock in the evening he departed. [28] We went to the castle. We proceeded to the antechamber where we had to wait for three hours. I paid my respects. Thereupon we delivered presents to the senior and junior councillors. [29] After our coolies had sobered up, we delivered our presents to the commissioners of the temples and the governor of Edo. [30] On behalf of several gentleman, Brasman asked for saffron, theriac and four bottles of Spanish wine. [31] Kyūdayū asked many questions about lunar and solar eclipses. Van Horbag, who is experienced in these matters, has replied to Kyūdayū's satisfaction.

April [3] Farewell audience. The orders have been read to me. I received 50 gowns and permission to leave. [5] The Shogunal physician, accompanied by several students, paid us a visit and he talked about medicine with Van Haaster. Late in the evening, I was asked to order the following items from Batavia. 1. Scarlet paint for dying cloth, including an explanation of how to apply it. 2. Roots, bulbs or seeds of saffron. 3. Flax and linen. 4. A book about herbs with drawings of the herbs and explanation of their properties. 5. A book about all known animals with illustrations and also the description of the temperament of the animals. I replied that it was impossible to obtain the first three items mentioned. However, items four and five can be ordered. A physician of a lord has talked about diseases and the healing power of herbs with Van Haaster. We were asked several questions: 1. Are there rats in Holland? Reply: Affirmative. 2. If we had seen angels in the Mountains. Reply: No. 3. Does it snow in Holland and is it as cold as in Japan? Reply: Affirmative. 4. Are there dragons in Holland? While asking this they showed us the head, skin and paws of an iguana. Reply: No. [8] Departure from Edo. [21] Arrival in Miyako. I received a letter from Van Poot, stating that a fire has raged on the Chinese island. It destroyed 43 houses and 11 provisions warehouses. [22] I urged the lacquer-workers to produce high quality lacquer-ware. [25] Arrival in Osaka. On our way we visited several temples. [28] We paid a visit to the city garden, the temples and the copper and silver refineries. [30] Departure from Osaka.

May [12] Arrival in Shimoneseki. [13] Departure from Shimoneseki. [19] Arrival on Deshima. The journey has taken 95 days. Van Poot returned the keys of the warehouses and his diary which did not contain anything noteworthy. [27] The lord of Hirado has arrived in Nagasaki. He paid us a visit. I welcomed him at the land gate. He was accompanied by a large retinue. I showed him around the island and ordered two of my compatriots to play billiards. He examined the paintings in my

office and the animals in formaldehyde. [30] Kizaemon, accompanied by the first servant of the lord of Hirado, gave me a present consisting of two bales of sake and a square box containing smoked stone bass. I conveyed my thanks for the present.

June [3] Kizaemon told me that the aged emperor has died. We have to observe a mourning period of five days. A lot of money will be spent on his funeral. [17] We went to the residence of Hizen where I paid my respects. Hizen has given permission to inspect the sampans and to pay a visit to Nagasaki. [26] I have put out a contract for the repair of our buildings amounting to 230 *taels* or 805 guilders. [27] I have put out a contract for the repair of the sampans. [28] Gohei told me that the clocks had arrived in Edo on the first of June. The Shogun derives great pleasure from the clocks. [3] I drew up a muster roll of the Company's servants.

July [1-6] Nothing noteworthy has happened. [8] One of the concubines of the crown prince has given birth to a son, called Takechiyo. One of the servants has picked up the brown horse which will be sent to Edo in the near future. [21] Gieske has finished repairing our buildings. [29] Tokuzemon has been appointed junior interpreter. He has proved to be an interpreter who serves our interests well.

Arrival of the Enchuijsen and the Abbekerk

August [10] Two ships have been sighted off the coast. I sent a deputation to the ships to pick up the Company's papers. [11] A ship has anchored off the Papenberg. While sailing past Deshima, the interpreter Joske shouted that Visscher and Van Rhee had arrived. The flagship has anchored off the Papenberg. I sent a deputation to that ship. Upon its return, the deputation reported that the *Enchuijsen* and the *Abbekerk* had arrived. The ships left Batavia on the 17th of June and have run into three severe storms. Yesterday the skipper of the *Abbekerk*, Isaac de Valk, died. The ships have been allowed to anchor off Deshima. I notified Visscher of this in a letter and, very late in the afternoon, the ships anchored off Deshima. We have picked up Visscher, Van Rhee and the other friends. The value of the cargo of the ships amounts to 480,891 guilders. I have communicated the news of the world to the interpreters. [12] The presents have been unloaded and have been taken to the residence of Sakuemon. The two stallions have been shown to Hizen, who was very pleased with these animals. During a meeting of the council, we read the Company's papers and I have presented notices of promotion to several compatriots. They are very grateful for their promotions. [15] The interpreters told me that three new guard-houses will be built on Deshima. Furthermore, a fence will be erected around the bleaching field alongside the Lelie and the Doorn warehouses. In addition, one guardsman from Nagasaki will guard the island during the night, while vessels will cruise in the bay guarding the fence of our island facing on to the bay. It is clear that the Japanese are seeking to increase our isolation. [18] While we were gathered in Van Rhee's room, Van Haaster entered saying that H. Kruger, who is vomiting blood, will not see the morning. We went to the room of Kruger where

we found that he was very weak. He has appointed Visscher and Van Rhee executors of his last will. [19] Around six o'clock in the morning Kruger died. We informed Hizen about the death of Kruger who has been buried at Inasa in the presence of four compatriots. [27] I have mustered the *Abbekerk* and I have proclaimed the regulations. The coolies have begun unloading the ship.

September [2] One thousand chests of copper have been shipped to the *Abbekerk*. [3] I have mustered the *Enchuijsen* and I have proclaimed the regulations. A large amount of sappan wood has been unloaded. [6] The ray-skins have been sorted out. The presents destined for Sakuemon and Hizen have been delivered. Ten blankets have been given to Van Poot who will distribute them among the sick. [9] Kizaemon told me that the lord of Hizen has arrived in Nagasaki accompanied by a big retinue. He made a tour of the island after which he went to the *Abbekerk*. [17] The merchandise has been unpacked. The musicians and the carriage and its appurtenances have to remain here. [30] *Matsuri* (temple festival). We were forced to please the governor and interpreters by attending the *matsuri*.

October [7] The interpreters announced that we were allowed to sell goods amounting to 708,162 guilders and that we are obliged to buy 70,188 catties of camphor from Satsuma. [8] We have delivered our presents to the authorities in Nagasaki. Thereupon we enjoyed ourselves in the city. Copper has been shipped to both ships. [12] The *Abbekerk* has sailed for the Papenburg. [13] I have installed Visscher as my successor. I pray for a safe voyage to Batavia.

A Monument for Van der Crujsse?

