

SECRET DIARY KEPT BY OPPERHOOFD ISAAC TITSINGH* 1782 - 1783

1782

Although I wrote to the best of my knowledge of the inconveniences which sending only one ship every other year would create when I replied to the question what my considerations were of trading with three ships every two years, I could never have foreseen that this would have had such detrimental effects on all the inhabitants of Nagasaki, as these have become manifest to me.

The governor's concern, which showed itself first in the checking of our books, and subsequently in the incessant praying for three days in the temples with the promise of large rewards if the prayers were answered, and the lamentations of the whole city, urged me to try every possible means to bring about some improvement in trade from these events. Thus, when the governor asked me for the reason for the non-arrival of the ships, I gave him such answers as are extensively noted in the diary of the year 1782 under 17, 18 September, and 23 October. Furthermore, I candidly told all Japanese who have access to our island, that the losses the Company is suffering on its trade at present are forcing it to take less interest in trade with this empire, being assured that this would spread around the city and would reach the ears of the lords' attendants who have their domicile here, which then could not be kept a secret from Court. This has been proved true.

3 December

On behalf of the governor, *Onderrapporteur* Jūbei came to inform me of his proposal to grant the Company a larger quota of copper in future, if the Company would bring all such goods as the *Geldkamer* demanded for next year, in reply to which I offered the governor the following document on the 10th.

10 December

[Titsingh is willing to accept the proposal if the Company's trade will benefit, but there are several difficulties which have to be resolved first, namely:]

1. The acceptance of a larger quota of bar-copper.

2. The prices of the imports.
3. The impossibility of being able to supply the demands in full or in part in the very next year.

I do not have to bring to Your Honour's attention the vexations which the Company has had to suffer here since its removal from Hirado, how it has been burdened by the compulsory *taxatiehandel*, by the debasing of the *koban*, by the fixed export of bar-copper, and the lowering of the prices of its commodities by the so-called *shogunal Geldkamer*, vexations to which our papers have born witness all too well ever since the year 1641, and they would probably increase even today, if it were not for the fact that the Japanese are convinced that they have pushed the Company to the brink and that the slightest endeavour in that direction would be followed by our immediate departure, and they foresee that this will lead to the fall of Nagasaki and their own ruin. I shall only remind Your Honour of the contract that was made by *Opperhoofd* [Hendrik van] Homoed in 1751, granting the Company an annual export of 11,000 piculs of bar-copper, which the *Geldkamer* adhered to so shamelessly that in 1764 we were given notice of being allowed to export only 8,000 piculs from that year on. This forced the Company to decrease its trade to make the costs more bearable and to send three ships every two years, for that is enough to carry this quantity. The examples of the years 1765 and 1767 made the Japanese fear that this project would be persisted with, and this made them consider that, if the single ship which would be sent every other year were to perish, they would miss out on the substantial profits on our cargoes, the customary gifts, and the necessary ballast for the junks. They decided to grant an increase of one thousand piculs and subsequently a quantity of 700 piculs in private trade, which they desired to have noted as an acknowledgement of the customary obeisance, although only one ship had come to trade, and it was indeed to induce the Company to send two ships every year and thus to have their affairs put in less jeopardy.

As it appears from the aforementioned that we are well aware of the manner in which we are being treated, I shall deal more candidly with Your Honour, leaving it up to Your Honour to turn it to account in time.

* This diary has no marginal notes. We have translated the full text.

1. Bar-copper is an important commodity for the Company in the factories in India; the people there cannot do without it. This has occasioned the requests emphatically made every year by the *opperhoofden*, but the *Geldkamer* has deemed it more to its advantage to deal with the Chinese, and having too great a conception of our profits, thought it could treat us at its own discretion without considering the consequences, and curtail our export from time to time as seemed to best suit its interests. The Company thus being unable to satisfactorily supply the orders of the factories and the western nations annually, sought another way to obtain copper, and they found it in copper from Sweden, and although it is a long way from being up to the standard of the Japanese, the low price and inescapable need induced the Company to ignore its lesser quality. From that time, it has been attempted to improve the copper that is imported there from different countries, and for some years this has been successful with the Hungarian copper, and now the Company is experiencing the unpleasant consequences in the sense that the Coromandel Coast, where the largest quantity of copper was sold annually, has not demanded one picul from Batavia in 1780, and therefore a substantial quantity has remained in the warehouses and the Company not only loses the profits it used to make, but is burdened as well with the interest on the capital invested, which the Japanese could have prevented by listening to our representations and by enabling us to take the wind out of our competitors' sails by granting us a larger quota. Because nowadays a large quantity of copper is annually imported from Europe — which can be bought at a lower price than the bar-copper — and because the Company cannot lower the present price without incurring heavy losses on the trade with this empire, it is not able to sell its copper, unless it is willing to lower its price and is also enabled by a larger export from here to trade there in such a quantity of bar-copper — which at a more moderate price will always be valued more highly than the European kind — as is needed to supply the demand of those peoples. But to that end it is necessary:

2. That the *Geldkamer* pays a price for the imports that is commensurate with the excessive profits it is making on them. This will meet the Company to some extent in the heavy costs which it has to bear here. For the price at present is so low that, if it is calculated accurately, the Company loses a lot, even on the cost price. Sugar, one of the most important commodities in this empire, has been calculated according to the Japanese price, but in all Indian factories and in the Persian Gulf it sells for 10 taels per picul. Pepper is sometimes sold to the Chinese in Batavia as a special favour for 17 or 18 taels per picul, while tin made 38 Japanese taels per picul in China in 1780. To persuade Yourself of the truth of all of this, Your Honour can have inquiries made in that empire when the junks depart. As with

these three articles, which are annually imported in abundance, the same is the case with the silk and woollen fabrics which are especially demanded for Japan from the Coromandel Coast and Bengal, as well as from the Netherlands. Therefore, Your Honour can deduce for Yourself that if no other agreement on the trade is struck, the Company will deem it inadvisable to continue trade with this empire any longer and I am not in the position to lend my ear to any contract of that nature, unless it is based on an increase in the prices for the imports.

