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# Cultural Mediation in Edo Japan

*Rangaku* as initiator of the process of questioning

the domestic discourse in *sakoku* Japan

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## 要旨

1600年、最初のオランダの商船として、遭難のため *Liefde* というネーデルランド連邦共和国の東インド会社の一隻は九州の豊後で停泊してしまった。30年後、1630年に第三代の将軍徳川家光によって打ち出された鎖国令に通じて、ヨーロッパの国々の中で唯一、オランダのみが日本との交易を継続することの許可を得た。その時から1853年の黒船来航まで、欧米の知識や科学、言語学という学問が日本の学者の中で人気になる傾向が見られた。それが蘭学時代の始まりとされている。

よく聞かれるように、江戸時代の日本では外国との接触があまり行われなかった。そのため、徳川幕府の下で行われた文化的な発展が過小評価されることもよく見られる。しかし杉本つとむや片桐一男、松方冬子らが論じた通り、実際には鎖国時代において東アジアの国々だけではなく、ヨーロッパの発展した科学的な知識や医学的な技術も蘭学者によって日本に普及された。そのため、明治維新の際に完成されたその現代化の過程は十七世紀に開始したとも言える。また日本は西洋化したアジアの国だという発言も世界中で広まったようだが、まずは西洋と東洋の定義が必要ではないだろうか。それを示すために、章1ではその二つの国の歴史的背景に焦点を当てる。

本書では、上記の疑問を明らかにするため、昔の日本とオランダの文化的アイデンティティーに対する主観的立場の曖昧さの解析に集中した。蘭学者が編集した書物を読み調べることで、その蘭学者の他者のアイデンティティーと自己のアイデンティティーを明らかにすることが出来ると考える。異文化や異人との接触により、自文化や価値の普遍性を疑うようになり、それに伴って両文化の特徴を目立たせることが出来るという私見は、この研究の根拠になる。特に章2はその文化の概念の問題を解決してみる試みと思ってもいい。

蘭学者の興味は、第一に西洋風の科学や医学だったと言えるが、紅毛人の書籍を読むために、まずオランダ語の理解が必要不可欠であった。そのため、多くの江戸の蘭学者と長崎通詞はその異言語を学び、文法書や辞書を編集し始めた。そのような人々を言語学者と名付けることがまだ適当ではないかもしれないが、確かに日本歴史上、西洋の言葉に関し

ての深い研究が初めてなされたのがオランダ語なのだった。その言語学的研究の影響や結果は章3と章4に示す。

また翻訳することは、ソース言語の単語から、ターゲット言語の単語にするプロセスに尽きず、それぞれの語彙の文化特異を重んじなければ起源の意味が全く通じないこともある。江戸時代の日本では、翻訳のプロセスが特に曖昧であったため、杉田玄白の有名な『解体新書』などオランダ語の原書を比較的に分析してみても、翻訳者が理解できなかった文や、意味が変わってしまった文が見られる。それらの誤差を分析することは、蘭学者たちから見た自己と他者に対しての視覚を明らかにする方法だとされている。この課題に関して、章5では多少の例が挙げられている。

また、歴史に遠い個人や組織の行為や視覚を評価したり、判断したりすることはこの研究の目的ではない。歴史学、文化学、言語学や翻訳学を合してその微妙な誤解を重んじることで、蘭学の中に隠れている悟性に達するのは、本書の前提になる。今日まで蘭学に関してこのような分析がなされたことがないとすれば、新たに開示される詳細だけではなく、革新的な研究を起こす動機になることに願いをかけるのが、本書である。

## INDEX

Preliminaries.....	p.8
Introduction.....	p.9

### CHAPTER I

#### The Historical Context - A closed Japan and the open Low Lands: an appearance

1.1. Birth of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands.....	p.13
1.2. The establishment of the United East India Company and why it succeeded.....	p.16
1.3. Japan's trade net in Asia: a <i>forced</i> interruption.....	p.20
1.4. The <i>sakoku</i> and the privileged relations with the VOC.....	p.22
1.5. The bureaucracy of Dejima, the new offices and the interpreters.....	p.23
1.6. The expedition to Edo, homage to the <i>shōgun</i> .....	p.26
1.7. The <i>Oranda fūsetsugaki</i> : an opening towards the West.....	p.28
1.8. The misconception of <i>imperialism</i> and <i>protectionism</i> .....	p.29