Hence Jan van der Crujsse left for Batavia in the certainty that, the following year, he would again return to Deshima as chief. This was not to be. After the ships, the *Enchuijsen* and the *Schellagh*, arrived in Nagasaki on 21 August 1738, Visscher noted in his diary: "That the Honourable Van der Crujsse left Batavia on the *Enchuijsen* to take up his position of chief for the second time, however he died off Poel Thijmaon and was buried on that island." This is Pulau Tioman off the east coast of Malaysia. In the ship's log of 't *Raethuijs van Vlissingen*, I discovered another note stating that Messrs Van Dishoeck in Domburg (Zeeland) should be asked if Van der Crujsse had any children or other family members still living, but the result of this enquiry also remains a blank. However, the clerk who made this note thought that Van der Crujsse had made his will in Japan on 29 June, 1738, and had died there. As we know from Visscher's entry, he died on his way there and therefore cannot have had his will drawn up on Deshima. There are still plenty of unanswered questions hovering around our Zealander. More in depth research might provide enough material to justify a short biography of him. If Johannis de Rijke, the engineer who

worked in Japan where he was held in high regard in the nineteenth century, will soon have two monuments in Colijnsplaat, at least one should be managed in St Philipsland for Van der Cruijse. This would be a way to create an interesting route for Japanese tourists to visit the birthplaces of and monuments to Zealanders who have been important to Japan.

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The Man Who Paved the Way: The Interpreter Imamura Gen'emon Eisei (1671-1737) as the Founder of Dutch Studies

The Dutch trading-post on Deshima, in Nagasaki Bay is a prime example of a place where a reciprocal dialogue between two cultures commenced, not only with a view to establishing profitable trading relations but also to begin a meaningful cultural and scientific exchange. The interpreter Imamura Gen'emon Eisei is a man who personified this dialogue. As a young man he played an instrumental role in the transference of Eastern to Western culture and later, as an adult, he played a pivotal role in the transference of the Western to Eastern culture. The principal theme of this article is his role in the development of Dutch Studies or Rangaku, which will be examined in six phases. Before writing about his personal role in this phenomenon, we begin with a sketch of the place where this transference of knowledge happened.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 2011. "De Beschikker en bezorger van alles. De tolk Imamura Gen'emon Eisei (1671-1737) als inspirator van de achttiende-eeuwse Hollandkunde (*rangaku*)". *Het Verre Gezicht. Politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika. Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. Leonard Blussé*, edited by Lindblad, J. Thomas and Schrikker, Alicia. Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen. 218-233. It was translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop who was also responsible for the correction of all marginalia of the Deshima Diaries Source Publications Project.

The Window on Two Worlds Opened

Gen'emon's whole life was structured by Deshima. From 1641 to 1853, Deshima was a window on the world: for Japan a revelation of the West and for the Dutch an education about Japan. All the information about the outside world reached Japan via this tiny island and, albeit much less, some knowledge about Japan did trickle out to the outside world. In 1634 it had been put at the disposal of the Portuguese but in 1639 they were banned from Japan. The island was connected to the mainland by a heavily guarded bridge, the Holland Bridge. The houses of the employees of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) were aligned along its only street. From the point of view of the Japanese authorities, Deshima was considered a regular quarter of Nagasaki and fell under the control of a mayor (*otona*). Like Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Sakai, Nagasaki was one of the five cities which fell under the direct control of the Shogun (central government) (*gokasho*). Each of these cities was administered by two magistrates (governors / *bugyō*) who took turns to reside alternately in their own city or in Tokyo. Its unique position meant that a third *bugyō* was appointed in Nagasaki in 1668. "(...) to permit closer attention to [be paid] to the arrival of

foreigners and to ensure the safety of this world-renowned harbour". [Sloane Manuscripts 3060, f. 210v.]

The Dutch administration closely resembled that of the Japanese. Hence, the Dutch chiefs could also spend only one year on Deshima. When they returned to Batavia (the VOC headquarters in Asia), they served a term on the Judicial Council before returning to Deshima for the second or third tour of duty. Whereas the governor-general (the VOC top-man in Asia) can be compared to the Shogun, the equivalent of the Japanese emperor was the Stadtholder (the hereditary governor of the Netherlands, a member of the House of Orange) and the Heren XVII (the Seventeen Gentlemen, or the Board of Governors of the VOC) in the Republic. The chief invariably held the rank of chief merchant in the VOC hierarchy and his jurisdiction was confined to the ten to fifteen Dutchmen and the twenty to thirty Malay- or Portuguese speaking slaves who lived on Deshima. For their official contacts with the authorities in Nagasaki, the Dutch were forced to rely completely on the Japanese Interpreters guild which consisted of 150 persons. Membership of the guild was hereditary. The interpreters had their own house on Deshima, close to the Watergate. The guild was subdivided into eight ranks. The VOC employees distinguished only four: apprentice interpreter, junior interpreter, interpreter and senior interpreter. The senior interpreters controlled the flow of information between the Dutch and Japanese authorities.

Besides these official contacts, the Dutch maintained informal relationships with a whole range of servants such as cooks, domestic personnel, gate-keepers and so forth, who were all on the VOC payroll. The Dutchmen also enjoyed close relationships with their Japanese "housewives" or "keesjes" who are never mentioned in the official correspondence of the VOC authorities. Only in private correspondence do we sometimes catch a glimpse of these women of the "Flower and Willow World". But it is no exaggeration to claim that a very large proportion of the population of Nagasaki was dependent on Deshima, either directly, or indirectly. The Chinese, who also maintained a trading-post in Nagasaki, likewise provided many Japanese with employment.

The annual routine of the trading-post was determined by the arrival of two or three ships from Batavia around the middle of August. During the subsequent trading season, the Dutch sold their imported commodities such as linen and cotton cloth from India, silk piece-goods from China and spices from Indonesia. Their principal purchases from the Japanese consisted of copper, camphor and small amounts of lacquer-work and porcelain. At the end of October, the ships returned to Batavia on the northern monsoon. This was the time when neighbouring *daimyos* (feudal lords) and the magistrates of Nagasaki came to visit Deshima where they examined the cabinet of curiosities containing creatures preserved in formaldehyde. They would also often go on board the ships. The sailing of the ships

ushered in the quiet period, which was used to make preparations for the court journey to Tokyo which the chief was obliged to undertake each year to present gifts to the Shogun.

His travelling companions included the doctor, two merchants, a Japanese interpreter and a throng of bearers. For the period of this journey, which took three months, the chief was given the rank of *daimyo* and he was treated as such. Both on the outward journey as on the way back to Deshima the caravan spent a few days in Osaka where orders were placed for lacquer-work and porcelain. They also spent several days in Kyoto and, on the outward journey, they were presented with a travel pass permitting them to travel along the famous Tōkaidō (Eastern Sea Route). On the return journey they visited some of the renowned temples of Kyoto (Bodaert-Bailey: 1991). During the time they spent in Tokyo, the company lodged in what was known as the Nagasaki Inn where the Dutch could be visited by the court physicians and students, albeit under strict supervision. The high point of the whole exercise was the audience with the Shogun which would often take hours. Once this was over the caravan returned to Nagasaki.