3. I am not authorized to commit the Company to promptly supplying all such commodities as the *Geldkamer* may demand for next year on the departure of the ships, for that demand is indeterminate and it depends on more or less sales in this empire, and thus the Company is on an unsteady footing and cannot order a substantial quantity of goods from elsewhere, with which it would be saddled, if they were not needed here; and secondly, because the ships which are sent to transport those commodities sometimes perish, we would be left without them altogether, also because ample time has to be allowed for the ordering of the silk and woollen fabrics in the Indies as well as in Europe. Therefore, to make this proposition palatable for the High Government of the Indies, it is necessary to agree to the following five points:

1. The *Geldkamer* will fix a price increase on all imported commodities, and will also accept 20,000 cattles of prime quality cloves annually, for which I shall commit the Company to importing as much sugar, tin, sapanwood, ducats, lead, and other commodities as are needed.

2. The export of bar-copper will be augmented and will be fixed in perpetuity, and no changes may be brought about by the arrival of a few more junks or the pretence of scarcity.

3. The commodities which the *Geldkamer* will demand on departure of the ships will be carried hither in the second year, insofar as they are to be imported from India and are not available in Batavia, and in the third year insofar as they have to be imported from the Netherlands, in order that the Company is given ample time to order them in the required quality and quantity.

4. If it should happen that the Company is not able to supply in part or in full the commodities requested for that year due to the loss of its ships or other misfortunes which cannot be foreseen, and gives sound reasons for what had caused this, this will not bring about the least change in the fixed export of bar-copper, on the understanding that what is short will be satisfied with one of the articles most in demand.

5. The *Geldkamer* will not decrease the price of any commodity on the pretence of poor quality, unless we ourselves are convinced of the truth of this, and we shall give full satisfaction in which case we are free to accept the prices offered or to return the commodities to Batavia, but when they are import-

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ed again and are of good quality, the former price will hold.

If agreement is reached on all these points, on which the whole further trade of the Company with this empire rests, two contracts need to be drawn up containing the aforementioned points in clear terms to prevent any arguments, and these contracts have to be signed and stamped by Your Honour and the *Geldkamer* on the one hand and by me, on behalf of the Company, on the other, awaiting the approval of the High Government of the Indies.

Although in former times we have always been urged most strongly to secure a greater quantity of copper, Your Honours' secret letter of 24 June 1781 advising me not to seek a greater quantity because of the decreasing sales and the large quantities of unsold stock made me reluctant to request a larger quota, the more so because this greater allowance rests on the fulfilling of the *Geldkamer's* orders for next year, which not only depends on their whims but, because it is impossible always to meet their demands, we are also subject to their caprice in the delivery of copper. Therefore, I deemed it more opportune to give this reply, which is a conditional contract and can always be adjusted on the arrival of the ships in such a manner as Your letter indicates would best serve the interests of the Company.

On 17 December the said *rapporteur* came to inform me that my document had been translated and presented, and the secretary had told him that the consequences of this affair were too great and that the governor was not empowered to decide on the price increase, for this was decided by the *Geldkamer* and the shogunal *Rekenkamer* in Edo, and therefore he could not enter into such a contract on his own authority. However, he was willing to present the necessary expositions on his return to Court.

He also told me how all officials in Nagasaki, including the shogunal intendant, the *stadsburgemeesters*, officials of the *Geldkamer*, yea, everyone who has a living from the Shogun had only enjoyed three-fifths of their usual income, and the huge expenses for the upkeep of their households have caused many to die from deprivation. The prisons were stuffed with criminals and the complaints from the community were increasing to such an extent that it is to be feared that, unless appropriate action is taken, this winter will be one of fire and murder, for Nagasaki will of necessity collapse in ruins because of a shortage in foreign trade, for apart from our commodities, there is nothing here to draw the people from other regions.

During those same days, on behalf of the shogunal accountant, Senior Interpreter Kōsaku proposed that I send for shipwrights, helmsmen, and boat-swains to teach the Japanese the construction and navigation of our ships. I had His Honour informed that the staying away of our ships was proof that

our state was embroiled in a great war and therefore all shipwrights who could be found in the Netherlands and in the Indies were employed in the construction of warships, which made it impossible for the Company to acquiesce in this proposal, however much it likes to oblige the Shogun. If it pleased the Shogun to approve that, on the arrival of the ships, a hundred Japanese, who are considered to possess the necessary abilities and can be taught these crafts, be sent to Batavia, I would undertake to ensure that the High Government of the Indies divide them over our shipyards and teach them all that pertains to shipping and, when they are proficient, send them back. I was well aware of the prohibition of Shogun Yoshimune* of 1635, but the troubles at that time and their fear of the spread of the Roman faith had given cause for that, and since that time they had become more civilized and this empire had enjoyed peace for so many years that one should not now be afraid to leave, for, when upholding a law, one should always keep in mind what advantage or disadvantage one extracts from persisting with it. On his departure he promised to present my answer in this way.

23 December

The governor had me informed that the Chinese had brought him tidings that this year no ships had arrived in Canton, and the rumour was doing the rounds that everything was in uproar throughout the Indies and near Batavia a great war was being waged. I had His Honour thanked and let him know that I did not doubt the rumour about the war, but that one could not rely on the accounts of the Chinese, for nations other than the Dutch, French, and English send ships to that empire, and it is not likely that they are impeded in their trade because of our difficulties.

