

Introduction to the Contents of the Deshima Dagregisters of 1641–1660

This volume of the Deshima *Dagregisters* ushers the reader into the first two decades of the Dutch presence on the island of Deshima in Nagasaki Bay. These were the crucial two decades which saw the so-called seclusion or *sakoku* policies of the Tokugawa government formalized. Consequently, the representatives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Japan had to adapt their former relatively free lifestyle to the new strict regimen of shogunal rule.

On 4 August 1639, the Japanese authorities issued a ban on all commerce with Portuguese traders who, following the rhythm of the monsoon, had commuted between their settlement in Macao in southern China and Nagasaki in Japan for scores of years. They were now denied admission to Japan under pain of death. This edict was issued because the *Bakufu* did not want any Roman Catholic to set foot on Japanese soil ever again. That this shogunal edict was no empty threat was soon proved: when a Portuguese embassy led by Luis Paes Pacheco arrived at Nagasaki on 6 July 1640 to appeal for a renewal of trade, the Japanese response was swift and severe. The emissaries were apprehended and, just as the Portuguese had been warned, they and their entourage were summarily executed, because they had dared to challenge the will of the Shogun. Only the lives of thirteen Lascar crewmen were spared. They were sent back to Macao to report what had happened.

For a brief period the Dutch merchants in Japan might have lived under the impression that, as non-proselytizing Protestants, they could watch these measures from the sideline and even take some advantage from them: after all, they were now the only European merchants left in Japan. However, early in November, when the *Ômetsuke* in charge of the anti-Christian campaign, Inoue Chikugo-no-kami Masashige, arrived from Edo to inspect the Dutch factory at Hirado, any such false

impression was soon dispelled. Having rummaged through all the warehouses and every single room of the living-quarters in search of Christian symbols, Inoue broke the shattering news to the Dutch *opperhoofd*, François Caron, that all VOC buildings had to be demolished without delay. He informed the Dutch chief factor that the Shogun had taken offence at the impertinent behaviour of the Dutch and the magnificence of their buildings in Hirado, which even sported *Anno Domini* dates on the gable. Not only was this a Christian date but it was also considered a serious affront to the Shogun because it was a negation of the Japanese calendar. Furthermore, from that year onwards, the *opperhoofd* of the Japan factory had to be replaced after a term of one year.¹ There was a general feeling at the court that the Dutch chief factors at Hirado had become too well acquainted with the Japanese language and had befriended too many local people.

During his visit to the shogunal court in Edo in the spring of 1641, Caron's successor, Maximiliaen Le Maire, who had overseen the demolition of the VOC buildings over the past months, was informed by the *Bakufu* that all the Company's goods and belongings should be forthwith transferred to Deshima off Nagasaki, where the Portuguese had been housed before their expulsion.² Consequently, after three decades of relatively free movement in the former pirates' haunt of Hirado, the Dutch now faced confinement in Nagasaki under the close scrutiny of the local Japanese authorities. Many entries in the diaries of the early 1640s are devoted to information about the laborious transport of the possessions of the Company from Hirado to Deshima and

1 Dagregister Caron, 9 Nov. 1640, The Historiographical Institute (ed.), *Diaries kept by the Heads of the Dutch Factory in Japan*, Vol. IV (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1981).

2 Dagregister Le Maire, 11 May 1641, The Historiographical Institute (ed.), *Diaries kept by the Heads of the Dutch Factory in Japan*, Vol. V (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1984).

the prolonged process of collecting the outstanding debts at Hirado. Not until many years later did the Governor-General in Batavia exempt the impecunious Lord of Hirado from settling his bills.

The move to the cramped quarters on Deshima radically changed the nature of the Dutch presence in Japan. Two years earlier the Company servants at Hirado had had a foreboding that a change of policy was in the air, when they were ordered to send their Japanese spouses and children to Batavia. Now their freedom of movement was drastically curtailed. They were literally boarded up on a tiny plot of land. Contacts with the female sex were henceforth limited to occasional paid encounters with *keisei* or prostitutes, the public observance of the Christian faith was strictly forbidden, and it soon turned out that even dead Dutchmen were to suffer under the new rules. Those unfortunate enough to pass away on Japanese territory were denied a proper burial in Japanese soil. Wrapped in straw mats and weighted with heavy stones, their corpses were dumped into the coastal waters at a distance of four to five miles from the mainland. Except for these draconian burial regulations, which were lifted in 1654, the newly-imposed security measures would continue until the 1850s when the visit of the American squadron under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry heralded a new age in Japan's relations with the West.

The Dutch found themselves completely at the mercy of the whim of the Japanese authorities, but they also had to admit that, guarded on all sides by watchmen and spies, they and their merchandise, physically speaking, were more secure than in any other country in Asia. In addition, they continued to make considerable profits from their trade in Japan throughout the 1640s. Deshima was in these years one of the most profitable VOC factories. This awkward situation elicited the ironic comment from the Nagasaki Governor Baba Saburōzaemon that, “even if the Dutch were treated ten times worse than the Portuguese, they would not leave Japan but would keep coming”.³

In the Deshima diaries of these early years, feelings of insecurity among both the Dutch *and* the Japanese authorities themselves are reflected in three predominant concerns. These concerns gradually took shape through a series of disturbing events such as the arrests of Roman Catholic priests who tried to slip covertly into the island empire in search of martyrdom in 1643, the arrest of the crewmen of the VOC ship *Breskens* in the same year, and the second attempt by the Portuguese to gain the ear of the *Bakufu* in 1647. As the diaries show, all these ‘affairs’ were dealt with in a more or less peaceful manner in due time, but three major underlying concerns continued to occupy their minds. What were these concerns?

First of all, there was the continual insecurity which the Dutch felt about the direction that the newly imposed strict and seemingly fickle policies of the shogunal authorities might take. They had simply no idea what hidden agenda of the Edo court might have in store for them. It was not until later that they began to explain to themselves that the series of edicts on overseas trade should really be seen as an attempt to seal off the country from foreign influence or intervention, and that they had been allocated the specific role of informants.

Secondly, it was clear that the Tokugawa government itself remained vigilant about any Roman Catholic proselytism, either through intrusions on to Japanese soil by Roman Catholic missionaries, or by Christian literature smuggled from abroad. The *Bakufu*, which was traditionally responsible for Japan's security, was also militarily prepared for possible reprisals by the Portuguese on account of the killing of the ambassador and his retinue in the summer of 1640. In this tense atmosphere Inoue Chikugo-no-kami saw the Dutch as potential informants who could keep him posted on overseas affairs.

Thirdly, there was the problem of Chinese competition in trade. The Dutch witnessed with dismay how the Japanese policy towards their only remaining rivals in foreign trade in Nagasaki, the Chinese traders, was changing. A growing number of Chinese junks, bypassing the Dutch settlement at

3 This volume, Dagregister Le Maire, 10 Aug. 1641.

Tayouan, called at Nagasaki, which meant in effect that the Dutch were losing their painfully acquired position of middleman in the Sino-Japanese trade and consequently they would have to diversify their trading relations with Japan.

Now that Japanese competition and shortly afterwards also that of the Portuguese along the trade routes had been eliminated, for a brief moment the Dutch believed that the dreams they had cherished about conquering major shares of the Chinese and Japanese export markets had at last come true; instead, it turned into a nightmare. Whereas in the past some Chinese skippers, circumventing the ban on trading with Japan, had stealthily bartered in Japanese coastal waters, they now began to sail straight to Nagasaki. Under these new conditions, Chinese shipping began to challenge the Dutch position of middleman in Formosa. The VOC had built Zeelandia Castle at the entrance of the Bay of Tayouan on the island's west coast for use as an entrepôt in the triangular trade network connecting Southeast Asia with China and Japan. Bypassed by Chinese junks sailing directly to Nagasaki, the Company fortunately succeeded in finding another source of raw silk to supply the Japanese market in Tonkin (North Vietnam).

In the meantime, the mandate of the imperial Ming dynasty was being challenged by peasant uprisings and along the northern frontier the struggle with the nomadic peoples continued. In 1644, after many years of turmoil, civil strife, and fighting along the Great Wall, China was invaded by the Manchus, who promptly occupied the imperial capital Peking, and drove out the rebels who had deposed the last Ming emperor. Finding themselves in firm control, they established a new dynastic reign of their own, the Qing. Amidst the political turmoil of the last decade of the Ming dynasty, Zheng Zhilong (alias Iquan) rose to prominence in Fujian Province. Within a few years this adventurer became an admiral in the Fujianese coastal command.⁴

Zheng Zhilong was born around the turn of the century in Nan-an prefecture, Fujian Province. In his younger years he had sailed the trading routes to Manila and Hirado. At the latter port he married a Japanese woman from the Tagawa family. In 1624 she gave birth to a son, Zheng Chenggong, whom we encounter in the Dutch records as Coxinga. Zheng Zhilong entered the services of the Dutch East India Company as an interpreter, known by the name of Iquan, in 1624, but when his linguistic competence proved unsatisfactory, he was soon given a more fitting position as a commander of a squadron of Chinese privateers sailing under the Dutch flag. Despite this goodwill shown him, he deserted the Dutch ranks and formed his own fleet of pirates with which he plundered shipping along the coasts of Fujian and Guangdong. In 1628 he negotiated a somewhat twisted deal with the Fujianese authorities whereby, upon surrender, he was appointed naval commander with the specific task of redeeming his past transgressions by fighting other Chinese pirates and keeping the Dutch at bay. In 1633, with a fleet of 150 war junks, he soundly beat a blockading sea force of eight Dutch ships under the command of the Governor of Formosa, Hans Putmans, in Liaulo Bay south of the island of Jinmen (Quemoy).