In the absence of the chief, the second-in-charge supervised the repair of the buildings on Deshima. After the chief had returned in May, everything was made ready for the arrival of the ships in August. In the literature, Deshima is portrayed as a prison but I think this gives a wrong impression which was perpetuated by the employees and by later historians. Instead, certainly for the Dutch VOC employees, it was more like an earthly paradise. They could spend almost the entire year living a carefree existence wallowing in incredible luxury. In comparison to the Netherlands, there was an abundance of everything: food, pleasurable leisure activities (billiards, flying kites), drugs (opium) and sex.

The free sexual morals in Japan must have come as a shock to the upright, pious Dutchmen, but nothing was easier to become accustomed to than your own Japanese mistress who very quickly initiated you into sensual delights. They also taught you to take a bath every day and they massaged you whenever you so desired. A smallish number of employees immersed themselves in the Japanese language and culture. The prevailing image of Deshima as a prison where the Dutch were mostly driven out of their minds by boredom can, as far as I am concerned, be consigned to the waste-paper basket of history. I would like to replace this image with a picture of Deshima as an earthly paradise on which the VOC employees lacked for nothing and enjoyed a wonderful time. This was equally true of the large majority of interpreters for whom this multi-cultural island must have been a breath of fresh air. Anybody who reads the diaries of the chiefs and their assistants realises that there was a strong bond between the interpreters and the VOC personnel. This was expressed in a shared sense of humour, a quintessential characteristic of reciprocal understanding.

Among the many items they noted in these diaries, the chiefs reported information about Deshima and Japan to the Board of the VOC. By some small miracle, these have all been preserved and they are a rich source of information about what was happening in Nagasaki and in Japan. The prime importance of the Deshima Diaries Source Publication Project, in part initiated by Leonard Blussé, lies in the fact that this unique Western source about Japan in this period will be made completely accessible to researchers and other interested parties through the indexing and translation of the more than 200 volumes (Blussé: 1992 / Van der Velde 1990).

Gen'emon Makes His Bow

“However, fortune presented me with another opportunity and an instrument in the shape of a learned young man, thanks to whom I could achieve my aims and gather a rich harvest of knowledge (...) He had to seek out significant information about the state of the country, the government, the court, religion and the history of past ages, family affairs as well as daily events. There was not a book I endeavoured to see, which he did not obtain for me and explain and translate the passages indicated” (Kaempfer: 1727).

With these words the botanist and VOC physician Engelbert Kaempfer expressed his belated gratitude to his Japanese assistant who, during the time he had been posted on Deshima, 1691-1692, had supplied him with the information on which his book *The History of Japan* (1727) was based. Until well into the twentieth century, this book not only influenced Western perceptions of Japan, it can even be said to have determined them to a large degree. It is therefore no surprise that specialists have long sought to find the identity of this assistant. The diaries have proved to be the key through which the identification of Gen'emon could be made.

On 22 September, 1695, Gen'emon and two other Japanese employees took exams in Dutch in the presence of the Chief Merchant Hendrik Dijkman and the physician Matthijs Raquet, to whom Gen'emon was assigned as a servant (NFJ 108 (1695), 290). The exam was held at the request of the Nagasaki magistrates. The result would actually have little real impact on who would eventually be appointed because other factors, such as ties of friendship and family, played a greater role. According to the Deshima Diaries, Gen'emon was a scion of an interpreter family. His grandfather, Imamura Shirobei, had been an interpreter for the Dutch when their trading-post was still located on Hirado (an island off the north-west coast of Kyushu). His father, Imamura Ichizaemon, moved to Nagasaki in 1641 when the Dutch were forced to move to this city (Imamura: 1942). His son, Gen'emon, was born there in 1671 and Ichizaemon retired in 1694. In view of the fact that the

profession of interpreter was hereditary, we should not be surprised that his son followed in his footsteps a year later.

Four days after the exam, clad in ceremonial robes, Gen'emon called on Dijkman to pay his respects and inform him that he had been appointed assistant/junior interpreter. Dijkman describes him in the following terms: “[...] in the Low German language, he is so proficient that none of the other interpreters can match him, having since his youth served here at the counting-house as the servant of the chief surgeon.” The final part of this sentence provides us with irrefutable proof that he was Kaempfer’s assistant. (NFJ 108 (1695), 290). This entry in the diaries has been overlooked by scholars such as Numato Jirō and even Imamura Akistune, who had searched the diaries for traces of his ancestors, but had failed to register it (Jirō: 1966). Often important information about people or events can be found in places where one would not necessarily expect to find them.

Additional proof that Gen'emon was Kaempfer’s assistant is provided by the fact that he sold Kaempfer many books from the library of the wealthy mayor (*otona*) Yoshikawa Gibuimon at high prices. The Sloane Collection in the British Library contains a number of different books with Gibuimon’s name stamped in them (Sloane Manuscripts). During the time he spent in Japan, Kaempfer had enjoyed a reputation as a good doctor but, after he left, he became best known in Japan as the founder of the science of artillery, which became known as Kaempferian artillery science (Jirō: 1966, 33). This is a fine example of historical invention because the man himself knew nothing about it. What is true is that, shortly after his departure, thanks to Gen'emon’s efforts, the manuscript about the science of artillery began to circulate there and this is the reason that Kaempfer is associated with it.

Gen'emon not only supplied Kaempfer with Japanese maps, books and drawings but, because he could read and copy Dutch books, he also introduced his fellow countrymen to Western knowledge. The copying of texts and the subsequent circulation of the copies was a ubiquitous way of disseminating knowledge in Japan. Nevertheless, it is never linked to transference of European knowledge at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. In this context, a number of “rediscovered” manuscripts from the archives of the Dutch trading-post in Japan deserve our closer inspection.

Right on Target

The archive of the Dutch trading-post (or factory) in Japan contains manuscripts which are remarkable for a wide variety of reasons (NFJ 650). The compiler of the inventory, M.P.H. Roessingh, dated them to around 1695 and attributed them to a Japanese interpreter whose identity he did not specify (Roessingh: 1964, 11).

In fact, he gives no explanation for either the dating or for the attribution. The manuscripts are all written in Dutch in the same hand and deal with such topics as the production of white cloth which could be dyed and descriptions of whaling and the artillery. The fourth manuscript, which will be dealt with in greater detail here, bears the title “Bosscieterij Konst” (Science of Artillery), first volume and contains 132 pages. This manuscript is a copy of the second edition of *Korte en bondige verhandeling der Bosscieterij Konst als mede hoe men een constapel examineren moet* (Brief and Succinct Treatise on the Science of Artillery and How a Gunner Should Be Examined) (Von Zedlitz: 1662). The author, Frederick von Zedlitz, was a non-commissioned officer in the army of Willem Hendrik of Nassau. The Library of Leiden University is home to the only surviving copy of the first edition in the Netherlands. This means that it can be compared with the handwritten copy of the second edition and it does not take very long to determine that this part of the text of the copy does not deviate from that in the first edition.