1783

27 January

Today I sent a letter in duplicate to Mr [Cornelis] Van Heijligendorp with the departing junks. Because of the high price of rice, I requested the governor for some from the shogunal warehouses, which he refused, but I am sure that the interpreters have not even proposed it to him.

24 February

I have not heard anything of the negotiations on the price increases since the arrival of the junks. Kōsaku informs me that he has reported to the shogunal accountant and his answer was that he fully understood the reason for my refusal, but that the proposed means was of the highest importance and he did not think that the Shogun would acquiesce in

* Sic. The Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu.

it — the main reason being that the Shogun has little sense and is wholly guided by his uncle, Senior Councillor Tanuma Tonomo-no-kami, who is held in low esteem by the Japanese — although the most sensible among them complain bitterly about their unhappy condition, and if that prohibition were to be lifted, it would be very easy for me to engage 20,000 men within a month, if it were made known throughout the whole empire. However, it seems that people are giving more and more thought to their condition, and everyone expects that if the present crown prince, who is engaged to the daughter of the Lord of Satsuma, should eventually rule, a change for the better will occur because of his father-in-law's instruction.

1 March

The governor had Junior Interpreter Jūbei propose that I have bird's nests imported from Batavia to serve as return cargo for the Chinese junks over here. I had His Honour informed that bird's nests rise excessively in price on the departure of the junks from Batavia, and the Chinese had exported them at 1,700 rixdollars a picul in 1781. Therefore, it would be necessary to set the condition beforehand that — this product being of great importance — if it was imported in a fair quantity, the fixed tax of 300,000 taels for the trade would be insufficient, if the aforementioned contract was accepted. Moreover, the governor would have to commit himself to issuing such strict laws against stealing that we would not be in danger of suffering any loss, for otherwise the whole trade would disappear. To engage his trust, I also showed him the return of the trade of 1781, with the request that he bring to the governor's attention how much the Company had lost, and I also allowed him to copy the loss that had been made on the commodities of each factory, taking care to turn two pages together when we came to the products from Amboina. He returned to the city highly satisfied, assuring me most emphatically that he would give a fair account of this affair to the governor, for he had always doubted the truth of our declarations and had thought that it was in the nature of all merchants to complain.

2 March

In answer to the governor's proposal to export Chinese satin, silk *pansjes*, and gold bullion in return for bird's nests, I declared that the Company itself traded with China and imported a sufficient quantity of these commodities in Batavia, and that His Honour could understand that it was cheaper to receive it first-hand than if it also went through the hands of the *Geldkamer*; one could also not rely on the grade of the Chinese gold and we would be forced to employ an assayer, which would increase the costs of this factory too much. Thus I could not accept this proposal unless a price was fixed for the

bird's nests as well as for the Chinese satin, *pansjes*, and gold beforehand, and the approval of the High Government of the Indies was also required. I also asked him about the results of yesterday and he told me that the secretary had copied his notes and had promised to show them to the governor, and he did not doubt that His Honour would bring about an improvement in trade.

8 March

Today all rice merchants have been summoned to Government House so that the reason for the high price can be determined. The interpreters assure me that not enough rice is grown along the whole of the *korte landweg* to feed all inhabitants, and the major part is coming from other provinces. The people of the Ryūkyū Islands, who export a large quantity to Satsuma every year, have imported rice from thence this year, due to a poor harvest. There is no shortage of rice, but the high price is caused by the fear of the lords that, because our ships do not come, a hard fought war is being waged in the Indies in which Japan might take part at some time, which made them keep the rice in their warehouses so as to be able to wage war. Although this reason seems ridiculous to us, it is nonetheless true: each lord has warehouses for money and for rice in order to be able to bear the costs of a war, and he will never touch the money that has been set aside for that purpose, which is clearly shown by the Lord of Chikuzen, who has a powerful domain which is burdened with debts, but he prefers paying a high interest to using the funds in his warehouses.

The main reason for the high price in Nagasaki is that it relies on the foreign trade and does not produce anything itself and thus it is only frequented by barges coming from all parts of the empire for the imported commodities. These barges bring a cargo of rice and coal, and the skipper is happy if he makes 200 taels thereon, which serves to pay his crew and for the upkeep on the outward and homeward journey. His profits are derived from what he gains for the transport of the commodities. Because our ships have not sailed hither and few junks have come to trade, few barges have also arrived and of those few three, which were fully loaded, sank in the storm on 26 September. This causes the price of rice to rise by the day and the misery of the townspeople increases steadily. The complaints about the abject poverty and the hardship in the city are incredible, and this has forced the governor to send thirty thousand taels to Shimonoseki on the 15th of April for the procurement of rice.

26 April

I am told as true that, when Governor Nagato-nokami arrived in Edo, he was in such fear of disapproval of his government that he entered the castle without requesting permission first and only with

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the greatest difficulty could his patrons restrain him from cutting open his belly, and he had to relinquish two-thirds of his treasures. This shows how the Government in Edo has received adequate information on the situation in Nagasaki.

12 May

The governor has shared out three thousand bales of rice, which he paid for out of his own pocket, among the poor in the space of 10 days. From the highest to the lowest, the people here love him as a father and sometimes he has the pleasure of hearing words to that effect when he crosses the city by night accompanied by just one servant to listen to the complaints of the people.

3 July

One of the shogunal senior accountants has arrived from Edo to take account of the *Geldkamer* and he has also been ordered to investigate the reason for the non-arrival of the ships and the junks. Everyone in Nagasaki can tell him this, and I hope to be able to contribute my share when the opportunity arises.