After this victory Iquan was able to dictate his terms to the Dutch, who were more or less dependent on his collaboration to open up trade between China and Nagasaki through their entrepôt at Tayouan. During the 1630s, the large amounts of Chinese silk and sugar transported by Chinese junks to Formosa for trans-shipment to Japan favoured both partners in trade: Iquan drew a huge income from the tolls and taxes he could levy on this trade, and the Dutch East India Company was able to gain such a large share of the Japanese market that by 1639 it could replace the Portuguese as the chief suppliers of these commodities. However, this uneasy collaboration between the Company

4 Boxer, C.R., 'The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan' *T'ien-hsia Monthly*, 11 (1941), pp. 401–439. Blussé, 'Minnan-jen or

Cosmopolitan?', pp. 245–264. 'Cheng Chih-lung', in: Hummel, Arthur W. (ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington: The United States Printing Office, 1943), pp. 110–111.

and the Chinese mandarin was pretty skewed and weighted in Iquan's favour.

In 1640, Paulus Traudenius, Governor of Formosa, reported that he had concluded a contract with Iquan by which the latter promised him a steady supply of Chinese commodities for the Japanese market to the amount of 40,000–45,000 taels, to be delivered to Zeelandia Castle. The next year it became clear that Iquan did not intend to live up to the agreement. He began to send his junks directly to Nagasaki, bypassing the Dutch establishment on Formosa. The import figures of Deshima show this unequivocally: in 1640 the Dutch imported goods worth 6,355,569 guilders. One year later this figure had dropped to 1,022,908 guilders. Probably Iquan chose this course because the Dutch had not enough capital available in Tayouan to purchase all the goods he sent, but, more importantly, because the Chinese imperial government was no longer able to enforce its maritime prohibitions on trade with Japan. Hence the promotion of Iquan to commander of the coastal navy in combination with his emergence as the most powerful shipping magnate on the Chinese coast can only be understood in the context of the gradual demise of the central government in Peking.

As Ming loyalists, Iquan and his son Coxinga sent out several appeals to Japan for help against the Manchu forces, but these requests fell on deaf ears in Edo.⁵ In 1646 Iquan surrendered to the Qing forces in Fuzhou, but his brothers and his son continued the struggle farther south along the coast at Xiamen, financing the ongoing war effort with the proceeds of the trade with Japan. The first Japanese who asked the Dutch with some surprise, and probably some irony, why they had taken such a dislike to their Chinese competitors and Iquan in particular, was the *Ômetsuke*, Inoue Chikugo-no-kami Masashige.

In a sense this remarkable man personifies the interaction between the other two main themes which we have just mentioned: the Dutch concern about their position in Japan, and the Japanese concern about the pernicious influence of the Roman Catholic mission on Japanese society and possible acts of revenge by the Iberians. This power-broker had been personally appointed by the Shogun to solve the Christian question in Japan once and for all and was also given the task of supervising the Dutch move from Hirado to Nagasaki. Inoue believed he could use the Dutch to keep an eye on the Portuguese, and the Dutch in their turn needed the *Ômetsuke* to protect them against overzealous shogunal officials.

The question whether the Tokugawa government ever developed a clear programme to direct the Japanese empire into a state of seclusion or whether this seclusion process occurred naturally in due course as a result of the centralization policies remains unanswered. The seclusion process was effectively set in motion by a set of regulations promulgated by the Shogun, but any historian who would like to see how the decisions behind these edicts actually came about will soon be frustrated in his or her search, thwarted by a lack of sources. Unfortunately no clearly stated, well-documented records of discussions at the shogunal court exist.⁶

The absence of Japanese sources makes it particularly rewarding to use the archive of the Deshima factory to study the role of Inoue Chikugo-no-kami Masashige in the shogunal government reforms leading to *sakoku*. In his actions as Inspector-General of Religious Affairs and patron of the Dutch, we can see how *sakoku* gradually took shape. The *Ômetsuke*'s wheeling and dealing at the Edo court in connection with the so-called *Breskens* incident has been extensively looked into by Reinier Hesselink.⁷ In 1643 a group of Dutch sailors was

5 Carioti, Patrizia, 'The Zheng Regime and Tokugawa Japan: Asking for Japanese Intervention' in: Andrade, Tonio, and Hang, Xing (eds), *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550–1700* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), pp. 156–180. Dagregister Van Tzum, 13 Apr. 1646.

6 Boot, W.J., 'Maxims of Foreign Policy', *Itinerario*, 24/2 (2000), pp. 62–79.

7 Hesselink, Reinier Herman, *De gevangenen uit Nambu: een waar geschied verhaal over de VOC in Japan* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2001). English version: Hesselink, Reinier H., *Prisoners from Nambu: Reality and*

arrested by local authorities when they landed at Nanbu, a hamlet situated on the north-western coast of the Japan Sea, in search of water and provisions. The local authorities initially took them for yet another invasion party of Roman Catholic priests. After it had been established that these ‘intruders’ actually were Dutch sailors in search of fresh water and supplies, Inoue stepped in and helped resolve the matter.

George Elison has focused on Inoue’s methods of persecution and his occasionally successful attempts to have Roman Catholic priests apostatize and then force them into marrying Japanese wives. This remarkable man has also been sketched as the protector and patron of the Dutch and as avid collector of exotic rarities.⁸ Nagazumi Yōko has characterized him as a stern, but occasionally also amiable, elderly gentleman who was mad about Western inventions, a kind of *rampeki avant la lettre*, who was always on hand when the Dutch really needed him. However, all this still leaves us pretty ignorant of what the motives for his actions might have been. Before we look into his contacts with the Dutch during the 1640s, let us briefly review his antecedents.

Inoue Masashige was born in Tōtōmi Province in 1585. It has been suggested that he was a Christian in his youth. His career was that of a man of merit. He began as a palace guard of Tokugawa Hidetada, and, during the siege of Osaka Castle in 1615, he took his first enemy head. One year later Inoue joined Iemitsu’s inner circle and in 1625 he was appointed *metsuke*, inspector. In 1626 he followed Iemitsu on his visit to the Emperor in Kyoto and in 1627 he was given a junior rank with the title Chikugo-no-kami.

Make-Believe in Seventeenth-Century Japanese Diplomacy (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002).

8 Elison, George, *Deus Destroyed. The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1973), pp. 199–207. Nagazumi, Yōko, ‘Orandajin no hogosha to shite no Inoue Chikugo-no-kami Masashige’, *Nihon rekishi*, 327 (1975–1978), pp. 1–17. Blussé, Leonard, ‘The Grand Inquisitor Inoue Chikugo no kami Masashige, Spin doctor of the Tokugawa Bakufu’, *Bulletin of Portuguese Japanese Studies*, 7 (2003), pp. 23–43.

When Inoue was appointed *Ōmetsuke* in 1633, the size of his fief had already increased to 4000 *koku* of rice. During the Shimabara Rebellion he was sent to Kyushu as the personal envoy of the Shogun. On 30 July 1639 he was appointed to the *Shūmon aratame yaku*, the office of Grand Inquisitor of Religious Affairs, and was awarded an income of another 6000 *koku*. A few days later, on 4 August 1639, the final *sakoku* edict was issued forbidding the traffic of the Portuguese galliots. He who dared transgress this edict would be decapitated. Inoue might have been involved in the cruel decapitation of the Portuguese ambassadors in August 1640, although later sources state that the execution had been hastily carried out before instructions from Edo had arrived. In the autumn of 1640, Inoue personally ordered the chief factor of the Hirado factory, François Caron, to demolish the factory buildings on Hirado. Inoue also kept a close eye on the Chinese traders in Nagasaki and, in the sixth month of Kan’ei 17 (1640), he forbade them to carry Roman Catholic priests aboard their ships. As the *dagregisters* show, throughout the 1640s Inoue dealt with the various attempts by Portuguese priests to land in Japan, and applied rather unique methods to make them apostatize. For the Inspector-General a good Christian was not a dead Christian but an apostatized Christian. Inoue was also closely involved in dealing with a second attempt by the Portuguese court to send an ambassador, Don Gonçalo de Siqueira, in 1647. Owing to the inept way in which this affair was handled but also as a result of Dutch delays in sending an ambassador in the aftermath of the *Breskens* incident, the Inspector-General was briefly denied access to the court, although he soon returned to favour. Inoue died at a venerable age in 1661.