The manuscript is written on good quality, handmade lined Japanese paper. As it is impossible to write on this sort of paper using a metal nib or a quill without immediately damaging its structure, the conclusion has to be that not just this manuscript but also the other three were written with a brush. Because I had never seen a manuscript like it, I sought contact with a specialist in Japanese books. He confirmed that the manuscript was indeed handwritten and added that he had also never seen anything else like it. Taking into account the level of control which would be needed to achieve such brush-work, the Dutch have to be excluded as possible authors. This brings us closer to identifying the as yet unknown but certainly Japanese copyist. Besides a thorough knowledge of Dutch, he must have had lengthy experience in writing in the language because, otherwise, he would never have been able to accomplish such brush-work. This could only be one person: Gen’emon.

A closer examination of the manuscript reveals that some letters of the alphabet show a strong similarity to the symbols used in the *katagana* syllabary, including the “t”, the abbreviation of the word “het”. In this fashion the *katagana* syllabary could have provided a bridge for the interpreters, by which they could learn to write Dutch. When the copyists made errors in their writing, they used *gofu*, a good masking material (rather like Tipp-ex) which could be written over. The few corrections there are have mostly to do with double “ls” which have been corrected to double “rs” (it is a well-known fact that Japanese have difficulty pronouncing “r”). The drawings in the copy of *Bosscieterij Konst* also deserve special attention. The fact that the copyist used shading in his illustrations indicates that the copy has been made by a literary man rather than by a professional illustrator, because the latter would have used variegation and resorted to *sumi* (a sort of gum) instead of *gofu*.

When these facts are associated with the important ban on Western books, this and the other manuscripts just mentioned offer a clear indication of how Western

knowledge was disseminated throughout Japan. When all is said and done, it was much easier to smuggle loose pieces of Japanese paper rather than whole books out of Deshima. Proof that this sort of smuggling actually happened is provided by the pagination of the Bosscieterij manuscript which, in contrast to the text, is written in Japanese. This made it possible for Japanese bookbinders who had no Dutch to piece a book together. One of the places where this could have taken place was in Gibuimon's library.

Gen'emon visited him frequently and it was at his house that he met one of his nieces. Gibuimon, who had tutored him in the intricacies of commerce, saw in the intelligent young man an eligible suitor for his niece. He was able to contrive with the governor for Gen'emon to be promoted to the rank of interpreter on 24 July, 1696 (NFJ 110 (1696), 145). Although the majority of the assistant/junior-interpreters never ever attained the well-paid job of interpreter, Gen'emon succeeded in acquiring the coveted position within one year, a meteoric career rise. His new job paved the way for him to supplement his income in all sorts of ways. His star continued to rise because, on 8 January, 1697, he achieved yet another promotion when he was appointed junior rapporteur interpreter. Another interpreter who would achieve almost the same importance as Gen'emon, Namura Hachizaemon, was appointed senior rapporteur interpreter (*nenban tsūji*). As established earlier, these rapporteur interpreters played a key role in the communication between the Dutch and the magistrates in Nagasaki. They reported directly to the mayor and the governor and took it in turns to escort the chief on the annual court journey to Tokyo. At any rate, Dijkman was delighted with their appointments. He described them both as good-tempered, pleasant company as well as remarking that their mastery of Dutch was unsurpassed (NFJ (1696), 78). It is therefore no surprise that the marriage between Gen'emon and Gibuimon's niece was settled in March 1697 (NFJ 110 (1696, 307-338 / NFJ 111 (1697), 221).

The Pioneers of Dutch Studies

Although Gen'emon is considered the founder of Dutch Studies and his activities in this period marked the first phase, in this same period there were other pioneers alive who were important to the second phase, which ushered in a deeper immersion accomplished by the interaction between two Japanese and two Europeans. The latter two were Giovanni Batista Sidotti (1668-1714), an Italian priest who landed in Japan uninvited in 1708 bearing a papal command to convert the Japanese to the one true religion, and Cornelis Lardijn, who was chief on Deshima in the years 1711-1712 and 1713-1714. The Japanese actors were Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), councillor to Shoguns Ienobu and Ietsugu and a famous Confucian scholar who wrote



Figure 1. *Plegtigheid der Vertreedinge van het Krucifix, enz. te Nagasaki in Japan* (Trampling upon the Crucifix, etcetera), c. 1770. Engraving, 18 × 12.5 cm. Collection Vortex. Photo Cindy Bakker.

various books about the West. These works were based on information he had obtained from Sidotti and Lardijn through the translations of the other Japanese actor, Gen'emon. According to the scholar of Japanese Grant K. Goodman "[...] the interpreting had to be extremely scholarly and detailed [and] it is obvious that were it not for Imamura Eisei, the writings of Arai Hakuseki and the important effects they produced might never have occurred" (Goodman: 1986, 46).

The diaries give a clear picture of the interaction between the various actors. On 2 September, 1707, Gen'emon was appointed chief rapporteur interpreter. He was the first to interrogate Sidotti after his arrival in Nagasaki on 18 December, 1708. Gen'emon was quickly aware that Sidotti was a priest, a conclusion easily drawn from the many Christian accoutrements which he carried with him. The authorities in Nagasaki were alarmed by the sudden appearance of a Roman Catholic priest bearing his concomitant symbols like the Cross, which had been forbidden in Japan for seventy years on pain of death. As a precaution, the governor of Nagasaki had the interpreters swear a blood oath that they would not allow themselves to be converted by the priest. The ceremony known as *fumi-e* (trampling on the crucifix) had to be observed every year by the people of Nagasaki.

As matters stood, Fatsizemon and Gen'emon were actually the only two people who might have been tempted; Gen'emon in particular as he was the one who had to interrogate Sidotti, with occasional help from the Dutch. Gen'emon was ordered to write a report, destined to be sent to Tokyo, about the answers Sidotti had given to the governor's questions. The Shogunal government decided that Sidotti should be brought to Tokyo in person. Considering the strict laws banning Roman Catholicism, this was a remarkable decision. In fact, if these had been strictly adhered to Sidotti should have been executed on the spot, which is certainly what would have happened a decade earlier. However, Sidotti's arrival coincided with the illness and death of Shogun Tsunayoshi and the rise of Hakuseki as councillor to his successor, Ienobu. Probably, as a consequence of having read Gen'emon's report, Hakuseki decided to have Sidotti brought to Tokyo because he was interested in meeting him. Gen'emon was commanded to escort Sidotti to Tokyo. Before his departure, the chief, Hermanus Menssingh, impressed upon him that he had to be careful with the answers to the questions about religion because he feared that careless answers might endanger Japanese-Dutch relations (NJF 121 (1710), 5). Gen'emon promised him that he would go out of his way not to awaken any suspicions that he might be a crypto-Roman Catholic.