20 August

I was summoned to Government House. On behalf of the governor, I was asked for the true reason why this year and last year no ships arrived. When he was busy translating, the interpreter let slip that I had said last year that the war was the only cause, which I denied at once in such a way that the secretaries were clearly aware of my displeasure. I replied that the non-arrival of the ships could partly be attributed to the war, but mainly to the loss on the trade, which was apparent from the fact that the Company had been engaged in wars several times before but had still sent ships hither every year, and that letters had also arrived from Europe which told us to decrease the trade with this empire because, in spite of all remonstrations, no improvement had been achieved. The High Government of the Indies was also displeased about the degrading treatment which its *opperhoofden* had to suffer, which shed an unfavourable light on the degree of civilization of the Japanese, for its highest representatives were treated with distinction everywhere else in the world, and therefore I requested the governor to attend to these matters.

They then asked me if I was expecting any ships and I answered that I was not giving up hope until the 24th, for in 1720, when also no ships had arrived the year before, this had happened.

Thirdly, they asked me if I had a shortage of provisions, to which I answered that we were making do, and that the cost of rice was the heaviest the Company had to bear and that I regretted that no favourable response had been given to my request to be granted some from the shogunal warehouses.

After all this had been presented on all fours to the governor, the reply was that I should keep my spirits up for, on the arrival of the new governor, His Honour would consult with him what could best be done for us. Then I took my leave, but not before I had taken the interpreters severely to task for their sinister translation.

Late in the afternoon someone was sent to me, who told me that on the grounds of what had happened in Government House that morning, the governor doubted if the interpreters had truthfully translated what I had said, and that His Honour will request my opinions in writing and that I should give my reply to him to offer it to the governor. I requested him to tell His Honour that we could not rely on the interpreters, not only in this case but in all others, for they only notified the governor of those things they deemed opportune, and therefore they deceived both His Honour and us. I promised to give him my reply to have it translated literally. Today the accountant decreed that, if the ships do not arrive, all who are in the service of the Shogun will receive two-fifths of their usual income. This gives rise to the fear that this winter the whole of Nagasaki will be cast into chaos.

22 August

The governor requested my opinions about the non-arrival of the ships in this and last year in writing. I handed the interpreters the following document and a copy signed by me to the governor's messenger, who translated it literally in my presence. [See the diary under this date for the text.]

24 August

Today he brought me the interpreters' translation which implies that I attributed the non-arrival of the ships to fear of pirates as I had also declared last year, and that the Company had to be embroiled in a severe war, and furthermore that I had requested an improvement in trade and that the *opperhoofden* should not be searched any longer. He told me that the governor was incensed at having been deceived in such a way, but he wanted it to be kept quiet for the moment to see what they will cook up now the ship is anchored near the shore.

28 August

Not having received a reply to the aforementioned document, I asked what the reason for this silence was. They said that the governor was most upset about the loss the Company had suffered in the western factories and he could well imagine that it had not been capable of sending a ship hither last year. His Honour could not bring about improvements in the trade, for this was a matter that depended on the *Geldkamer*, but when he arrived in Edo he would present our complaints.

That afternoon my confidant* appeared to inform me on behalf of the governor that the interpreters, who had come on the 26th to take down the news to send it to Court, gave as reasons for the non-appearance of the ships the severe war, that we no longer had factories in India, that the Great Moghul had taken Nagapatnam by surprise and that the whole of Batavia was at war.

I considered that these stories would create an unfavourable impression, for the consequences of having Haider Ali as an enemy in India were greater than having the English as enemies, and in my presence I had him translate the treaty which Governor [Reijnier] Van Vlissingen had concluded with Haider Ali, of which I had received a copy, literally, and I had him hand it to the governor. At the request of the governor I also gave him a scribbled note of the bill of lading with the request that he consider that the Company had sent this ship hither to oblige the Japanese so as not to deprive them of many essential commodities, and therefore I relied on the fairness of His Honour to accept all the goods in full. I promised that if the Company were to send ships next year it would try to fulfil the demand as best as it could, which had not been possible because of the disasters caused by the war. Furthermore, I had him request the governor to have the interpreters ask me if the Governor-General had not sent us any particular orders, for then I could inform His Honour truthfully of the opinions of the Governor-General and the Council of the Indies, and tell him in particular how the Company set little store on the Japanese trade in these times, reading to him — under promise of secrecy — from the general letter the prefatory authorized threat to leave without trading, in such a way as I deemed best, being assured that the governor would know of it within half an hour.

29 August

The governor had the *dwarsskijker* and the senior interpreters, Kōsaku and Motojirō, ask me for the reason why last year no ship, and this year only one had arrived, and if the Governor-General had sent me any particulars about this. I replied that I would draw up a document and would offer it to the *rapporteur burgemeesters* tomorrow when the bills of lading were taken up, to be offered to the governor.

30 August

After the bills of lading had been noted and the order for camphor as well, on condition that it had to be delivered in new barrels, I gave the *burgemeesters* the following document on their departure with the request to offer it to the governor after it had been translated by the interpreters. [See the diary under this date for the text.]

The same evening I had my confidant translate this document in my presence and sent him to the governor with it. I also ordered him to request the secretary to ensure that the camphor is delivered in such barrels as had been sent as a trial in 1780, for the High Government was highly displeased about the short weight last year and would otherwise abandon the order.

1 September

The discussion I had yesterday with the interpreters gave me little hope for a favourable outcome and I decided to take a different course and to impress on them their own interests, for they are completely convinced that I am fully aware of everything that concerns the desperate state of Nagasaki.

2 September

Today I sent for the *Tolken College*. After having described in so many words to them how I had tried to obtain an improvement many times, I brought to their notice that the time for thrusting their haughty pretences on me with impertinent faces had past, that I was aware of their desperate state, how each of them was up to his neck in debt, and knew of no way to save himself, and could not get any credit with the merchants, that not only their prosperity, but that of all citizens from the governor down to the lowest person depended on the arrival of the foreigners, for Nagasaki, densely populated at the moment, will fall into ruin within three years, that they also knew that I had information about many particular matters — through my confidants — about Nagasaki and the whole empire and could therefore easily surmise how important our trade was and that if we were to get serious about it, the Japanese would give in to us.