Almost every year in winter during their tributary journey to the court the Dutch would meet with Inoue in Edo. In summer they often met in Nagasaki when he came to inspect the southern regions as Persecutor of the Christians. Especially during their visit to Edo, Inoue would interview the Dutch visitors extensively prior to the audience with the *Rōjū* and the Shogun, to whom he would personally

introduce the chief factor of Deshima. Inoue was continually debriefing the Dutch or had others do this for him, not only because he wanted to gain information from them but also to prepare them for tricky questions during the audience. Therefore it is understandable that the Dutch ended up calling the man who had ordered them to demolish their trading factory at Hirado their protector. They were after all completely at his mercy, a situation somewhat akin to the curious bonding which often occurs between a captor and his hostages. “Have faith,” Inoue reassured Jan van Elseracq, who was looking after the Company’s affairs in Hirado during the removal, “do not be concerned about the change of location; the Dutch will do as well in Nagasaki as they have in Hirado, rest assured.”⁹ On 22 October the Dutch were told the reasons why the Shogun had ordered the destruction of the Hirado factory one year earlier. Inoue hoped that the Dutch would not be discouraged by their new position and would continue to send “richly-laden ships” as they had done in the past.¹⁰ On a visit to the *opperhoofd*’s house with other officials two days later, the Japanese had shown themselves to be very curious about the situation in Formosa, where the Dutch were making a major effort to dislodge the Spanish from their settlement in Chilung. Inoue commented that he would rather have the Dutch than the Castilians as his close neighbours.¹¹ When Le Maire bade goodbye to Inoue, who was returning to Edo, on 28 October 1641, the latter told him that henceforth the Dutch should inform the Shogun about the activities abroad of the Portuguese and Castilians. Three months later, in January 1642, Van Elseracq visited Edo. The Dutch party had to stay in the former lodgings of the Portuguese, which, according to Van Elseracq’s description, resembled a prison. The Dutchmen could not even stand up straight in them.¹² Governor Heiemon tried to raise the spirits of the Dutchmen a little by having one of

his servants, who had learned this art in Nagasaki, bake loaves of bread especially for them for the duration of their visit, because he knew that “the Dutch would rather eat bread than rice, and bread was not available in Edo.”¹³ The Governor-General had provided Van Elseracq with the original pass issued by Tokugawa Ieyasu to prove that the VOC had been granted free entry in Japan’s harbours by the Shogun’s grandfather. When the chief factor handed the pass to Inoue, the latter promised to show it to the Shogun.

In August 1642, as they stealthily tried to set foot on land, a group of Roman Catholic priests, the so-called Rubino group, was discovered in Satsuma. A few months later a second group was caught. Inoue employed the renegade priest Sawano Chūan¹⁴ to have them apostatize too. Around this time it also became known that the Dutch Republic had entered into a Ten-Year Truce with Portugal, which made the Japanese suspicious of the real intentions of the Dutch. This uneasiness was only partly mitigated by the news that the Spanish had indeed been driven out of Formosa. In November 1642 the new *opperhoofd*, Pieter Antonisz Overtwater, was asked whether the Company intended to raze the Spanish fortress at Chilung or was considering continuing to trade from there.¹⁵ When Overtwater appeared in Edo in January 1643, he had plenty to explain to Inoue. Overtwater confirmed that a truce had been concluded with the Portuguese so that they could fight the Castilians together, but he assured the Japanese officials that this had not been done because of any friendship for the Portuguese.¹⁶

When Overtwater’s successor, Van Elseracq, was summoned to Edo in October 1643 in connection with the custody of the ten crewmen of the *Breskens*, who had been arrested at Nanbu on 29 July 1643, he had a great deal more to explain, although his reception at Inoue’s lodgings on 3 December 1643 was nonetheless quite friendly. During his interview

9 Dagregister Le Maire, 11 Aug. 1641.

10 *Ibidem*, 22 Oct. 1641.

11 *Ibidem*, 24 Oct. 1641.

12 Dagregister Van Elseracq, 14 Jan. 1642.

13 *Ibidem*, 16 Jan. 1642.

14 Cristóvão Ferreira.

15 Dagregister Overtwater, 8–9 Nov. 1642.

16 *Ibidem*, 15 Jan. 1643.

Inoue showed Van Elseracq two large maps of Manila depicting the fortresses and the entrance to the harbour and gave a detailed inventory of Spanish strength. Van Elseracq was so impressed that he promptly asked for a copy!¹⁷ Sometime later the chief factor was told by the local interpreters that the Nagasaki Governor Baba Saburōzaemon was even suggesting mustering Japanese troops on the Dutch ships to dislodge the Spaniards from Manila and the Portuguese from Macao.¹⁸ The same proposal had already been made in the 1630s prior to the Shimabara Rebellion.

On 24 October 1644 we read about the arrival in Nagasaki of Uma-no-jō, Inoue's regent. On 11 November he visited Van Elseracq for the express purpose of discussing some specific matters. Sawano Chūan acted as interpreter. The Japanese official raised some security issues but also asked more detailed questions about the actual power structure in Holland itself. He again pursued the possibilities of a Dutch attack on Portuguese Macao, and also wished to know about the relative powers held by the Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik and the States-General in the Dutch Republic and the Governor-General in Batavia. At least three hours were spent together “without any of the [Japanese] interpreters appearing”.

When Overtwater reached Edo in January 1645, the discussions with Inoue largely concerned the aftermath of the *Breskens* incident – were the Dutch still planning to send ships to Tartary? Had they discovered gold islands to the east of Japan? – plus further questions about the war between the Portuguese and the Spaniards and the situation in recently conquered Malacca. Inoue also showed interest in specific numbers: how many Dutchmen were living in Batavia; how many ships visited Formosa annually and so on.¹⁹ From their hosts, the Dutch heard that Inoue had been partially successful in his efforts to persuade the captured Jesuits to apostatize. Two of the four who had been captured

in July 1643 had actually married Japanese wives, the other two had died.²⁰

Most of this discussion was repeated during the audience at the court, which serves to show that Inoue actually rehearsed the kinds of questions he expected would be posed at court. In February a new problem was broached when Inoue wondered how the shogunate should view the future role of the English in Asia. Were the Portuguese possibly planning to continue their trade with Japan through offices of the former? One can see how worried the *Ōmetsuke* must have been about the possible connivance between the Dutch and the English when he found out that Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik's son, the later Stadtholder Willem II, was actually engaged to an English princess. He wanted to know the precise relationship between the Prince of Orange and other European royalty, the English king in particular. When he was told that the Dutch and the English were friends in Europe but that they had fought several battles in the Indies, he called for two maps to be brought out, one of the Indies, the other of the whole world on a Japanese screen. He asked about the distance between the various countries, which were pointed out to him. Inoue also discussed sea battles, asking whether small ships could seize large ones and how this was done.

It turned out that there was a hidden agenda behind these opening questions. News had been received by the Japanese that an English ship had visited Macao. The authorities wanted to prepare themselves for a possible English visit to Nagasaki by having the right kind of defence vessels ready. The link between the English royal house and the House of Orange was again made. Because Inoue could rely on his spies in Nagasaki as well as being able to gather information via the renegade priests and “that Godforsaken troublemaker”, the apostate Portuguese priest Chūan, Overtwater strove to be as precise as possible in his descriptions of the actual power of the Stadtholder in the Dutch republican system.

17 Dagregister Van Elseracq, 3 Dec. 1643.

18 *Ibidem*, 16 Sept. 1644.

19 Dagregister Overtwater, 8 Jan. 1645.

20 *Ibidem*, 12–14 Jan. 1645.

The reason for questions being posed about sea battles now became clear. In the event of an English ship being seized by the shogunal forces and her whole crew killed, the Japanese wanted to know, would the English then try to seek revenge on the Japanese? The Dutch answer was that they certainly would seek revenge, but that English power in Asia was so limited and weak that the shogunal government need not have any fears about the outcome. The English would not be able to inflict any damage on the Japanese empire, simply because they did not possess the necessary resources in Asia to do so. Exercising appropriate tact, Overtwater also had to explain that the Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company was in no position to thwart any possible English attempt to sail to Japan nor would they commence hostilities against such old friends in Europe for no other reason than their sailing to Japan to trade. This sent Inoue a clear message as he admitted that, in Japan as well, the governors of the Shogun could not take the slightest action against the will of His Majesty, much less launch such a violent war. The interrogation again proceeded with questions about the military strength of the Dutch and the Portuguese in Asia. Maps were brought out and the situation in Java, Ceylon, Formosa, Malacca, the Spice Islands, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, and Bali was clearly described to and noted down by the Japanese. In short, the Dutch military presence in Asia was carefully mapped out by Inoue.