All this meant that Gen'emon was caught up in a delicate mission fraught with danger. He and Sidotti left together on 25 October, 1709, stealthily under the cloak of night, in the hope of escaping the attention of the people of Nagasaki (NFJ 121 (1710), 54). They arrived in Tokyo on 1 December and Sidotti was immediately jailed in the prison for Christians (*yakshiki*) which had stood empty for seventy years (in 1714

Sidotti would meet his end there in a gruesome manner after being locked up in an incredibly small cage in which he could not move an inch). Hakuseki questioned him there with the assistance of Gen'emon. He remained in Tokyo for two months. It was in this period that Hakuseki must have collected the bulk of the material which he would later work into his *Seiyō kibun* (1715), a manuscript which contains some critical views about Christendom. On his journey home, Gen'emon met Menssingh in Osaka on 3 March, 1710, and informed him about the conversations between Hakuseki and Sidotti (NFJ 121 (1710), 5).

That Hakuseki's interest was not confined to religion can be deduced from his meetings with Lardijn. In November 1710, the bookkeeper Jacob Nentwig completed a Japanese map of the world by adding the names of the countries and cities at the request of the governor of Nagasaki (NFJ 122 (1711), 8). Not long afterwards, the governor visited Deshima accompanied by a student of cartography and, according to the chief, N.J. van Hoorn, the student asked all sorts of "stupid" questions about a fifth continent, as if four were not enough in his opinion! (NFJ 122 (1711), 8). The world map was forwarded to Tokyo as a present for the Shogun. Now Hakuseki really had the bit between his teeth and, when Lardijn was escorted to Tokyo by Gen'emon in 1712, he poured forth a stream of questions about cartography, geography and Dutch paintings. The information which Hakuseki extracted from Lardijn found its way into a new manuscript, *Sairan Igen*, the first scientifically based book about the geography of the world in Japanese. More information found a place in his manuscripts *On Dutch Matters* (*Oranda Kiji*) and *Description of the Natural Features of Holland* (*Oranda Fudoki*). Although these only appeared in print at the end of the Tokugawa period, they were initially eagerly devoured in manuscript form, stimulating the further development of Dutch Studies.

At the request of Hakuseki, Gen'emon also transcribed a list of 300 Dutch words in the *katagana* syllabary. Japanese interest in Dutch books about botany, medicine and military science was almost certainly larger in this period than has hitherto been thought; the manuscripts just mentioned are proof of this. Hakuseki was in the position to legitimate the study of the West and he must have stimulated other scholars to follow the path of Rangaku. Hakuseki's interest encompassed everything to do with the Dutch and the Netherlands and also unquestionably medicine as, for instance, he allowed his son's stiff knee to be examined by the physician Willem Wagemans whom he asked if the problem could be cured. Wagemans diagnosed the problem and prescribed medicine for it (NFJ 123 (1712), 128-139). In 1716 he again showed his faith in the healing properties of Dutch medicine when he used a prescription from the Dutch physician for an ailment from which he was suffering (NFJ 126 (1716), 117).

Whereas before 1715 the emphasis in Dutch-Japanese relations had been on commerce, the accent now shifted in the direction to the transference of Western

knowledge. On the one hand, Shogun Yoshimune clung onto the tight restrictions on the export of raw materials (copper) brought in by Hakuseki in 1715 and the concomitant striving to achieve autarky. On the other, Yoshimune also shared Hakuseki's interest in Europe. Hakuseki set the tone in this new phase of Japanese-Dutch relations and, with the lifting of the ban on the importation of Western books in 1720, Yoshimune changed the official policy which ushered in the third phase of Dutch Studies (Van der Velde: 1990, ii).

Dutch Equestrianism or Oranda Bajutsu-sho

In 1719, the chief, Joan Aouwer, described Gen'emon as "the man who takes care of everything" (NFJ 129 (1719), 79). Thereafter, Gen'emon was definitely seen by both the Dutch and the Japanese as the irreplaceable intermediary between the two countries. From this time, he is invariably referred to in the diaries as Vadertje Ginnemon (Little Father Gen'emon). His status was raised to even greater heights by Yoshimune's interest in Rangaku. The Shogun sent a number of scholars to Nagasaki to study a whole gamut of wide-ranging aspects of Western knowledge. The Dutch sources devote great attention to Inomate Sositje, very probably the son of the interpreter Inomate Denbei, as well as to Mukai Gensei and Fukami Kyūdayū. The last mentioned spent the years 1722 to 1727 in Nagasaki and, during this time, on Yoshimune's behalf, he asked the Dutch chiefs about an enormous range of subjects. His questions were about practical matters such as agriculture, animal husbandry, architecture, fire-engines, foodstuffs, forestry and navigation as well as covering more theoretical realms such as astronomy, the calendar, geography, geometry, legislation, mathematics, religion and state institutions. The barrage of questions launched by Kyūdayū, who was an intelligent man according to Chief Merchant De Hartog, must have made huge demands on Gen'emon's time (NFJ 136 (1726), 51).

After his return to Tokyo, Kyūdayū was appointed Shogunal librarian (*gosho-motsu bugyō*). He would play a big role in the dissemination of Dutch Studies and until his death in 1773 continued to ask questions of any Dutchmen who happened to visit Tokyo. Notwithstanding the expansion of Dutch knowledge during the reign of Yoshimune, the first Japanese manuscripts on such theoretical subjects as linguistics and mathematics would only see the light of day at the end of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, on a less theoretical subject like equestrianism and horse-breeding there was a successful transfer of knowledge in what can be categorised as the fourth phase of Dutch Studies in which Gen'emon, just as in the first, played a central role. The driving force behind this phase was the horse-lover Yoshimune. On 19 May, 1725, Gen'emon was appointed Shogunal messenger (*goyō kata*), for

which he was given an extra emolument of 500 taels over and above his usual salary (NFJ 135 (1725), 144). His appointment as Shogunal messenger coincided with the first shipment of Persian horses to Japan on 23 July, 1725. These horses were accompanied by the German horse-master J.G. de Keijser (1796-1736) (NFJ 129 (1719), 157-158). Yoshimune was extremely impressed by the horses and, in 1727, he sent the Shogunal horse-master, Matazaemon, to Nagasaki. He remained there two years learning about Western equestrianism from Keijser in a specially constructed riding-school. Gen'emon translated all the questions Matazaemon asked Keijser, who joined his Japanese colleague when he left to return to Tokyo in 1729.