Next, I represented to Senior Interpreter Kōsaku, who will be *opperrapporteur* next year and will go on the court journey in 1785, how the interpreters derive their largest profits from the court journey through the profits they make on the remainder of the gifts and the sugar which they are granted by the *Geldkamer*, that if they in general had their prosperity at heart and he in particular, they would give credence to my words and represent to the governor: that inasmuch as it was the governor's duty to guard the interests of the Shogun, it was also my duty to promote the interests of the Company, and therefore it was necessary that I informed the High Government of the Indies of the importance of our trade to this empire. I gave them my solemn assurance that, if this year no price increase was granted for our commodities, I would not rest on my arrival in Batavia before the High Government had decided not to send any ships hither next year, thus they could foresee in time the consequences this would

* The unidentified confidant appears several times in the Secret Diary. He has been identified as the Apprentice-Interpreter Namura Naosaburō. I. Tanaka-van Daalen, 'Titsingh no "fukushin no keiko tsūji" no nazo,' *Newsletter of the Japan-Netherlands Institute*, 82, July 1998, pp. 1-4.

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have for the governor, for Nagasaki and for themselves. Their dismay and the conviction that I would keep my word made them promise that they would confer with each other and convey to the governor what I had said.

3 September

Today I received a visit from Kōsaku, Motojirō and the *dwariskijker*. After a few vapid discourses as a prelude to their sinister goal, they repeated their old song, that the changes in trade depend on Edo and the governor would mediate to obtain an improvement when he arrived there. Tired of hearing that insipid talk every time, I assured them with a solemn oath that unless an improvement was brought about this year, I would see to it that next year no ship would be sent, in order to give the shogunal accountant the time needed to make out their accounts. After having discussed this with each other for a long while, they asked to be given the prices which I wanted for the woollen, silk and cotton fabrics, to see to what extent these could be granted. I promised to give them these and straightaway I went to check the extracts from the books since the establishment of the *Geldkamer* in 1716.

In the evening I gave them the prices which I had stated for all the commodities, of which I note here the highest prices which the Company has enjoyed in different years ever since the establishment of the *Geldkamer* in 1716, and in the other column the price which is demanded now.

[Prices for: different coloured cloth, cloth rash, crown-rash, perpetuanas, *taffachelassen*, chintzes, cotton thread, powdered sugar, sappanwood, pepper, tin, lead, cloves, mother-of-cloves, putchcock, Surat catechu, *mumia*, elephants' teeth, ducaton, silk fabrics, rayskins.]

After having read them through, they said that there were many articles among them which the Japanese did not care for, whilst it was impossible to obtain such prices for the other commodities. However, they would offer the document to the governor and consult with the *Geldkamer*. Conversely, I pointed out to them that it was very well possible that next year no ships would come, and they left.

5 September

The interpreters inform me that the *Geldkamer* was objecting to such a large quantity of cloves, for in 1781 they had notified us that without a substantial reduction in price they would not accept more than one thousand cattles. I ordered them to bear in mind that the Company was engaged in an arduous war and needed its ships both to fight the enemy and to send them with its commodities to those factories where it made a profit on them and, only because of its special affection and the consideration that for about two centuries it had been given the exclusive permission to trade with this empire, had it decid-

ed to send a ship hither this year laden with such commodities as it had been able to gather in order not to deprive this country of many articles needed — although it did not make any profit on its commodities and there was still a large quantity of copper in its warehouses, for due to the troubles in India, it was not vendible — with the hope that in the slack season I would fruitfully have employed the necessary means for an improvement in trade; that this consideration merited a fair appreciation on their side, for if the High Government had not taken this course of action for the aforementioned reasons, they would have been in danger of having to beg for their food because of destitution. They seemed to lend an ear to my words and promised to do their utmost to obtain a satisfactory result. In the evening I had my confidant translate the aforementioned and sent him to Government House to hand it to the governor, with the request that His Honour be of assistance in this matter.

6 September

My confidant came to inform me that yesterday's document had been handed to the first secretary, and that he had been given the reply to rest assured, for the governor was willing to make a favourable settlement this year with regard to the commodities and the camphor.

7 September

The interpreters Kōsaku and Motojirō came to visit me oozing with pomposity. After much circumlocution, they sang the old song that the governor could not change anything this year, but would bring about an improvement in trade on his arrival in Edo. I requested them very seriously to leave my house and, unless they had something else to tell me, to spare me the trouble of their visits in future. Because the governor had already given me an undertaking, I could not make good this ruse, unless they want to pay court to the governor by persuading me. It seemed to me to be a last spasm of their impertinence, and it serves as an example of their character, for without the Company they would die of starvation. After having given me many expressions of their desire to help the Company, I said goodbye to them, after which they departed with the same pomposity.

The governor let me know quietly that it is not possible to acquiesce in the prices I request, that there were many articles which the Japanese ordered more out of habit than out of necessity, that the prices of the woollens had been lowered in former years as I could learn from the merchants. He will have the interpreters present this to me with the request that I deal with it as firmly as His Honour would on his part. I had him thanked for this undertaking, with the promise to do everything that was reasonable and fair.

8 September

The governor had his confidant inform me that these price increases for the commodities seemed hopeless to him, for not only the Shogun, the councillors, and other nobles, but especially the shogunal intendant and other regents of Nagasaki, whose income would be cut back by this increase in the price of sugar, were involved, and would fight it with all their might. It would be better to leave the prices at their present level and to give some agio on the trade.