At the next meeting the matter of the design of war galleys carrying heavy pieces of ordnance came up again and the Dutch were asked to build a scale model, seven or eight feet long. Once more questions were asked about the political constellation in the Netherlands. It was no easy task to describe the exceptional nature of the Dutch Republic, which was in revolt against its overlord, the King of Spain, to a high official of the *Bakufu*. Overtwater solved this problem by likening the seven provinces to the *daimyō*-ruled *han* in Japan, under the authority of members of the higher nobility, adding that each province chose several representatives who, in their totality, constituted the highest authority in the Low Countries working in combination with

the Stadtholder (of the Spanish King), the Prince of Orange. “Even though he is the most powerful and prominent member, he could not start a war or terminate old alliances with emperors, kings, or rulers of any country, nor conclude new treaties without the consent of the chosen members of the nobility,” he said. Overtwater was careful not to mention that the nobility in Holland had actually lost most of its power and that the country was ruled by a *burgher* patriciate.²¹

Prior to the audience of 1646, Inoue had been curious to know how the Dutch authorities at home had reacted to the prompt release of the crew of the *Breskens* a few years earlier. Did they appreciate the magnanimous gesture of the Shogun and were they possibly planning to express their feelings of gratitude by dispatching a special embassy?²² Because this issue has been dealt with extensively by Reinier Hesselink in his monograph, we shall not go into it any further here. Suffice it to say that Dutch procrastination marred Dutch-Japanese relations until in 1649 an ambassador – a dead one at that – finally appeared. Next a written statement in which the Shogun expressed his favourable disposition towards the Dutch was handed over, but he did warn them to avoid commercial contacts or any intercourse with the Portuguese or the Castilians, and to be vigilant about bringing any priests to Japan.²³

When *Opperhoofd* Wilhem Versteeghen visited Edo in January 1647, he once more faced the usual questioning about the strength of the Dutch in Java and their relations with the Portuguese and other overseas countries. He replied that in Europe Holland was still at war with Spain but at peace with Portugal, although there was fighting going on with the Portuguese in Brazil and the Indies. Thereupon Inoue once more broached the subject of the position of Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the United Provinces, and asked of which generation in the dynastic line

21 *Ibidem*, 3–6 Feb. 1645.

22 Dagregister Van Tzum, 12 Feb. 1646.

23 *Ibidem*, 13 Feb. 1646.

he was a member. When the answer was, “the third generation”, he was satisfied. He might have subconsciously likened him to the Shogun Iemitsu who was also third in line. Next he asked about foodstuffs, medicines, and the life-span of people in Holland.²⁴

In the days which followed more questions about the strength of the Spaniards were posed. When Inoue was told that they would never overcome the Dutch, he laughed as if he felt very relieved and admitted to have been suffering under the apparent Spanish effort to convert the Japanese to Christendom. He estimated that at the height of the Roman Catholic mission almost a quarter of the Japanese had been Christian, whereupon the Shogun – “in order to prevent further harm” – had ordered a great number of people to be executed. These executions were being carried out daily and many people were still in prison, he said.²⁵

Prodded once more about the marital relations between the House of Orange and the House of Stuart, Versteeghen wrote down a list of marriage relations between the various royal families of Europe and pointedly added that, while the King of France was married to the King of Spain’s sister, and the King of Spain was married to the King of France’s sister, Spain was nonetheless at war with France, as if to prove that marital relations really did not matter.²⁶

In the summer of 1647, an event occurred which almost brought disfavour upon Inoue at the court. On 26 July, a Portuguese ambassador, Don Gonçalo de Siqueira de Souza, arrived in Nagasaki out of the blue to request once more the re-establishment of trade relations with Macao. The Dutch on Deshima witnessed with astonishment how powerless and unprepared the shogunal forces actually were against the large Portuguese galleons anchored in the roadstead. Notwithstanding all the earlier enquiries about the construction of well-armed galleys, none had actually been built. After lengthy parleys, the ambassador left empty-handed on

4 September 1647. This uninvited and unannounced visit caused Inoue particular embarrassment at the court as he should have been informed about the arrival of the ambassador. He clearly needed to do something to regain the favour of the Shogun and complained of bad faith on the part of the Dutch because they had not yet sent an ambassador from Holland to express gratitude for the lenient treatment of the crew of the *Breskens*. The Dutch were forcefully reminded of all that had been done for them over the past eight years. Thanks to Inoue, the sailors of the *Breskens* had been set free and had “compassionately” been provided with warm clothes. Although Van Elseracq, the incumbent *opperhoofd*, had promised that a special ambassador would certainly be sent from Holland to convey the Dutch gratitude for the Shogun’s benevolence, this had not happened so far. This promise should now be acted upon.²⁷

When *Opperhoofd* Frederik Coyett visited Edo in December 1647, he soon discovered that not only was Inoue out of favour at court, but that the protector of the Dutch suspected them of having assisted the Portuguese ambassador on his journey to Japan. Coyett was able to state that a Portuguese ship had indeed been blown off course to Batavia in 1644, but that this was in no way connected to the embassy to Japan. When asked whether it was true that a Dutch fleet had occupied the fortress of Cabita at the entrance of the Bay of Manila, he replied that this rumour, which had been spread by the Chinese in Tayouan and Nagasaki, sounded unconvincing to him.²⁸

Rumours also seem to have been spread about Coyett, who was the brother-in-law of François Caron. Inoue had an interpreter ask him whether he was perhaps related to the Governor-General, which he denied. Two weeks later Coyett was told that this year the Shogun would not accept the Dutch gifts because he was displeased by the persistent absence of a special ambassador from Holland to express gratitude for the release of the

24 Dagregister Versteeghen, 6 Jan. 1647.

25 *Ibidem*, 14 Jan. 1647.

26 *Ibidem*, 22 Jan. 1647.

27 *Ibidem*, 29 Sept. 1647.

28 Dagregister Coyett, 24 Dec. 1647.

crew of the *Breskens*. Consequently, Coyett had to return to Deshima without having achieved anything. Later the Dutch were told that Inoue had lost favour with the Shogun because he had pressed Coyett's case too hard. After the Shogun had snarled at him: "Chikugo-no-kami, you are the champion of the Dutch", the *Ōmetsuke* had not dared to appear at court for seventy days nor had he been summoned.²⁹ In the summer of 1648, Chūan, who was very close to Inoue, confirmed that the Shogun's displeasure had indeed been caused by the long delay in the promised display of gratitude and that, once an ambassador showed up, the Company's affairs would certainly prosper again.³⁰

Finally, at the end of 1649, the long-awaited Dutch embassy arrived, although the ambassador appointed, Petrus Blockhovius, had died on the way. His replacement Andries Frisius had much to explain, not only about his own identity, but also about the recent turn of political events in Europe, since the Peace of Westphalia had also brought the Eighty Years' War between Holland and Spain to an end. Consequently, by the month of April, Inoue was pleased to tell the Dutch that the two-years' dissension between the Japanese and the Dutch caused by the arrival of the Portuguese ambassador had now been laid aside and that the Dutch would again be allowed free trade as they had during the time of the Shogun's grandfather, of his father, and of the Shogun himself.³¹ This remark was a slight exaggeration, but it expressed all too clearly the great relief with which Inoue must have established that the Dutch, and he himself, had been reinstated in the Shogun's favour.

As a sign of their good faith, the Dutch also sent along two soldiers, Juriaen Schedel (specialized in pyrotechnics) and Jan Smidt, a junior merchant, Wilhem Bijleveld, who had been one of the captives of the *Breskens*, and a surgeon, Caspar Schamberger, who were entrusted with the special tasks of instructing the Japanese in military and medical

affairs. After the audience with the Shogun, these men remained behind in Edo, while the rest of the envoy's party returned to Deshima. During their ten-month stay at the Shogun's court, they fully lived up to expectations. The performance of the pyrotechnist in particular "contributed to a great respect for the Dutch nation".³² Surgeon Schamberger also made a good impression on the Inspector-General, who now "experienced some fine samples of Dutch medicine". This "led to the Japanese appreciating and esteeming it more than before".³³ Unbeknownst to himself, Schamberger had a long-lasting influence in Japan: his instructions were noted down and in Japan he is remembered as the forefather of the *Kaspar ryūgeka* (Kaspar-style medicine).³⁴

Now that the good relations between the VOC and the Japanese government had been restored, the Dutch again undertook the annual journey to Edo. Pieter Sterthemius failed to have the honour of prostrating himself before the Shogun because Iemitsu was ailing and two councillors stood in for him. A month after his return to Deshima, Sterthemius was informed that Iemitsu had died. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Ietsuna. The two descriptions of the young Ietsuna in the *dagregisters* were both made by an irreverent Zacharias Wagenaer. He gives an amusing account of the first audience during which he managed to catch a glimpse of Ietsuna. The Governor of Nagasaki, Kurokawa Yohyōe, and Commissioner Chikugo-no-kami escorted him to the audience hall, where

we had to kneel down and Chikugo-no-kami lay down four or five paces ahead of me around a corner and apparently kept peering to see when His Majesty would appear. [...] Because I wanted to know whether I had lain down on my face for such a long time for a human being or an owl or a monkey,

29 Dagregister Van Brouckhorst, 13 Jan. 1650.

30 Dagregister Coyett, 12 July 1648.

31 Dagregister Van Brouckhorst, 8 Apr. 1650.

32 Dagregister Sterthemius, 14 Nov. 1650.

33 *Ibidem*, 9 Jan. 1651.