### CHAPTER II

#### Social Analysis - A mutual *misunderstanding* of each other

2.1. Preliminary tools' understanding.....	p.32
2.2. Analysis in two levels, presenting the <i>inside-outside</i> vision.....	p.33
2.3. The attitudes towards <i>foreignness</i> according to the meditations of Robyns.....	p.34
2.4. <i>Inside and outside</i> answers to ' <i>What is Dutch?</i> '.....	p.35

2.5. East and West, <i>what is Japanese?</i> .....	p.40
2.6. Domestic perception and rivalry between Dutch scholars.....	p.44
2.7. Acceptance of Western culture.....	p.46
2.8. The attitude towards Western medicine.....	p.51
2.9. The problems with empiricism and the introduction of science.....	p.54
2.10. Western astronomy, Chinese calendars and Japanese traditions.....	p.56
2.11. The study of chemistry and the realization of linguistic shortcomings.....	p.58
2.12. A societal amalgam, conclusive deductions.....	p.61

### CHAPTER III

#### Studying the language - Japan's first attempts to linguistics

3.1. <i>Vroegnieuwonderlands</i> or <i>Nieuwonderlands</i> ?.....	p.63
3.2. Motivations to study the Dutch language and language proficiency.....	p.66
3.3. Studying Dutch phonetics, the necessity of the <i>kana</i> syllabaries.....	p.72
3.4. The structure of the handbooks of Dutch grammar.....	p.77
3.4.1. AB Boek - Letterkunst.....	p.77
3.4.2. Enkele Woorden.....	p.78
3.4.3. Samenspraak.....	p.83
3.4.4. Opstellen.....	p.88
3.4.5. Cijfering.....	p.89
3.5. Explaining the Dutch pronunciation, <i>Wage Reigen</i> by Motoki Yoshinaga.....	p.89
3.6. Conclusive thoughts on the Japanese studies of the Dutch language.....	p.91

## CHAPTER IV

### Studying Dutch - The relativity of grammars

4.1. The First Grammar Books: Explaining the Concept of <i>Spraakunst</i> .....	p.93
4.2. Investigating a language: the parts of speech.....	p.95
4.3. Dutch grammar, a Japanese understanding of it.....	p.97
4.4. <i>Zelfstandige Naamwoorden</i> , the Nouns and their cases.....	p.98
4.5. <i>Werkwoorden</i> , the Verbs and their use.....	p.100
4.6. Other parts of speech.....	p.108
4.7. The influence of Western linguistics, conclusive thoughts.....	p.110

## CHAPTER V

### Analyzing Translations - Re-evaluation of translational *mistakes*

5.1. The concept of <i>mistake</i> , how to envision it.....	p.112
5.2. Sugita Genpaku's difficulties and translation choices.....	p.113
5.2.1. The difficulty of the language, Sugita's translating process.....	p.114
5.2.2. Shortcomings of Japanese science and the cultural specificity of ideas.....	p.119
5.3. The first studies of Western law and translations of Dutch legal texts.....	p.122
5.3.1. The translations of Dutch law texts by Mitsukuri Genpo.....	p.123
5.4. Evaluating translations according to their <i>mistakes</i> , conclusions.....	p.128
Conclusions.....	p.129
Bibliography.....	p.133

## Preliminaries

This research contains texts in Dutch and Japanese, although knowledge of such languages would be helpful it will not be taken for granted that the reader knows either of the two, nor that they are familiar with their history and cultures. For this reason, when considered necessary to understand the content, both languages will come with a translation in English. With regards to Japanese, the terms that will occur are going to be accompanied in their first instance by the original Japanese script version. The romanization will be, thus, provided according to the Hepburn system.

For the intrinsic nature of this study, many parts of text in earlier Dutch and Japanese will also appear. In this case the romanization of the Japanese text will be carried out according to the *kunrei-shiki* 訓令式 system, as it better fits the necessity to represent more faithfully the differences in characters utilized by the Japanese. This means, for example, that, when the name Doeff is written ツーフ in the original text, it will be translated into *dūfu*, instead of *zūfu* as compelled by the Hepburn system.