I thought this consideration very fair, but, on the other hand, I considered that if I could obtain a price increase for the commodities, this would be more profitable for the Company when it sent two ships than the agio. I had the governor thanked for his communication but, at the same time, I presented to him that his offer was very fair, but that the Company was too magnanimous to decrease what it had already set aside as gifts and therefore all the goods which were for the Shogun, crown prince, councillors, and other nobles, and the Nagasaki recognition as well would be calculated at the current prices, but for everything that is delivered to the merchants and for what remained after the gifts had been presented in Edo, the prices needed to be increased if a lasting trade was to be enjoyed, for this agio could be considered a pittance, which the Company did not need from the governor or the Shogun, but it only desired a fair price for its commodities, and I requested that His Honour attend to the matter satisfactorily.

9 September

The aforementioned interpreters came with a happy countenance to congratulate me on the good tidings which they had for me: that the governor had been so generous as to grant 6,000 taels above the usual agio. I thanked them for this communication, requesting them to inform the governor that the Company does not need a pittance from the Japanese, but desired a fair price for its commodities, for the 6,000 taels had to be considered a reparation for the multifarious costs that we were burdened with on the island. Not succeeding in their goal, they returned disgruntled.

10 September

Another visit from the interpreters, but the leaf was turned completely. They informed me that the governor could not acquiesce in the prices requested, for reason of the lower demand for woollens in this empire, and the superfluity of other commodities, as well as the disadvantage to the Nagasaki regents caused by the decrease of the gifts for the Shogun and nobles. I replied what has already been mentioned on the 8th.

They thought this fair, and told me that if I did not agree to an increase in agio, I should go about low-

ering the prices as firmly as the governor would do on his part, excluding from all increases tin, lead, ducats, cloves, mother-of-cloves, putchcock, catechu, *mumia*, and elephants' teeth, for the first article is delivered to the Chinese at the same price, the next two without any profit to the shogunal minters, and the others, apart from the silk fabrics which only serve as gifts, are not really necessary as they are ordered to satisfy the requests of some nobles. I started to draw up my demand again, and after many arguments we agreed to the following increases, on the condition that the Company would import the goods demanded as precisely as possible, if the situation allowed, after which we said goodbye with a hearty show of friendship, with the assurance that they will propose this matter today. [List of prices.]

11 September

I received the news that Kōsaku had been with *Burgemeester* Han'emon — who at present has been entrusted by the governor with the charge of the affairs of the foreigners but without the rank of commissioner — until late at night, discussing the price increases and twice he had been on the verge of having a fight with him, having told him: "When Your Honour leaves Government House, he undresses, and if he is tired, he goes to bed. On the other hand, the Dutch are fair game for the enemy, storms, and typhoons at sea before they arrive here, where such low prices are extorted from them for their commodities that they return home with a loss, of which the consequences are felt from the governor down to the lowest citizen." After vehement altercations they had finally reached a settlement and the *burgemeester* had agreed to deal with the matter in a favourable way, although not the slightest price increase could be granted for this year.

12 September

In the afternoon the governor had my confidant notify me that he has sent the interpreters to inform me that he is granting the Company ten thousand taels in excess of the usual agio this year, with the request not to consider this a pittance, but a token of his desire to continue trade with satisfaction, with the firm pledge that, on his appearance in Edo, he would bring about the prices requested, and also the exempting of the *opperhoofden* from the ignominious searches. I had His Honour thanked heartily for his goodness, and had him told that I would accept the ten thousand taels on this condition. Shortly after, the joint *Tolken College* appeared, informing me with much ado of the aforementioned, requesting a document as proof that they had translated it faithfully. After having again represented to them that the Company would for no reason desist from the increases requested, and that I accept-

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ed the ten thousand taels for this year, taking the governor at his frequently repeated declarations that he could not grant a price increase without the consent of the shogunal *rekenmeesters* in Edo, but that he would effectuate this on his appearance there, I requested them to convey my gratitude to the governor for his apparent generosity and I handed them the following document, satisfied that I had concluded the matter satisfactorily. [See for the document the diary under this date.]

13 September

Because of the objections of the camphor merchant and as a compensation for the short weight, the governor proposed that I drop the new barrels that have been ordered and in future accept camphor in the usual barrels at the 1780 price, which is one tael a picul less, and I consented happily. The news of the improvement that has been granted has revived all citizens of Nagasaki, being confident that they will see two ships appear again every year.

14 September

I had the interpreters ask the governor that if the *Geldkamer* had a surplus of copper due to the few junks that had come to trade, to tell me before my departure how much His Honour was willing to grant the Company annually above the usual quota, in order that the High Government of the Indies would have enough time to send such orders to its factories as were necessary to promote its sales and take the wind out of our competitors' sails, but the reply was that only two ships were allowed to come and trade, and what remained of 1781 and this year greatly exceeded the full export of two ships and for this larger quota — which they considered improbable because of the growing scarcity — they needed permission from Court and they did not dare ask. I represented to them that the governor had had Junior Interpreter Jūbei make the first proposals about this last year, if the Company imported all goods which the *Geldkamer* demanded. On their reply that the governor had had no authority to act thus, but would have had to accomplish this in Edo if his proposals had been accepted, for otherwise he would have been transgressing the Shogun's orders, I decided to follow another course and to present the following proposal to the governor, so I could use it as a guide when drawing up the demand. [See the diary under 27 September for the proposal.]

The same evening I secretly sent this calculation to Senior Secretary Sugura Kosemon with the request he present it to the governor and to inform me of his opinion thereon.

18 September

My confidant informs me that this matter is of too

great importance and the governor did not have the authority to deal with it, for he had seen in the papers at Government House that when the ships failed to arrive in 1719 because of the permitted export of half of the annually fixed quota, the next year also the export of half of the copper quota had been granted, and that His Honour was of the opinion that my efforts would be in vain, but he advised me to await the arrival of the new governor, if I wanted to pursue the matter.