34 Michel, Wolfgang, *Von Leipzig nach Japan. Der Chirurg und Handelsmann Caspar Schamberger (1623–1706)* (Tokyo/München: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 1999).

I decided while I had to lie there for a while longer, that when rising, I would look around freely for the reason that I had appeared here. And indeed, when I was ordered to rise and leave, I did so unabashedly and I discerned a fine fellow.³⁵

After his second audience he came away with a more favourable impression of the young Shogun: “I was awarded a better opportunity than two years ago to behold His Majesty. I observed him well – standing upright with bared head. I thought that he had become more manly. He was dressed in just a plain black gown covering dark blue baggy trousers.”³⁶

In view of Ietsuna’s youth, the VOC – eager to court the Shogun’s favour – thought that he would appreciate rare animals to entertain him. The two small, beautifully caparisoned Bengali oxen drawing a carriage presented to him in 1659 had been a great success, and so was a cassowary in 1657, but the animal which really took Ietsuna’s fancy was an ostrich, presented to him in 1658. Ietsuna was so delighted with this bird that he had six men look after it and he wanted to know all there was to know about it. But he did not enjoy the ostrich for very long. The big bird, which had survived the severe jostling it received when it was being taken to safety during the fire which raged in Edo while the Dutch were in the city, succumbed to all the attention lavished on it just a few months after its presentation. Back in Nagasaki, Johannes Boucheljon was told that “the Shogun had taken much pleasure every day in seeing it run. One rainy day, while running, it had hit its chest against some wood lying about there and it had fallen to the ground and within view of the Shogun it died. Apparently they have chased the bird too much and tired it out and thereby killed it.”³⁷

The aforementioned fire was the second of the three great conflagrations in Edo which the Dutch witnessed. Both *opperhoofden* who were

eyewitnesses – Wagenaer and Boucheljon, the latter twice – have left us an account of these disasters. Although the fire of 1658 caused enormous damage, that of 1657 has gone down in the annals as the Great Meireki Fire. The inferno of 2 March 1657, in which more than 100,000 people are thought to have died, is well known in Japanese literature, but few accounts can compete with the chilling eyewitness report by Zacharias Wagenaer.³⁸ He and his party escaped from the fire unscathed, save for their Japanese cook, who fell to his death in his attempt to escape. According to Wagenaer, the real cause of the fire was not known: “Some say that it has been caused by carelessness, which is usually the cause here, others insist that it has been arson and that the fire had deliberately been started in several places.”³⁹ The *dagregisters* do indeed frequently mention arsonists being caught.⁴⁰ This contradicts the more poetic accounts in Japanese literature, suggesting that the fires had been involuntarily caused by imprudent women. One version has it that the Meireki Fire was caused by a kimono sleeve (*furisode*) catching fire.

The *opperhoofden* noted with amazement the speed with which the houses were being rebuilt after each conflagration. The Tokugawa government gave the victims of the fires huge financial assistance. Inoue was granted 10,000 gold *koban* or 660,000 taels by the Shogun for the building of a new mansion and it was reported that every day for many months sixteen horses packed with 48,000 taels of the Shogun’s silver would travel from Osaka to Edo to provide for the needs of the Edo population. Those costly shipments were not accompanied by

35 Dagregister Wagenaer, 27 Feb. 1657.

36 Dagregister Wagenaer, 19 Apr. 1659.

37 Dagregister Boucheljon, 14 July 1658.

38 Dagregister Wagenaer, 2–9 Mar. 1657. Arnoldus Montanus also published an account of this great fire a few years later in: Montanus, Arnoldus, *Gedenkwaardige Gesantschappen der Oost-Indische Maetschappij in 't Vereenigde Nederland aan de Kaisaren van Japan* (Amsterdam: Van Meurs, 1669).

39 Dagregister Wagenaer, 4 Mar. 1657.

40 See, for instance, Dagregister Happart, 4 Feb. 1654; and Van Dam, *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, Vol. 11-1, p. 420, who points his finger at *kale adel* (impoverished nobility).

any guards at all.⁴¹ This shows how well-organized and thoroughly disciplined the Tokugawa police state really was. The Dutch claimed that there were spies everywhere. Posing as *yamabushi* (mountain priests) or assuming other guises, spies were dispatched throughout the empire to undertake secret investigations.⁴² As a result, all officials had to go about their duties in the knowledge that their conduct was continually under close scrutiny.⁴³

Apart from being exposed to the danger of being roasted alive during their stay in Edo, the Dutch also had to face the perils at sea on their travels to and from the capital. In view of these hazards, the Japanese authorities decided that the Dutch party would take the route overland from Nagasaki to Kokura and vice-versa, and they should travel to Edo only after the Japanese New Year, when the harsh winter season and the shortest days had passed. Therefore, in 1659, Wagenaer was the first to follow this route on his way back from Edo, although the unrelenting rain made travel over the muddy roads heavy going and the farmhouses on the way were not equipped to accommodate these foreign travellers and could not provide the comforts to which they had become accustomed on the Tōkaidō. In March 1660, after he had had to flee a raging fire for the second time, Boucheljon was told that the court had decreed that, in future, the Dutch should travel to Edo two months later, and arrive in Edo in *Sangatsu* (the third month), which meant that Spring would have arrived and there would not be as many fires.⁴⁴ This change in the date of departure from Deshima affected the descriptions of the journey: for instance, we no longer read about servants of the inns at which the Dutch party lodged running around throwing roasted beans against the ceiling while shouting “Pha” to drive out the devil on New Year’s Eve.

Another welcome change which was finally granted by the Japanese government after many

years of petitioning was permission to bury a deceased foreigner in Japanese soil. After the move to Nagasaki, the Dutch were denied burial of their deceased on land and the corpses were taken out to sea and committed to the deep. The reason given for this was “because in the past, when a Christian had been buried, some people had gone to the grave by night and had opened it to take out a piece of his body to keep as a holy relic.” For many years this compulsory sea burial was a sensitive issue for the Dutch, because denying someone a proper burial was a fate which befell only criminals.⁴⁵ The death of Junior Merchant Otto Wacker in Edo in 1654 provided the breakthrough. He was buried by the Japanese in a temple in Asakusa.⁴⁶ Nine years earlier, *Oppperhoofd* Overtwater’s servant from Lamey had also been buried near Edo, “somewhere in the wilderness in a very deep hole, because the shallowness of the sea around here, in which the people and His Majesty himself go fishing, does not permit the body to be thrown in it.”⁴⁷ Acknowledging these instances – if burial on land had been approved in Edo, it should also be approved in Nagasaki –, the Japanese authorities relented and, on his last day in charge of the Dutch factory, Happart was informed that in future the Dutch dead could be buried “in the Japanese way in the ground, laid in a large box or barrel, without any ceremonies”.⁴⁸

The first to be accorded this honour was Jacob Heijndricksen, a sailor who drowned. Two Dutchmen were allowed to attend his burial among Chinese graves at Inasa. He was not buried in the Japanese way, that is crammed into a barrel, but he was laid in a coffin. The Japanese covered the grave with turf and stones and in the centre they planted a small cypress tree.⁴⁹ Inasa, the mountain opposite Deshima on the other side of Nagasaki Bay, would be the final resting place of all VOC personnel who

41 Dagregister Boucheljon, 24 Feb., 17, 19 Mar. 1658.

42 Dagregister Coyett, 26 June 1653.

43 Dagregister Winnincx, 11 Feb. 1655.

44 Dagregister Boucheljon, 2, 14 Mar. 1660.

45 Dagregister Happart, 25 Feb. 1654.

46 Dagregister Happart, 23–24 Feb. 1654.

47 Dagregister Overtwater, 1 Feb. 1645.

48 Dagregister Happart, 31 Oct. 1654.

49 Dagregister Winnincx, 7–9 Oct. 1655.

died in Nagasaki until the closure of the Dutch factory.

There were two other issues which rankled and were raised by every *opperhoofd* – the obligatory date of departure on the 20th day of the 9th lunar month and the ships' hatches which had to be sealed and opened by the governors' officials every time goods were taken from or stored in the hold. The first issue, the fixed departure date was a shogunal order which the Japanese officials could not countermand and any postponement would always remain an exceptional favour at the governor's discretion. The second, having the ships' hatches sealed, was not a shogunal order but had been introduced by Baba Saburōzaemon, Governor of Nagasaki. But even after his death in 1657, this matter could not be resolved to the satisfaction of the VOC servants.⁵⁰

One shogunal order which was breached by the Dutch was the ban on the observance of any religious activity. In 1651, Pieter Sterthemius was informed that: "on the past strict orders of the Shogun we [the Dutch] should not celebrate the Sabbath or any other holy days or display any signs of this either in our dress or anything extraordinary. We should especially be careful not to show any Christian books to Japanese eyes, much less disclose anything of that nature to them."⁵¹ But on 1 January 1659, in a New Year's resolution, Zacharias Wagenaer, Hendrick Indijck and a few other members of the factory decided to better their lives beginning with their religion, which would call for them to exercise their duty to God. They would come together every evening in "one of the most suitable warehouses and glorify God's name, notwithstanding the ban on practising [their] religion in private or openly".