Special characters that will, thus, occur are the *long vowels*, namely the Latin letters for the vowels with the macron diacritic (*ā, ī, ū, ē, ō*). The Dutch language also features characters that are not used in English, namely the dieresis, or trema, used to separate the vowels into different syllables when they could be mistaken for diphthongs (*ä, ë, ï, ö, ü*) or the letter *ÿ*, that will be used to render the instances in which the digraph *ij* was handwritten as a single character in the original document.



## Introduction

To consider Japan a *westernized* Asian country is without any doubt a widespread belief, consistently soaked into the general opinion, as well as between the academic community of historians. When we think of Japan we are bound to eventually recognize the obvious role that the Meiji Restoration played to accompany the country towards the rapid *modernization* from the preceding Edo period, which unsurprisingly is oftentimes referred to as *feudal Japan*.

Many historians and scholars in Japanese studies have, nevertheless, been suggesting that the real starting point of such a transformation has to be found in the aforementioned Edo period which, as argued in this research, has frequently been overlooked from a cultural development point of view based on the so-called *sakoku* 鎖国<sup>1</sup> policy, that formally issued a complete ban on foreign contacts. Although it is true that the Tokugawa ruling experienced a notably low number of encounters, not only with Western ships, but also with Chinese traders, it is also agreed upon that during such a period Japan was not as isolated as the claims by the *shōgun* 将軍<sup>2</sup> initially seemed to be desiring. This idea has been most notably supported by well known scholars such as *Katagiri Kazuo* 片桐一男, *Sugimoto Tsutomu* 杉本つとむ and *Matsukata Fuyuko* 松方冬子, as well as many others.

While their position will be thoroughly analyzed further in this thesis, it will be argued that much of what caused the Meiji Restoration's pull towards the West actually directly originated from the *yōgaku* 洋学<sup>3</sup> movement and, in particular, the *rangaku* 蘭学<sup>4</sup> that were carried out in the Edo period. The fascinating features of these disciplines sprout not only from the influences they have had on the constitution of what we can now experience as 'Japan', but also, and some might say, most interestingly, from the interaction between two seemingly opposite cultures in a time where the concept of *culture* itself was extremely distant from what we might now define it to be.

When the economically commerce-based political system of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands (*De Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*) met the protectionist feudal *bakufu* 幕府<sup>5</sup> ruling the Japanese archipelago, numerous instances of incomprehension and

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<sup>1</sup> Literally *Country in Chains*;

<sup>2</sup> A *shōgun* was a warlord that during the Edo period belonged to the *Tokugawa* 徳川 family, de facto ruling Japan as the emperor lost his power;

<sup>3</sup> Literally *Western Studies*;

<sup>4</sup> Literally *Dutch Studies*;

<sup>5</sup> The government of the *shōgun*;

misunderstanding were, expectedly, bound to happen. Without any need to question the truthfulness of the popular saying '*You learn from making mistakes*' we will immerse ourselves in such instances of problematic communication between the Dutch and the Japanese in order to understand more deeply how both civilizations envisioned their worlds, what influenced such visions and how the interaction between them influenced each other.

When we talk about communication we must ultimately steer towards language and linguistics. These disciplines were, in fact, more or less directly, the prime obstacle the *rangakusha* 蘭学者<sup>6</sup> had to overcome, and will be dealt with as main focus of this research, approaching this subject holding the belief that, in most cases we will study, language will recur as a red thread tying them to one another. As a simplification, one might argue that the absence of a scientific method in Japan was not the initial issue generating the inability of the Japanese to grasp the content of the books they intended to study, as much as the lack of a thorough understanding of the language said method was being explained to them in.

Linguistics, though, was not the main interest that led the Japanese to approach the Dutch textbooks. This is reinforced by simply looking at the famous compilation of the iconic *Kaitai Shinsho* 解体新書 by *Sugita Genpaku* 杉田玄白, who believed in a fast and ready-to-use translation of Western medicine books at the cost of the accuracy of the language. Sugita, who was not a proper Dutch language student at the time, actually asked his Dutch scholar, and friend, to help him in his endeavor, which he compared to *being on a boat in the ocean with no paddle nor rudder*<sup>7</sup>. His name was *Maeno Ryōtaku* 前野良沢, but he ultimately refused to appear as a co-author on the book cover apparently because the two disagreed on the '*faster is better*' philosophy. This point allows us to very clearly state that a timid interest in (Dutch) linguistics was already born amongst Japanese scholars as early as the 18th century, at least. The study of a language, though, cannot be pursued as an isolated subject as all the aspects of a tongue mirror and are mirrored into the culture it developed in. That is why, even if we might translate the word *freedom* with the term *jiyū* 自由, the gravitas and the cultural references it could be alluding to will not be simply transferred to the Japanese word. This is the reason why, as we will see, the omni-comprehensive endeavor the Japanese translators of the Edo period burdened themselves with also featured many '*mistakes*', generated by a lack of knowledge of the *other*. One should not forget to put the word *mistakes* into