Around this time, Gen'emon was arrested for a short while on charges of corruption. The chief, Pieter Boockestein, wrote that were it not for the fact he was the Shogunal messenger, he would have been banned, the fate which befell the rest of his accomplices (NJF 139 (1729), 66-67). Boockestein signed a petition addressed to the governor of Nagasaki pleading for Gen'emon's release. We cannot say whether this had any real influence but the fact remains that Gen'emon was released a few days later. His status as a pivotal figure, who was virtually indispensable, in the relationship between Japan and the Netherlands was perhaps the principal reason that he got off so relatively lightly.

Gen'emon was ordered to accompany Keijser and Matazaemon to Tokyo and he told Boockestein that he was afraid that he would not return from the journey alive (NFJ 129 (1729), 381-381). Despite his forebodings, he did survive his long stay from October 1729 to April 1730. During this time, he was ordered to write a report recording all the knowledge he had acquired about equestrianism and equine medicine. He took the opportunity to work it into a translation from the book by Pieter Almanus van Coer Toevlugt of Heylsame, *Remedien voor alderhande Siektens en Accidenten die de Paerden Soude kunnen overkoomen* (Recourse or Healing Remedies for All Kinds of Sicknesses and Accidents Which Might Befall Horses) (1688) which Keijser had brought to Japan (Katsuyama, 1993, 253-257).

Therefore, the report is the first proven successful attempt to transfer Western knowledge, in this case about equestrianism and related matters, because after its appearance horse-breeding techniques in Japan improved out of sight (Seiichi: 1990). In 1736 his book about Dutch equestrianism (*Oranda Bajutsu-sho*), an expanded version of his 1729 manuscript, appeared. This can be seen as the apotheosis of the career of a man who, in his youth as Kaempfer's assistant, had played a great part in the transfer of knowledge about Japan and in his later years as a man who was pivotal as the founder and mediator of Dutch Studies.

After his death in 1736, nobody could fill the gap he left behind. Thereafter the chiefs constantly complained about the deficiencies shown by the interpreters in their mastery of Dutch. The interpreter Chūjirō, who was in Tokyo with Gen'emon and Keijser, wished that he could have had just a little of Gen'emon's knowledge

今村源右衛門英生

P・G・E・I・J・ファン・デル・フェルデ

1736年9月22日（元文元年8月18日）、長崎のオランダ商館長ベルナルドゥス・コープ・ア・フルーン Bernardus Coop & Groenは商館日記にこう記した。「將軍御用方大通詞源右衛門、本日死去」。この短文の裏に、日蘭の文化交流の最も重要な担い手の1人であった男の生涯が隠れている。今村源右衛門英生（1671-1736）は阿蘭陀通詞の家に生まれた。幼少の時から出島に出入りし、そこで初めてオランダ語を耳にし

て、まもなく読み書きの両方を身につけた。1690（元禄3）年から1692（元禄5）年まで出島在勤の医師エンゲルベルト・ケンペル Engelbert Kaempfer も、源右衛門が助手となったときにその能力を認めた。源右衛門は、後に2世紀以上にわたり日本に関する基本文献となるケンペルの『日本誌』の資料収集に、貴重な役を果たしたのである。

源右衛門は見るうちに大通詞の地位に上り詰め、西洋における日

本像の形成のみならず、日本に西洋を紹介する上でも重要な役割を果たした。政治家の新井白石が、1708（宝永5）年に日本に潜入したイエズス会のイタリア人シドッティ Giovanni Battista Sidotti を尋問した際や、1712（正徳2）年にオランダ商館長ラルディン Cornelis Lardijn から聴取した際にも、源右衛門は特別に通訳を務めた。白石はその会話を元に、19世紀まで日本人の西洋像に影響を持ったオランダと西洋に関する2著『西洋紀聞』『采覧異言』を著した。

1725（享保10）年、將軍吉宗は源右衛門を御用方に起用し、彼の特異な地位は公に認められた。吉宗は西洋の知識に非常に興味を持っており、とりわけ馬術に関心があった。そのため源右衛門は、1726年から1735（享保20）年に吉宗のもとに幾度か滞在したドイツ人馬術師ケイゼル Johan Georg Keijser(ing)のために通訳することになった。そのころまでにはオランダ人は彼を“源右衛門親父”と呼ぶようになっていたが、彼は西洋馬術に関する書『西説伯業必携』をまとめた業績で、蘭学の祖の1人に位置づけられている。

原子爆弾の災禍を免れた源右衛門の墓所は、18世紀における日蘭の知識の伝播における彼の数多くの功績を歴史的に認めたもので、両国の史跡とされるにふさわしいものであろう。



今村源右衛門英生肖像（今村英明氏提供）

Figure 2. Summary of this article in Japanese. Source: Japanese Edition of *Bridging the Divide. 400 Years The Netherlands-Japan*. 2000. Edited by Blussé, Leonard, Rummelink, Willem and Smits Ivo. Hotei Publishing. Photo Cindy Bakker.

(NFJ 145 (1735), 203). His passing ushered in a fifth, fairly passive phase in Dutch Studies in which Kyūdayū, who was referred to earlier, carried the torch and also formed a bridge to the sixth period in which the knowledge acquired about Dutch Studies in all fields was expanded. The interpreters played barely any role in this. When Gen'emon died on 22 September, 1736, the incumbent chief, Bernardus Coop à Groen, confined himself to the business-like statement: "Also today the Imperial messenger Ginnemon died" (NFJ 146 (1736), 166). Not the most eloquent eulogy.

Rangaku's New Time Sequence

In his book *Rangaku no sō Imamura Eisei*, which was published in 1942, Akutisna Imamura, a direct descendant of Gen'emon, proposed that his ancestor should be considered the founder of Dutch Studies (Imamura: 1942). He based his claim on the family records at his disposal and on research in the diaries. This proposition has never generated much response because the commencement of the "real" Dutch Studies has always been placed in the second half of the eighteenth century and what had preceded this was regarded as trivial (Jiro 1992: 52).

In this article, I advocate a more nuanced view of Dutch Studies. I put their initial period at the end of the seventeenth century and argue that Gen'emon should be acknowledged as their founder. Later came a phase in which he acquired a powerful ally in the advisor to the Shoguns Ienobu and Ietsugu, the scholar Arai Hakuseki, who systematically collected knowledge about the West which he committed to paper in a number of extremely influential manuscripts. The third phase was that in which Shogun Yoshimune gave his blessing to Dutch Studies and partially lifted the ban on the importation of Western books in 1720. He also sent Japanese scholars to Deshima to acquaint themselves with all aspects of Western knowledge. During the fourth phase, Yoshimune focused on equestrianism and horse-breeding, initiating the first concrete transference of Western knowledge, producing better-bred horses in Japan and a publication about Dutch equestrianism by Little Father Gen'emon, which appeared first in manuscript form in 1729 and was only published in the year of his death 1736. The phase which followed, the fifth, can be classified as a passive time in which little was done with Dutch Studies. It was only after 1770 that Dutch lessons were given to Japanese scholars on Deshima and work was begun on a Japanese-Dutch dictionary, marking the beginning of the sixth phase (Van der Velde 1996: 301-5). Gen'emon's wordlist containing 300 entries, compiled sixty years earlier, provided the basis. It is safe to say that, without Gen'emon's profound interest in Western knowledge and without his flawless mastery of the Dutch language, the history of Dutch Studies would have had a completely different complexion.