A few of the previous *opperhoofden* had already introduced saying prayers openly at table, and it had become "a fine established custom". They were not afraid of the interpreters informing on them, for they were used to turning a blind eye to it. Whenever

they noticed that the Dutch were about to praise God aloud with heads uncovered, they left of their own accord until prayers had been said. By Wagenaer's time, the interpreters sometimes even remained sitting at the table with the Dutch until after grace had been said. Wagenaer and the others had taken heart from this and wished to go further and say evening prayers together. They were aware that, should they be found out, there would be repercussions, but the interpreters would suffer even more because they had kept their mouths shut. Wagenaer could not imagine that the interpreters would stir up any trouble without giving him due warning, for their own livelihood depended on the well-being of the Company. On 2 January 1659 the Dutch said evening prayers together for the first time in the European warehouse – so called because all the European goods were displayed there during the trading season. They were not able to sing one or two verses from the Psalms of David as they had intended, but they would try to do so on other occasions.⁵²

In this matter Wagenaer considered the interpreters to be civil, but he and the other *opperhoofden* were more likely to write disparagingly about their Japanese intermediaries and complain about them, feeling that they were ill served and "led like a dog on a leash by the interpreters. As long as it is plain sailing and it is for the aggrandizement of the Japanese, they are industrious men, but with the first gust of wind, which does not even diminish the Japanese pompousness, they lower the sails, creep into their shells and look away."⁵³

In this particular period the interpreters were still mainly Portuguese-language interpreters; Dutch-language interpreters were as yet in short supply. Inoue had his private interpreter, who spoke and read only Portuguese, no doubt because he was still hounding Portuguese priests. The interpreters were scions of a few select families and it was not easy for outsiders to be accepted for this position. In 1656, a certain Yosōemon, otherwise known as Brasman from Hirado, was added to the staff of interpreters.

50 Dagregister Boucheljon, 7 Dec. 1657.

51 Dagregister Sterthemius, 30 July 1651.

52 Dagregister Wagenaer, 1–2 Jan. 1659.

53 Dagregister Winnincx, 25 Feb. 1655.

He had learnt to speak Dutch fluently many years before when the Dutch were still trading at Hirado. Unquestionably, some of the interpreters will have shamelessly misused their position to dupe the Dutch, but generally speaking one can only sympathize with these men who constantly had to steer a middle course between the incredibly strict bureaucracy of the Tokugawa shogunate and the ever distrustful Dutchmen. It was a love-hate relationship which would continue right into the nineteenth century. Bernard Lewis has noted the same fraught interaction in a penetrating study on the role of the dragomans or interpreters of the Ottomans.⁵⁴ In the Ottoman Empire, Westerners also voiced the usual complaints about the incompetence of the interpreters, often accusing them of disloyal behaviour. They were accused of serving their own interests; of selling their services to the highest bidder; of forming a sort of self-contained, coherent dragoman group which owed nobody any real loyalty.⁵⁵ The dragomans were also often accused of being pusillanimous, too frightened to execute their duties properly, the same charges levelled at the interpreters in Nagasaki.⁵⁶

One field in which the Japanese interpreters certainly made their mark in later times is that of the study of Western medicine. In this volume, a growing appreciation of Western medicine by the Japanese is already becoming more evident. Schamberger's successors – even though usually not mentioned by name by their respective *opperhoofden*, indicating the low rank they held in the VOC hierarchy – were regularly consulted by the Japanese officials and high-ranking nobles, both in Nagasaki and in Edo. Inoue especially took advantage of the presence of the surgeon who accompanied the *opperhoofd* on the court journey, consulting him about his own medical complaints, as he suffered excruciatingly from kidney stones and failing eyesight. He also

arranged for Mukai Genshō, an important Japanese doctor, to be instructed by the surgeon on Deshima. With the indispensable help of the interpreters, they laboriously composed a book on Western medicine as a New Year's gift for the Shogun, which sadly perished in the Great Meireki Fire.⁵⁷

Another Japanese physician who came to Deshima for tuition was Fantano Gento, the uncle of Suetsugu Heizō, the shogunal intendant of Nagasaki. The VOC surgeons also paid house calls to teach European medicine with the help of the interpreters. The Japanese doctors dutifully noted down these instructions, but the Dutch were not terribly impressed by the efforts of these studious souls, given *Opperhoofd* Gabriel Happart's dismissive remark that “these heathens, forever trying to learn from us, think that by some short discussion between them and a surgeon, happening extempore and unplanned, European surgery can be thoroughly understood.”⁵⁸

It must have been extremely difficult, if not sometimes impossible, for all parties concerned – Dutch and German surgeons, Japanese doctors, and the interpreters alike – to convey and have a proper understanding of how European plasters, salves, and medicines were concocted from oils, spices, and herbs, ingredients which were often not even available in Japan. The interpreters especially, caught in the middle of this confusion, must have been at their wits' end.

In Edo, patients of high birth for whom Japanese medicine had proved ineffectual, as a last resort sought help from the Dutch surgeon, who was then supposed to heal them on the spot. In a rare instance, when the problem was a badly healed broken leg, the surgeon was able to cure the patient, but in other cases he could only administer palliative medicines which offered some relief.

Not all patients were of noble birth. On 7 December 1656, the Governor of Nagasaki sent to ask *Opperhoofd* Wagenaer “to perform a most improper task on his behalf. One of his best hunting

54 Lewis, Bernard, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

55 *Ibidem*, p. 26.

56 Dagregister Coyett, 18 Oct. 1653.

57 Dagregister Wagenaer, 18 Jan., 20 Apr. 1657.

58 Dagregister Happart, 14 Feb. 1654.

dogs, a large bitch, recently suffered a bad injury around her nether parts when she had a litter of two puppies.” The governor was very fond of the animal and he would like the VOC surgeon attend to it. The surgeon had already refused and at first Wagenaer objected on his behalf, but in order not to cause offence, for an outright refusal would have been construed in this light, he prevailed upon the surgeon to do his best to cure the animal. One week later Governor Kiemon sent another patient: a pet monkey, whose tail had been burned when the governor was playing with it near the fire. Wagenaer sarcastically noted in his *dagregister*: “It is all about a monkey’s tail. Who ever heard of such strange cures! First a skinny bitch, now a monkey, after this it will probably be a cat or an owl. But we shall oblige this touchy big *cabessa* [chief] in every way, even if he were to send injured billy-goats, buffaloes, and pigs to us!”⁵⁹

One of the patients who sought a cure from the European surgeon was Inoue’s senior secretary, Inoue Genba, who had served as a shogunal commissioner in Nagasaki in 1647, when the Portuguese ambassador sailed into the bay.⁶⁰ It turned out that the poor man suffered from haemorrhoids, which “[he] had sustained through sodomy as a female bedfellow, having been Inoue’s catamite when he was a young boy.”⁶¹ This same Genba had interceded one year earlier when a jealous Inoue had ordered one of his “wives or whores” to commit *seppuku* because of fornication with another man. When *Oppehoofd* Happart expressed his amazement, because this was the first time that he heard that a woman had had to commit *seppuku*, he was soon put straight: the person concerned was not a woman but a young man. Without any trace of embarrassment, he was told that not only was it common practice among the high Japanese officials to have bugger boys, but these were usually raised to high positions by their masters. Likewise,

Inoue himself was said to have slept with the former Shogun Iemitsu when he was a young man.⁶² The culture shock was complete when Happart’s successor, Leonard Winnincx, realized that some of the Nagasaki *burgemeesters* suspected him of sodomy, because they could not understand how “the Dutchmen could control their carnal desires without resorting to this practice, for they had not heard of any whores visiting Deshima”.⁶³ Sodomy might have been widespread in Japan, but in those years it was a capital crime in the Netherlands.