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<sup>6</sup> The Dutch studies scholars;

<sup>7</sup> Original quote: "その翌日、良沢が宅に集まり、前日のことを語り合ひ、先づ、かのターヘル・アナトミアの書にうち向ひしに、誠に艱難なき船の大海に乗り出だせしが如く、茫洋として寄るべきかたなく、ただあきれにあきれて居たるまでなり。", SUGITA, Genpaku, *Rangaku Kotohajime (Introduction to the Dutch Studies)*, Tōkyō, Iwanami Bunkō, 2015, 58th edition, pg. 37-38;

quotes here, because, as already argued, even though these instances of incomprehension undoubtedly *are* mistranslations and plainly faults, what they actually represent is the subconscious projection of the translators' own cultural backgrounds, that at the time were mostly based on Japanese and Chinese traditions and classics, into the foreignness of the so-called *Western science*. Understanding and studying these phenomena is the tool that will be used to unlock the realization of how the Dutch and the Japanese cultures differed from, interacted with and influenced each other during almost five centuries, starting from the late 16th century all the way to the early 20th while not disregarding the actual impact this long-term relationship had on modern Japan and Netherlands.

That said, we must not forget that when we think of these two countries, we should not make the mistake of ignoring the fact that they actually differed enormously from their current counterparts and such a research might also be helpful to actually comparatively study what they looked like in the past, since a foreign culture seldom overlooks differing details we could be accustomed to, and thus fail to notice. The same thing is certainly also true for their languages, that is why a deep understanding of the broad historical background intertwined with an analysis of what they understood of each other's languages is also called for.

At the same time a cautious mindfulness is required as we deal with concepts such as *Western* or *Eastern*, and particularly when approaching the oftentimes overused phrasing of a *westernized Japan*, and similar wordings, as the tendency to oversimplify cultural evolutions and interactions is as notable as avoidable. This is also something that will be meticulously taken care of, also stressing on the importance of the attitude of the Japanese translators against the foreignness and exoticness that the Dutch represented to them.

The attitude of the Japanese towards the *kōmōjin* 紅毛人<sup>8</sup> is undoubtedly the main focus of the research, but we should keep in mind that, although they could be considered more experienced in dealing with the foreign, also the Dutch were confronted with a new, exotic dimension that must have been completely alien to them. They too carried out studies of the Japanese archipelago's customs, political structure, bio-geological peculiarities and, most interestingly, language. This is especially evident in the work and production of the Dutch merchants' headmaster Hendrik Doeff who, after helping the Japanese interpreters to compile one of the first and most important Japanese-Dutch dictionaries, returned to his homeland and wrote a fascinating book collecting the memories

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<sup>8</sup> Literally *red-haired people*, the name the Japanese often used to refer to the Dutch because of their obvious different physical characteristics. The term actually originated in China. See IANNELLO, Tiziana, *Shōgun, kōmōjin e rangakusha. Le Compagnie delle Indie e l'apertura del Giappone alla tecnologia occidentale nei secoli XVII-XVIII (Shōgun, kōmōjin and rangakusha. The Dutch East India Companies and Japan's opening to western technology during the 17th and 18th centuries)*, Libreriauniversitaria.it edizioni, Webster srl, Padova, 2012, pg. 8;

that most stuck to his mind called *Herinneringen uit Japan*<sup>9</sup> (*Memories from Japan*) that will also provide us with many interesting research points.