24 September

I sent my confidant to request the governor to assist me in my proposal concerning the carpenters of the island and the sampans, of which I sent copies to him, and I also asked him if His Honour had really requested the silk fabrics, or was it an intrigue on the part of the interpreters?

25 September

The governor has me informed that he will press the *burgemeesters* to present the petition concerning the carpenters as soon as possible, for they had not been shown to him yet. Also, that he had indeed requested the silk fabrics, for no rarities had been found among the private goods in the ship or in the junks, and no *taffachelassen* had been imported, and as he was forced to share out presents to all nobles on his arrival in Edo, he was in a tight corner about how to accomplish that, and therefore he requested that he be obliged with the silks, without this being used as a precedent in future. I had His Honour informed that, although the High Government of the Indies forbade the selling of silk fabrics, I had no objections to obliging him in this instance, on the grounds of the good services he had already rendered to the Company and had promised to render in future, confident that Their Honours would give their stamp of approval because of the circumstances in which His Honour found himself, on the understanding that this would not be used as a precedent to make other requests.

Because I had used few silks in the previous presentation, on which footing it can roughly be kept, and on closing the books of 1781/82 — after the deduction of the 11 stolen pieces, which were restituted by the interpreters — the remaining pieces came to 354, this will suffice for the next presentation, at which time it is to be hoped that the Company's affairs in India will be restored with God's help.

27 September

The arrival of the new governor, Tsuchiya Surugano-kami, gives me an opportunity to present new petitions about the export of copper and I handed the interpreters the following document, ordering them to translate it today and to offer it with due

haste to the governors. [See the diary under this date.]

His Honour has let me know secretly that the papers concerning the carpenters still have not been presented to him, and he advised me to demand the one about the carpenter of the sampans be returned, for the carpenter was objecting to accepting it, and he did not want to give his spies any opportunity to accuse him in Edo that I had bribed him with my presents to condone such new fancies, and if the *burgemeesters* presented it to him, he would be forced to hand it back, but next year, on his return, he would grant me my request. Therefore I ordered to demand for the document to be returned.

His Honour also requested the sloop with a helmsman and a few sailors, and he would send Japanese sailors for daily instruction by us in the handling of sails. I had His Honour informed that, as soon as work on board permitted, I would gladly oblige him.

I again ordered my confidant to speak to the secretary about my proposal about the export of copper until 1786, and to propose to His Honour that it appears from our papers that in 1719 only half of the Nagasaki recognition had been presented because of the halved export of the fixed quota, and therefore to propose to the governor that, although I was not authorized, I was prepared to meet the whole Nagasaki recognition for the past year, only to find out if by exporting a large amount of bar-copper to the factories in India, there would be a way of stopping the large sales of European copper.

28 September

Today Senior Interpreter Motojirō returned me the document about the carpenter of the sampans and the copper, saying that the *rapporteur burgemeesters* had first sent for the usual carpenter and then for all ship's carpenters and had presented this contract to them, but none could be found to accept it. Furthermore that, because last year there had been no trade nor a court journey, the Company could not claim any copper, which would never be granted. On the first matter I replied that if he had not been so brazen, he could not be so impertinent to dare tell me such outright lies, for I had received the necessary accounts of it, and on the other matter I ordered him to tell the *burgemeesters* on my behalf that, if an *opperhoofd* sent them documents on account of the Company to present these to the governor, it is their duty to oblige and to leave it up to the governor to grant or refuse the propositions. No *burgemeester* had the authority to act according to his own whims and the Company would bear in mind the diligence with which they looked after its affairs, when it settled the gifts that were ordered. Moreover, that because they had returned this document unauthorized for reasons of their own, I was obliged to present it myself to the governor when he visited the island.

In the evening I sent my confidant to Government House to inform the governor of the impertinence of the interpreters and to complain about the treatment by the *burgemeesters*, and to notify His Honour of my reply and my intentions to present this document, of which I await the decision, in person when he comes to visit the island, whilst he assured me of having handed this proposal to the first secretary.

29 September

The governor has me informed that he has heard of yesterday's report, that I should not endeavour to obtain copper for the past year, for it could not be obtained. He had had all books checked and had seen how in 1719 the governor had made representations in Edo for the sale of the remainder of the commodities, which had finally been granted by the councillors with permission to export half of the copper quota; that I could easily understand that because the Nagasaki Regents were short of money, they would do everything in their power to let me have the copper in return for the recognition promised, if there was the slightest chance. His Honour also had me requested not to present him with any documents when he comes to visit the island, to which he would have no objections if he was staying here, but, however much he would like to oblige me, because he was leaving, this would only cause problems, for it could not be foreseen how the new governor would react to it, and the *burgemeesters*, to whom our petitions should be addressed in the first place, would be offended by this and might present the Company's affairs and him in an unfavourable light, which would only cause an alienation and they would work against us in every way.

I thanked His Honour for his well-meant advice, but I also proposed to him, if it was possible, to grant me the 700 piculs which belong to him and about which the *Geldkamer* nor the accountants had any say. The few junks which had come to trade this year had also exported little copper, but I had been told that there was a sufficient stock in the shogunal warehouses, thus no pretext of scarcity could be offered, and, apart from that, it was up to His Honour to deal with his property as he wished, which the Company would consider a token of his affection, and I eagerly awaited his decision.

I discussed this matter with the most trusted among the interpreters in the evening, and they promised to confer on this matter and as they saw no problems, they would assist me to the best of their ability.

Today I delivered the requested silk fabrics on the further insistence of the governor, hoping that Your Honours will give your stamp of approval to my action, which, although unauthorized, was executed on the grounds of the aforementioned reasons.

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1 October

The secretary informs me that I should draft a petition concerning the 700 piculs of bar-copper and have it translated by the interpreters and sent to the *burgemeesters*, with the request that it be presented as soon as possible to the governors, promising me to do his utmost to oblige me. I had the following petition prepared forthwith and sent to the *burgemeesters*.