I would like to thank Jorg Smeisser and Matthias Forrer for the useful information they provided me on aspects of Japanese manuscripts and handwriting.

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Janis Reijnhout (1816-1870) laid to rest in the Dutch cemetery in Nagasaki with a Dutch-Japanese inscription

From 1641 to 1853 Deshima, the Dutch trading-post in Nagasaki Bay, was the place at which trade between the United Dutch East India Company (VOC), and later the Dutch government, and Japan converged. The first period, roughly up to 1700, was its heyday. As time passed, the importance of trade began to recede and the emphasis shifted towards greater attention being paid to the transference of Western science and knowledge, referred to as *rangaku* (Dutch sciences) in Japanese. This knowledge formed the foundation which allowed Japan to develop into an industrial power much more quickly than other Asian nations and, by the end of the nineteenth century, allowed it to take its place on an equal footing with Western powers. Both periods are graphically illustrated in the *Deshima Diaries* (*Deshima Dagregisters*) compiled by the heads of the trading-post on Deshima. In their entirety they cover over 35,000 pages and a complete set is preserved in the National Archive in The Hague.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 2000. "Janis Reijnhout (1816-1870). Goesenaar vrijt zich een grafsteen". *Zeeuws Tijdschrift* 50-3. 26-28. Translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop.

From 1987 up to the present, on the initiative of and under the guidance of Leonard Blussé, these texts have been made completely accessible and provided with an English summary and indexes on the contents by Ton Vermeulen, Cynthia Viallé and the present writer. They tell a fascinating story and are the only foreign source about Japan in the *Sakaku* or "closed door" period (1633-1853) when the Tokugawa Shogunate closed Japan off from the outside world. The British writer David Mitchell has made adroit use of these sources to produce the thrilling novel *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*. Nobody should be surprised that the book abounds in historical inaccuracies, after all this is more of an advantage than a disadvantage in fiction.

Cross Street

After 1853, the year of the so-called opening of Japan by the Americans, which, contrary to general opinion, only occurred because the Japanese actually wanted it with the Dutch playing a big role behind the scenes facilitating it, all Western powers gained entry to Japan and legations were established in Osaka. The Dutch remained on Deshima until 1859, after which their post was demoted to a consulate and the Dutch legation also departed to Osaka. Thereafter Deshima suffered an era of decline and in 1899 the remaining extra-territorial rights were rescinded,

although a Dutch consulate was maintained there until 1940. This foreign “alien” presence in Nagasaki has never failed to excite the curiosity of the Japanese.

For decades the city of Nagasaki has been endeavouring to restore Deshima as close as possible to its original state. The project is now pretty much complete and has become a real tourist attraction. The majority of the visitors are from Japan, and combine it with an excursion to the neighbouring theme park “Huis ten Bosch”, in which a selection of Dutch buildings, like the tower of Utrecht cathedral, have been replicated. When Kees Slager, my wife Marianne Perdaen and I visited Deshima in connection with the VPRO radio programme “The Honourable Company” in 1995, this was still an ambition waiting to be realised (<https://itunes.apple.com/nl/podcast/het-spoor-ters-ug-de-loffelijcke-compagnie>). Then the circumference of the small fan-shaped island (about as big as Dam Square in Amsterdam) was outlined with rough iron nails and apartment blocks covered the site of the living quarters and warehouses of the VOC.

In 2017 it once more became possible to stroll through Deshima’s only street (although there was also a side-alley about two-thirds of the way along this street) and to imagine oneself transported back in time. It was only later I realised that, from a bird’s eye perspective (from the surrounding hills), this formed a cross, once the most hated symbol in Japan. Once a year the inhabitants of Nagasaki were obliged to participate in the “trampling on the crucifix” (fumi-e) ceremony. By forcing them to do so, the authorities thought they would be able to identify adherents of the Roman Catholic faith whom they believed would never dare to stand on this most holy of symbols. In this they were disappointed because a forgiving God was prepared to turn a blind eye to this transgression.

The Dutch Cemetery at Inasa

There are more reminders of the Dutch presence in Nagasaki. The VPRO team went into the hills around Nagasaki with a guide and it was not long before we found ourselves standing at the entrance to the Hollandsche Begraafplaats (Dutch cemetery) in the Inasa quarter. Most of the forty or so small tombstones are heavily weathered and their inscriptions are barely legible. However, the inscription on one headstone in the shelter of the cemetery wall turns out to have survived the rigours of time remarkably well. It is that of the man from the town of Goes in the province of Zeeland, Janis Reijnhout. Our emotions upon seeing this ultimate sign of life were all the more intense by the consciousness that his grave, cynically enough, had even survived the atom bomb attack on Nagasaki on 9 August, 1945.

The cemetery was located on the “good” side of the hill. The inscription is perfectly legible: “Here lies James Reijnhoud born in Goes in Zeeland 1816 died in Nagasaki 24 January 1870”. After returning from our trip, I made my way to the



Figure 3. Japanese inscription on the tombstone of Janis Reijnhout at the Dutch cemetery in Nagasaki. Photo Cindy Bakker. In translation the Japanese text reads as follows: “Set up by Yatsuhashi from the Ofujiya (a Nagasaki brothel) in the third year of the Meiji reign, the Year of the Horse, the second month, the thirteenth day (13 February 1870)”.

municipal archives in Goes. From the register of births, I discovered that “James Reinhoud” was born on 19 December 1816 at one o’clock in the morning as the son of twenty-two-year-old Jan Reijnhout and the four-year older Pieterella Tiessen. Jan’s occupation is noted as “deck-hand”. He gave his son the name Janis (therefore neither James, Janus or Janes). Although this was the sum total of what I could find out about the Reijnhouts in Goes, there must be more to be discovered about Janis in the Dutch Consular Archives.

Erected by Yatsuhashi

These archives revealed that Janis Reijnhout was a chip off the old block. In 1863 he arrived in Nagasaki on the bark *F. van Dambenoy* as a sail maker. He was then forty-seven years old. As far as it has been possible to discover, this was his first visit to Japan. Reinhout’s job on Deshima is variously described as constable or guard. There were also a couple of years in which he was unemployed and, in this period, he regularly acted as witness for the Dutch notary at the signing of Dutch official documents. It is not very likely that much more about Reijnhout and his life on Deshima will ever be found but, perhaps, there is still material about him lurking in the archive of the Ministry for the Colonies in the National Archive in The Hague or indeed in Japanese archives.