This particular field of research is extremely wide and many parts are still to be sufficiently studied also because, by its own nature, the *rangaku* is strongly characterized by 'mistakes' and misunderstandings than cannot be necessarily explained simply by reading their books. We must, in fact, use our 21st century scholars' hindsight to grasp why they failed to render such a concept, and what can be learnt by that. Any effort will thus be made to analyze such *faults* and *misses*, while trying to refrain from biasing the results with any moral interpretation of historical events, which is not always a given in the context of cultural studies. The attitude towards the exotic and the ways in which individuals belonging to both cultures approached the *infiltration* of foreign elements into their own world will be case by case read through the four ways of confronting translation theorized by Clem Robyns<sup>10</sup>, in order to recognize the patterns concerning this type of phenomenon.

Clem Robyns' theories also necessarily trigger an analysis of the *inside* and *outside* rationalization of what *foreign* and *domestic* mean. The impossibility of the two to overlap, in this case of study, is most clearly evident, for example, in the *imperialistic* introduction to the Dutch grammar book *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst (Low German Grammar)* by Petrus Weiland that can hardly agree with the vision of Sugita Genpaku and *Ōtsuki Gentaku* 大槻玄沢 who considered the *kōmōjin* language to be more practical and yet used much less rationally as compared to Chinese.

In conclusion, this research is focused on the description of the interaction between two cultures, with no interest in posing questions about the rightfulness of each individual's interpretation of the other and of themselves, but learning from them, while being inspired by the motto expressed by the popular Dutch saying Doeff dedicated in 1814 to the eleventh *shōgun Tokugawa Ienari* 徳川家斉 the first time they met each other: '*Bergen en daalen ontmoeten elkander nooit, maar mensen wel.*'<sup>11</sup>; *Mountains and valleys never meet, but people do.*

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<sup>9</sup> DOEFF, Hendrik, *Herinneringen uit Japan (Memories from Japan)*, Bij de erven François Bohn, Haarlem, 1833;

<sup>10</sup> ROBYNS, Clem, *Eigen vertoog eerst - vertaling als een bedreiging voor culturele identiteit (Own discourse first - translation as a threat to cultural identity)*, published in *Denken over vertalen - Tekstboek vertaalwenschap (Thinking about translating - Textbook of Translation Studies)*, T. Naaijken, C Koster, H. Bloemen and C. Meijer, Uitgeverij Vantilt, Nijmegen, 2010; pg. 348-359;

<sup>11</sup> KAZUO, Katagiri, *Sore demo Edo wa Sakoku datta no ka - Oranda-yado Nihonbashi Nagasaki-ya (Was the country actually closed during the Edo period, then?)*, Tōkyō, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, N° 262 of the series *Rekishi Bunka Library*, 2008, pg. 15;

# I

## The Historical Context

### A closed Japan and the open Low Lands: an appearance

Anno 1600, the Dutch trading ship *Liefde* (*Love*), led by captain Jacob Quaeckerneck accidentally reaches the coasts of *Bungō* 豊後<sup>12</sup> in the North-Eastern Kyūshū<sup>13</sup> after surviving the shipwreck that sank the other four ships of the fleet it belonged to. Of the numerous crew members only a few managed to survive the unlucky fait they met, among them the English pilot William Adams famously succeeded to reach Japan alive<sup>14</sup>. His survival has been fundamental in the opening of the trades between the Dutch and the Japanese, that eventually became almost exclusionary.

Knowing the historical context in which the *rangaku* took place is required to understand the reasons why they happened the way they happened, what did both countries look like when they studied each other and what caused the successfulness of this relationship.

#### 1.1 Birth of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands

Way before becoming part of Charles V's Holy Roman Empire the Low Lands were one of the most flourishing European territories, relying on their productive agriculture and textile manufacturing, with their center in Antwerp, in the Flanders, and on commerce. Charles V has been particularly positive for the territory as he travelled often through his lands, while residing in Brussels, that was already a polyglot city, where the Dutch-speaking aristocracy from the North could meet with the francophone noblemen from Wallonia<sup>15</sup>.

Nonetheless, since the second half of the 16th century, a severe period of crisis broke out, mainly caused by the continually growing competition with the English textile commerce, and the

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<sup>12</sup> Today's *Ōita* 大分;

<sup>13</sup> The *Kyūshū* 九州 is one of main islands that constitute the Japanese archipelago, situated in the south. It is known for being the region to which *Nagasaki* 長崎 belongs;

<sup>14</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 29;

<sup>15</sup> BENIGNO Francesco, *L'età moderna - Dalla scoperta dell'America alla Restaurazione*, (*The modern age - From the discovery of America to the Restoration*) in collaboration with M. C. Giannini and N. Bazzano, Editori Laterza, Bari, 2005; pg. 117;

devaluation of German silver, following the increasing importations from the newly discovered Americas. At the same time, the territorial expansion of the northern regions of the Low Lands, thanks to the iconic *polder*<sup>16</sup> technology, allowed those territories to extensively expand their agricultural domains, leaving the south behind in the food-production field.