"To Their Honours Kuze Tango-no-kami and Tsuchiya Suruga-no-kami, Governors of Nagasaki. The undersigned *opperhoofd* of the Company's trade takes the liberty of requesting Your Honours that he be granted the export of 700 piculs of bar-copper for 1782, as had been agreed with Governor Bingo-no-kami annually for the prices fixed by him and which has also been effectuated up till now, with representation of how he has fallen into arrears because of the failure of the ships to arrive and the heavy duties which he has to bear here, and he will consider this grant as a special token of the affection of Your Honours, and will be most grateful."

4 October

The secretary has me informed that the petition for the 700 piculs of copper has not yet been presented. I sent the *rapporteurs* to the *burgemeesters* to insist on this and on the request concerning the island's carpenter with all due haste.

5 October

Again I have presented a petition about the carpenter of the sampans to both governors, as can be read in the ordinary diary.

8 October

The *burgemeesters* still have not presented the petition for the copper. The secretary tells me to propose it myself when presenting the *hassaku*. I asked His Honour if it would not be better to hand the governor a document, for if I were to do it orally, the interpreters would translate my words as an expression of gratitude for the improvement in trade or something else.

9 October

According to a notification from the secretary, the *burgemeesters* presented the governors with the document concerning the copper this morning. His Honour and the shogunal accountant will take a decision today.

10 October

The Nagasaki recognition has been presented today, but no decision was given about my petitions, although I fear for an unfavourable outcome on the

basis of the secretary's notification.

11 October

Today the interpreters came to make known to me, on behalf of the *burgemeesters*, that however much the governors were willing to oblige me, they were not free to do so, for no trade had been conducted in 1782, and therefore no copper could be granted. They understood that we had suffered a great loss by the non-arrival of the ships, but they were assured that, because I had succeeded in improving the conditions of trade and in obtaining the exemption from body searches, I should take comfort from that, and should not take any further steps to promote a case in which they could not acquiesce, and the refusal of which would only be unpleasant for me. Being convinced of the futility of any endeavours towards obtaining last year's copper and the truth of the governors' words, I had Their Honours thanked for their polite refusal and I urged for a decision about the request concerning the carpenters.

12 October

The outgoing governor sent me the model of a ship like the *Trompenburg* made by a Japanese, with the request to have the sails and whatever else was lacking in the rigging made. He also urged for a model of a vessel with a well-closed superstructure for next year and also an able carpenter, if he could be spared. I promised His Honour to present both requests to the High Government of the Indies.

The reason is that the Japanese build their boats of light wood, and use little ironwork, and thus a strong wind causes many of them to go missing, above all the copper barges from Osaka, which carry a coarse load and, because of their lightness, they are not able to withstand the force of the sea, and the slightest storm smashes them to pieces, and last year six barges, each carrying 700 piculs of copper, foundered. To prevent this they are seeking such a model, for which the model of a lighter will probably be adequate.

13 October

I secretly received the message that five carpenters have been granted the right to tender a bid for the Company's repairs, and also that these carpenters had been summoned by the current *Onderrapporteur* Monjūrō and he had ordered them to make a settlement amongst them in such a way that each of them would get a turn to do the repairs for a year and they would have to pay the *College* ten percent of the fixed sum, which are new funds for this unscrupulous rabble, but which they will have to do without, for one of the carpenters has secretly assured me that he will do the repairs every year for a most civil price, and for only a small profit, without setting store by such orders or threats by the in-

terpreters, for now he knew whom to turn to. The secretary, whom I notified of the aforementioned, informed me that the document about the sampans will be returned and I shall have to make do with the governor's promise for next year.

Before I went to Government House for the audience of leave, the interpreters came to report that four carpenters had been granted the right to tender a bid for the annual repairs. I emphatically represented to them if there were only four of them, which seemed to take them by surprise, and they answered that there had been five, but the one named Enosin had been so insolent this year that they had intended to exclude him in future. I advised them to be careful and not to meddle with this case, but to leave everything pertaining to this case to the discretion of the *opperhoofd*. I ordered them to request the *burgemeesters* to have all five carpenters swear an oath at the soonest in order that the repairs to the warehouses the Lelie and the Doorn could be noted.

14 October

Today I received a stamped statement from the *Geldkamer* as proof that the Company has been permitted an export of 13,000 piculs of copper next year and for 1785 an export of 12,300 piculs. I ordered the interpreters to translate it and to give me two copies signed and stamped by them, the one to be taken to Batavia, and the other to be kept here.

At my request, the governors have permitted me to stay ashore for another 10 days until the 25th after the departure of the ship which has been set for tomorrow, to take care of business.

The document about the sampans has been returned by the interpreters with the assurance that the governor will accede to it on his return next year, for otherwise too many innovations would take place in one year.

18 October

The governor will depart for Edo tomorrow and I again sent my confidant, and subsequently both *rapporteurs* together with Kōsaku in their ceremonial attire to wish His Honour a safe journey and an abiding prosperity, and to thank him heartily for his friendship, with the request to bear in mind his promises to obtain the prices for the Company's commodities and the exempting from the ignominious searches. On their return he had them give me his strongest assurances and he also thanked me for the rigging of the boat, insisting on the receipt of a model of a solid boat next year. Because all particular negotiations end with His Honour's departure, and because everything necessary has been brought on a firm footing now, I shall take the liberty to conclude these separate notes for the time being, requesting with all due respect that Your Honours will cast a favourable eye over my endeavours towards restoring trade, in which confidence I recommend myself to your powerful protection and heartily wishing You all the blessings which can sweeten this life, I remain with due respect.

Japan, at the Nagasaki factory, 25 October, 1783

I. Titsingh.