From another source we learn that just a few years before, Inoue seemed to have made advances to a member of the Dutch mission to the shogunal court. Olof Eriksson Willman, the Swedish manservant of *Oppehoofd* Adriaen van der Burgh, appears to have been propositioned by Inoue during a visit. In ‘A Brief Account of the Kingdom of Japan’, appended to his journal, Willman mentions that “something occurred which I cannot write about out of Politeness” but that he replied that “because of this one Sin four Cities perished in the Land of Judea, in such Manner that Fire and Sulphur rained on them from Heaven, which is still burning to this Day.” Chikugo-no-kami pondered upon this for a considerable time, and finally answered through the interpreter: “Is this true? Then the whole of Japan ought to be set on Fire.”⁶⁴ This meeting must have taken place on 14 February 1652, for Van der Burgh mentions in his *dagregister* that on that day Chikugo-no-kami had ‘my servant’ (Willman) sit by his side; an honour Van der Burgh had not enjoyed, which piqued the Dutch *opperhoofd*.⁶⁵ Willman also mentions this exceptional honour and Van der Burgh’s pique on that day.⁶⁶ According to the

59 Dagregister Wagenaer, 7, 13 Dec. 1656.

60 Dagregister Happart, 12 Feb. 1654. Genba was then known as Okabe Uma-no-jō.

61 Dagregister Winnincx, 24 Feb. 1655.

62 Dagregister Happart, 2 Mar. 1654.

63 Dagregister Winnincx, 6 June 1655.

64 Willman, Olof Eriksson, *The Journal of Olof Eriksson Willman: From His Voyage to the Dutch East Indies and Japan, 1648–1654*, transl., annot., introd. Blomberg, Catharina (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2014), p. 66, note 244.

65 Dagregister Van der Burgh, 14 Feb. 1652.

66 Willman, *Journal*, p. 44.

dagregister, it was the last time that Willman was invited to Chikugo-no-kami's house.

This is one of two known recorded cases of a European having been propositioned by a Japanese for sexual favours. The other case occurred a little over a century later, in 1757, during the term of office of Herbert Vermeulen. Although the Japanese man who admitted to having made sexual advances to a young, unnamed Dutchman wintering on Deshima has not been identified, he was one of the eight senior and junior interpreters serving the Dutch. All interpreters signed a statement that this would not happen again on pain of dismissal from duty on the island.⁶⁷

It is puzzling that the *burgemeesters* mentioned above had not heard of any whores visiting Deshima, because prostitutes had been allowed on the island since 1641. According to Maximilaen Le Maire's *dagregister* of that year, placards had been published stating among other orders that, "whores were allowed to come on to the island, but no other women".⁶⁸ In fact, in 1649 *Opperhoofd* Dircq Snoucq tried to get public women banned from Deshima during the trading season "because of the many disturbances and the debauchery, which led to accidents".⁶⁹

67 In his biography of Isaac Titsingh, Frank Lequin published the transcription of Titsingh's handwritten copy of a document from the VOC's Japan archive with the same contents. Lequin does not mention or refer to the original document (stamped with the seals of the interpreters), which can be found in the Archive of the Dutch Factory in Japan (NFI 619, Incoming and outgoing correspondence with Japanese authorities. Deshima, 20 Dec. 1757). Either Titsingh or Lequin made an error in copying the sixth name in the list of the eight interpreters who stamped the document, the correct name being Nalabajasi Zjoeemon (Narabayashi Jüemon) and not Nalabesjasi Zensabroo. Lequin, Frank, *Isaac Titsingh (1745–1812), een passie voor Japan leven en werk van de grondlegger van de Europese Japanologie* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto/Repro-Holland, 2002), p. 242. There was no interpreter by the name of Narabayashi Zensaburō. Zensaburō was the personal name of Nishi, the fifth interpreter on the list.

68 *Dagregister* Le Maire, 19 Aug. 1641.

69 *Dagregister* Snoucq, 13 Aug. 1649.

The presence of a prostitute on the island could indeed lead to debauchery and disturbances, witness the incident involving the Junior Surgeon Marten Remeij. After having spent three nights in a row with a *keisei*, a prostitute, "in unbridled lust and debauchery" on Deshima, he ran away because he could no longer have her. The whole island had to be searched; he was nowhere to be found. Because both Remeij, a mestizo from Formosa, and the *keisei* spoke and understood Chinese, all the Chinese junks were searched from top to bottom, and also "thousands of Japanese citizens, and especially the ruffians in the whores' street had to allow their houses to be searched". Vessels went out to trawl the bay with fishing nets, with no result. To everyone's relief, the fugitive was caught two days after his disappearance, when hunger forced him to venture out of his hiding place.⁷⁰

This is a rare mention of the prostitutes from Maruyama who regularly visited the lonely Dutchmen on Deshima, whose life was quite different from that of their predecessors in Hirado. There all Dutch *opperhoofden* had lived with Japanese concubines (*mekake*) and fathered children by them.⁷¹ Not until the end of the eighteenth century do we find more references to Japanese women in either the *dagregisters* or the personal correspondence of Company servants.⁷²

70 *Dagregister* Wagenaer, 13–15 Oct. 1659. This tale was already being recounted in the seventeenth century by Montanus in his *Gedenkwaardige Gesantschappen*, pp. 402–403. See also Vos, Frits, 'Forgotten Foibles – Love and the Dutch at Dejima (1641–1854)', in: Brüll, Lydia, and Kemper, Ulrich (eds), *Asien – Tradition und Fortschritt. Festschrift für Horst Hammitzsch zu seinem 60. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1971), pp. 628–629.

71 Blussé, Leonard, *Bitter Bonds: a colonial divorce drama of the seventeenth century* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener NJ, 2002), pp. 35–37.

72 See, for instance, Appendices 2 and 3: 'Private notes' kept by Deputy Jean Baptist Ricard and Assistant Johannes Jacobus Smits during the court journey of *Opperhoofd* Hemmij, 1794', in: Blussé, Leonard, Viallé, Cynthia, Rummelink, Willem, and Daalen, Isabel van (eds), *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740–1800* (Tokyo: Japan-Netherlands Institute, 2004). See also

In this decade, 1650–1660, there were at least two exceptions to the abovementioned order that no females but whores were allowed on the island. On Christmas Eve 1657, Johannes Boucheljon wrote in his *dagregister* that, “[he] received a surprise visit from Intendant Heizō and his mother. She was carried in a *norimono*. They were accompanied by many male and female servants. [...] This is the first time since the Company moved here from Hirado, that a few honourable ladies had visited this island. We were much surprised by this, as were the interpreters and everyone in the city.” The ostensible reason for their visit was to satisfy their curiosity, for they asked to be shown the rarities and the other strange things in the factory, such as the recently imported fire engine.⁷³ The other exception was an eight-year-old girl from Formosa, who had been on a Dutch ship which had drifted from Tanshui on her way to Tayouan. She aroused the curiosity of the Governor of Nagasaki when he learnt about her presence on board the ship. He even came to Deshima on purpose to have a second look at her.⁷⁴

The Dutchmen saw very few women, not only because they were living in such isolation, but also because Japanese women were not allowed much freedom in public life anyway. Both Winnincx and Wagenaer noted that, on the third day of the third Japanese lunar month (*Sangatsu sannichi*), “all the women in the country are allowed to come out of their hiding places and enjoy themselves, sail out and look for shells along the sea shore when the tide is out. Shortlived joy, for as soon as they return home, they have to creep back into their shells, hidden away from everybody.”⁷⁵

Wagenaer’s description of his accidental encounter with female divers on his way to the shogunal court is undeniably of great interest. Riding at anchor in the Bay of Yobuko, he heard about a whale having been caught and went to have a look

at it. On his way back to the barge, he passed by a fishing boat from which women were diving for *awabi* (abalone). His vivid account of these divers, shivering around the fire on a late February day, and then repeatedly diving five or six fathoms deep into the icy water to collect the shellfish for their meagre livelihood, is full of unexpected empathy from a man who more often than not resorted to sarcasm to express himself.⁷⁶

We have cited amply from Zacharias Wagenaer’s two *dagregisters*. Among the remarkable heads of the Dutch factory featuring in this second decade – Gabriel Happart from Zeeland, who liked to show off his knowledge of Latin and was according to Chikugo-no-kami “small of stature, but great of heart”;⁷⁷ the diplomatic Johannes Boucheljon, who rose through the ranks in Japan; and the more formal later Governor of Formosa, Frederik Coyett – it is Wagenaer who stands out. Here follows a short biography of this remarkable man.

Zacharias Wagenaer – or Wagner – was born in Dresden-Neustadt in 1614, the son of a painter.⁷⁸ He went to Amsterdam in 1633 and took up employment with Willem Janszoon Blaeu, the leading map- and book-publisher of the time. The next year Wagenaer entered the service of the Dutch West India Company and he spent several years in Recife, the capital of Dutch Brazil, working as a clerk. Under the patronage of the governor of the Dutch colony, Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, artists and scientists studied and painted different aspects of the country. Wagenaer also compiled a pictorial account of Dutch Brazil: *Thierbuch*.⁷⁹ It contains

Lequin, Frank, *The Private Correspondence of Isaac Titsingh*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1990).