We can also discover more about him by studying his tombstone. Extremely intriguing and actually unique is the rather inconspicuous Japanese inscription on the left side of Reijnhout’s stone. Translated it reads: “Set up by Yatsuhashi from the Ofujiya (a Nagasaki brothel) in the third year of the Meiji reign, the Year of

the Horse, the second month, the thirteenth day”, (the equivalent to 13 February 1870 in the Western calendar). Obviously, Yatsushashi wasted no time because the grey stone headstone was raised just three weeks after Janis’s death. The historian Brian Burke-Gaffney, who worked in the international affairs section of the city of Nagasaki in the 1990s and was put in charge of research into the local tombstones of foreigners, sent me his written explanation of this unique occurrence: “Nothing is known about his [Reijnhout’s] relationship with the woman [Yatsushashi] who erected his gravestone. Yatsushashi was a courtesan who worked in the brothel Ofujiya. As you know, virtually all intimate contact between European men and Japanese women at this time took place in or through the auspices of brothels. My guess is that Reijnhout was one of Yatsuhashi’s regular patrons and that he gave her his savings when he died. This is not a very romantic interpretation, but I think it is the most realistic” (Archive Vortex. Correspondence Deshima). These are the words of Burke-Gaffney, a Briton who did not consider the erection of a tombstone for a Dutchman by Yatsushashi in any way exceptional, even though there is no other known example of a Dutch-Japanese inscription on a headstone.

Through Japan in the Time Machine

The same cannot be said for the Dutch writer and essayist Rudy Kousbroek who devoted one whole page to our man from Goes in his *In de tijdmaschine door Japan. De hofreis van het jaar 2000* [Through Japan in a Time Machine: The Court Journey of the Year 2000] (Kousbroek 2002: 69). Hans Keller devoted quite a bit of time to the stone in his documentary of the same name (Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid/ Dutch Institute for Image and Sound). Apparently Kousbroek had wondered what lurked behind the Japanese inscription during an earlier court journey he had made in 1972. “Was Janes (Janis/PvdV) such a passionate lover and Yatsushashi so much in love with him, that she raised a monument to him when he died?” (Kousbroek 2002: 69). Kousbroek speculated that perhaps Reijnhout had succumbed in the brothel while making love and hence the brothel felt an obligation to pay for his gravestone. That our man from Zeeland passed away in Ofujiya is a pure figment of the imagination. The owner of the brothel would not have felt obliged to erect headstones for loyal patrons. Furthermore, in that period it was not usual to erect a headstone for everyone who died; certainly not for the foreign clients of Japanese pimps. Quite the opposite in fact, they were the preserve of the rich and powerful. Hundreds of Dutch sailors died within sight of Deshima in the more than two hundred years in which the Dutch trading-station was up and running, but one must search in vain for their tombstones. They were either unceremoniously buried in the ground or dumped overboard.

Nagasaki Express

Kousbroek gathered more information about Reijnhout in the course of his 2000 court journey. He extracted an article from the *Nagasaki Express* in which it was reported that “Mr. Reijnhout, the Deshima Constable” had fallen off a cliff (*Nagasaki Express*: 29 January 1870). The Dutch businessman J.J. van der Pol, who was living on Deshima around the same time as Reijnhout, noted under this miscellaneous piece of information – printed in the margins of the newspaper – that Reijnhout had not toppled off a cliff. He castigated the journalist of the *Nagasaki Express* saying that he could easily have found out about the true cause of Reijnhout’s death, which he claimed was common knowledge. After all, Deshima was a small village.

However, Van der Pol neglected to mention the true cause in the margin, giving Kousbroek the opportunity to come up with an inimitable reason. “Was this (the remark by Van der Pol/PvdV) an – unsuccessful – attempt to save the honor of Janus [sic] Reijnhout, to give him his real name? If this is true, is the hypothesis of a death by passion in Yatsuashi’s arms the correct one?” (Kousbroek 2002: 69). In my opinion it is not an attempt, successful or unsuccessful, by Van der Pol to preserve Reijnhout’s honor. It was simply a reproof addressed to the *Nagasaki Express* journalist. Nor is it proof of Kousbroek’s hypothesis of Reijnhout’s death by passion in the arms of Yatsuhashi.

Hence, we have to leave the speculative domain of the essayist and turn to the sober reality of the Dutch Consular Archive in which the cause of death is recorded on a notarial certificate. “On the twenty-fifth of January 1870 [not the 24th as engraved on the tombstone/PvdV] around four o’clock in the afternoon on Deshima died Janis Reijnhout as the result of concussion occasioned by a fall. His profession, place of birth, age and parents, married or unmarried unknown to those present” (National Archive). It seems highly probable that Janus had fallen and made an unfortunate landing. From later documents of the Dutch Legation in Japan to the Foreign Ministry we can find out more, namely that: “Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to discover from the documents that the little which was left by the deceased (Reijnhout) has been designated to defray his funeral expenses and the settling of a few debts, leaving nothing for any beneficiaries” (National Archive, Notarial deeds).

Piercing Blue Eyes

This allows us to draw the conclusion that it was not the pimps of the Ofujia brothel who paid for his funeral but Reijnhout himself. It is no longer possible to discover whether he owed the brothel money. If this was in fact the case, it will have been

settled. It is certain that Yatsuhashi did pay for the tombstone – whether or not with money which she had received from Janis – because not everybody can have an inscription engraved on a tombstone and the implication is that she and Janis enjoyed a close bond. In other words, Reijnhout was more to Yatsuhashi than a client. As did so many other Dutchmen before him, during his time on Deshima he had a steady girlfriend, referred to in the *Deshima Dagregisters* as *huisvrouw* (housewife) which had more or less the same meaning as spouse. This makes her inscription on the tombstone much more understandable. Whether she would be buried beside him or not, she wanted it to be absolutely clear that she belonged to Janis and vice versa.

Perhaps the fact she had the name of her place of employment (the Ofujiya brothel) carved on it might seem surprising to a Western way of thinking but this would be making a wrong assumption. The profession of courtesan was (and is) an honorable one in Japan. Because of their relatively high incomes since the advent of the Dutch presence on Deshima, these housewives had grown into an influential group in Nagasaki society. Through their intimate relationship, via their *pillow talk*, they will have acquired some knowledge of the Dutch language which will have exerted influence on the dissemination of Western knowledge in Japan. The influence of these ladies, who often bore children with piercing blue eyes, offers a promising challenge to undertake far more in-depth research. Although no one has yet accepted this, it will be sure to yield fascinating results. Because the Dutch cemetery was declared a historical landmark in the 1990s, the names of the Japanese housewife and her sail maker from Goes will remain united on his tombstone for eternity. Hence, this gravestone can be seen as a silent witness of the love which Janis and Yatsuhashi cherished for each other and a unique monument to the intimate relations between Japan and the Netherlands during the last four hundred years.

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