73 Dagregister Boucheljon, 24 Dec. 1657.

74 Dagregister Wagenaer, 1 July 1657.

75 Dagregister Winnincx, 9 Apr. 1655, and Dagregister Wagenaer, 16 Apr. 1657.

76 Dagregister Wagenaer, 18 Feb. 1659.

77 Dagregister Happart, 10 Mar. 1654.

78 All biographical data about Wagenaer have been taken from Kees Zandvliet’s article ‘Zacharias Wagenaer 1614–1668. A Life in the Service of the Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company’, in: Holland Village Museum Nagasaki (ed.), *The Dutch East India Company in the 17th Century. Life and Work of Zacharias Wagenaer (1614–1668)* (Nagasaki, 1987).

79 The *Thierbuch* has been published by Teixeira, Dante Martins, e.a. as *The “Thierbuch” and “Autobiography” of Zacharias Wagener* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Index, 1997).

drawings of animals, fruits, and Indians, as well as scenes from everyday life. Among the sketches of Indians we find one of a Tapuya man and woman. Consequently, it is intriguing to read in Happart's *dagregister* that, in one of the meetings he had with Inoue, the commissioner questioned him about the Dutch presence in Brazil and about the cannibal Tapuya of whom he had heard.⁸⁰ One wonders how Inoue had learnt of these people, because this was before Wagenaer set foot in Japan.

In 1641 Wagenaer returned to Dresden. The next year he travelled back to Amsterdam, where he joined the VOC. He sailed to Batavia and was appointed clerk and cartographer. In 1653 he led a trade mission to Canton to establish relations with the new Manchu rulers of China. The Manchu officials told him that the government in Batavia should send an ambassador to the Emperor's court in Peking. Two years later the High Government dispatched an embassy led by Pieter de Goyer and Jacob Keyzer to China. When sailing back from Canton in 1653, Wagenaer's ship encountered a junk from Quinam off the islands of Macao. Because the VOC was at war with Quinam, it was considered a fair prize. Some goods from the junk were seized but the Chinese on board were allowed to leave on the junk with the remaining goods. It turned out that the junk belonged to Coxinga.⁸¹ Thereafter the High Government decided that Coxinga should be recompensed for the goods Wagenaer had taken from the junk.⁸² The seizure of Coxinga's goods would also cause the Dutch problems in Japan because, a few years later when the VOC ships captured another Chinese junk belonging to Coxinga, the Chinese complained to the Governor of Nagasaki. This happened during Wagenaer's tenure and he had to give the Nagasaki authorities an account of this act. In his defence of the seizure of the junk by

the VOC ships, Wagenaer kept it well under wraps that he had been involved in the earlier incident. If one did not know better, one would never have been able to tell this from his account in his *dagregister*.⁸³

After his two postings in Japan – during which the export of Japanese porcelain really took off, although Wagenaer should not be credited with being the one to initiate it⁸⁴ – Wagenaer led another trade mission, this time to Macassar, to secure a monopoly on the trade in spices. On his return, he was appointed supervisor of public works in Batavia. He resigned in 1661, after which he was appointed commander of the Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope as a successor to Jan van Riebeeck. In 1666 Wagenaer returned to Batavia. A year later he was appointed ambassador to the *Susuhunan* of Mataram. At the end of 1667 Wagenaer expressed his wish to return to Europe and he was appointed vice-admiral of the homeward-bound fleet. He arrived in Zeeland in July 1668 and travelled overland to Amsterdam, where he died a few months later in October. He was buried there in the Oude Kerk. Few of the *opperhoofden* of the Dutch factory in Japan could boast such a varied and colourful career.

Another colourful character, but one of whom the Dutch were wary, was their adversary Coxinga, the Chinese warlord Zheng Chenggong referred to earlier. His battles with the Manchu rulers of China are often mentioned in this volume and rumours of his designs on Formosa had already reached the Dutch in Japan by the end of 1660. However powerful he might have been on the China Seas, his standing in Japan was very low, as he was a Japanese half-breed of low birth, the son of a Chinese pirate who had clawed his way to his present position by warfare and piracy. This also contributed to the humiliating rejection of the ambassador whom he sent to the Shogun in July 1658. Ostensibly the

80 Dagregister Happart, 14 Mar. 1654.

81 Dagregister Coyett, 12 Sept. 1653. *Generale Missiven van gouverneurs-generaal en raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, ed. Coolhaas, W.Ph., RGP 112 (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), Vol. II, p. 703, 19 Jan. 1654.

82 *Ibidem*, p. 742, 6 Feb. 1654.

83 Dagregister Wagenaer, 27 Aug. 1657.

84 See Viallé, Cynthia, 'Japanese porcelain for the Netherlands: the Records of the Dutch East India Company', in: *The Kyushu Ceramic Museum* (ed.), *The Voyage of Old-Imari Porcelains* (Arita: Kyushu Ceramic Museum, 2000), p. 176.

reason for this embassy was to thank the Shogun for having given permission for his mother to leave Japan to go to China in 1645.⁸⁵ He also wished to have his half-brother, a son of this woman but with a Japanese man, join him. However, the major contributing factor to the Japanese court's refusal to allow his ambassador to travel to Edo was the grave breach of etiquette committed by Coxinga. In a direct contravention of Japanese protocol, Coxinga's letter to the Shogun was addressed directly to the Shogun shorn of any honorifics. Moreover, he completely bypassed the Governors of Nagasaki and the councillors, who took great offence at this breach of protocol and sent Coxinga's ambassador away with his tail between his legs.⁸⁶

The Siamese embassy to the Shogun, which arrived in Nagasaki on 9 July 1656, met the same fate. In this case the ambassador claimed to be the representative of the new King of Siam, the old king having died. Investigations by the Japanese authorities, who also questioned the VOC servants on Deshima who had previously been stationed in Siam and the Chinese who had travelled on the Siamese ship, revealed that the claims were false. The ambassador was turned away, but he died while awaiting the decision of the Japanese government.⁸⁷

Conversely, the Korean embassy which came to congratulate the young Shogun Ietsuna on assuming the reins of power was given the full red-carpet treatment. Not without a hint of envy did the Dutch note the huge amount of capital which was spent on the reception of the Korean envoys, who were accorded the highest honours wherever they went.⁸⁸ The Koreans knew their place in the East Asian world order and observed the correct protocol in their relations with the Japanese government. Correct protocol and procedure was something that every *opperhoofd* of the Dutch factory in Japan had to learn if he wished to achieve anything. It

was something the Company servants invariably found very hard to understand. They had to learn that when they went to pay a complimentary visit to a Japanese official, whether he be a governor or a councillor, they should not submit a request mentioning trade; nor should they express their gratitude for any favours granted when they went to welcome someone. Each matter should be dealt with on the appropriate occasion; there was a time and place for everything.⁸⁹ “*Yagate* – Soon!” was the answer which the Dutch in Japan frequently received whenever they tried to find out whether their requests had been submitted to the Governors of Nagasaki or how much longer they would have to wait for an audience at the shogunal court in Edo.

To guide them in all matters, the *opperhoofden* had the help of the interpreters, and of course, when they were at the court, that of their patron, Inoue, while he was still in office. Inoue was the first person to whom the Dutch captain reported on his arrival in Edo. He advised the Dutch visitors on the selection of their gifts for the Shogun and the *Bakufu* officials and to whom gifts should be presented. He also arranged their audience at the court and acted as their intermediary with the councillors. However, in June 1658, *Oppperhoofd* Boucheljon was informed “that Commissioner Inoue Chikugo-no-kami ha[d] been discharged from his office because of his age – he [was] 76 – and a certain Hōjō Awa-no-kami ha[d] been appointed in his place.” This was not a welcome change.

When the Dutch party arrived in Edo in April 1659 for their annual audience with the Shogun, it became obvious that their old patron and friend indeed no longer wished to be involved in the selection of the gifts for the Shogun and the officials, but had deferred this task to the Governor of Nagasaki who was on duty in Edo. Nonetheless, the retired commissioner still offered the Dutch his friendship and assistance, especially in Edo, for as long as he lived.⁹⁰ He also appreciated the annual visit of the

85 This actually happened during the reign of Iemitsu, the father of the present shogun, Ietsuna.

86 Dagregister Boucheljon, 25, 26 July, 8 Oct. 1658.

87 *Ibidem*, 10, 14, 18, 21 July, 6 Oct. 1656.

88 *Ibidem*, 28 Oct., 14 Dec. 1655, 10, 17 and 18 Jan. 1656.

89 See, for instance, Dagregister Winnincx, 27 Dec. 1654, 25, 28 Feb., 8 July 1655.

90 Dagregister Wagenaer, 5 Apr. 1659.

Dutch, in particular the rarities from Europe which were brought for him on those occasions – such as Dutch smoked meat, of which he was inordinately fond⁹¹ – until his death in 1661.

Their old patron was gone, but there would still always be someone to remind the Company

servants of their place in the Japanese hierarchy; that in a culture where *yagate* was a way of life, patience was a virtue; and that in their interactions with Japanese officials, there would be occasions when it was best to bow their heads and murmur a deferential “*Kashikomatta!*”⁹²

91 Dagregister Boucheljon, 29 Feb. 1660.

92 “Understood!”; “Very well!”.