The socio-political situation was also extremely fragile as the territories were actually divided into 17 provinces differing in institutions, laws and cultures. The friction was also amplified by the presence of many protestant groups rebelling against Charles' Catholic affiliations. These factions had successfully been repressed and persecuted until Calvinism entered the Low Lands, reuniting all those individuals who had been emarginated for religious reasons, supported by the artisans in the south and lower aristocrats in the north<sup>17</sup>.

As the Calvinist ideology spread, the forces pulling further from the Spanish crown of Philip II grew stronger, since it was perceived as a threat to freedom of religion, fearing the introduction of the Inquisition, as it was not rare for a Spanish individual to be elected in the Council of State. The situation then escalated in 1566 with the so-called Dutch Revolt when a group of rebels marched to the court of Margaret of Parma, daughter of Charles V and Governor of the Netherlands, demanding an easement in the ruling and more religious freedom. Margaret had to concede it to her people, causing a tumultuous period of iconoclasm the Calvinists perpetrated towards the Catholics.

William I<sup>18</sup>, member of one of the most influential families of Dutch high aristocracy, sided with the Protestants, leading the now entitled Calvinists to inflate their demands. This was not appreciated by king Philip II who sent the army to regain control of those chaotic territories. The presence of the Spanish army was not accepted by the population, also because of its high costs and their frequent plunders, causing Margaret to step down as Governor. She was succeeded by the duke of Alba, a Spaniard. This event was felt as an infiltration of the Catholic monarchy into the Dutch ruling system and ultimately gave birth to a desire to reclaim the United Provinces from Philip II. At this point in history, in fact, a group of exiled noblemen reunited and started targeting Spanish ships while gaining control of many port cities.

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<sup>16</sup> The *polders* are tracts of land claimed from the sea, created by draining water through the usage of dykes. They are generally tightly connected with the Netherlands as their creation has been skilled and extensive throughout time in this country, also giving birth to the saying '*God created the world, but the Dutch created the Netherlands*'. Their connection to them is also visible from the fact that *polder* actually is a Dutch word;

<sup>17</sup> BENIGNO, pg. 118;

<sup>18</sup> William I, also known as William the Silent (*Willem de Zwijger*), belonged to the noble House of Orange-Nassau (*Huis van Oranje-Nassau*) that especially starting from Willem I played a central role in the constitution of the Republic of the Netherlands;

At the same time both William I and his brother Louis of Nassau independently led their armies respectively in the east (starting his march in Germany where William had previously escaped) and in the south, to snatch from Philip II his territories. William thus settled in the northern region of Zeeland, of which he then gets nominated *stadhouder*, that basically meant being the head of state<sup>19</sup>.

As the Spanish kingdom started collapsing and ultimately bankrupting leaving the territories easily conquerable by the Calvinist rebelling forces, establishing in 1581 with the Act of Abjuration the United Provinces of which, in 1589, the States General (*Staten-Generaal* in Dutch) claim the control, recognizing the right of heritability of the command of the army to the Orange-Nassau family and electing Maurice of Nassau (The son of Willem I) as *stadhouder*<sup>20</sup>.

This new territorial entity was established with the intent to never allowing the Spanish crown to ever gaining back the control of any territory in the Low Lands, such a goal was also pursued through the alliance with Elizabeth I, queen of England. And was ultimately achieved in 1648, after the Thirty Years War, when Spain renounced her sovereignty of the United Provinces with the Treaty of Münster<sup>21</sup>.

The so-called *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden* (*Republic of the Seven United Netherlands*), founded in 1588, obtained ultimately its complete independence from the Spanish kingdom after 80 years of fierce revolts. Consequently, the relationship between the two territories was not the most peaceful, as they also collided often in their colonial expeditions and along their trading routes as we will see in the next paragraphs.

The country has also never been completely united thus, also, accounting for the linguistic differences that will be dealt with in 3.1. In particular the historical reasons behind the biggest differentiations between the northern languages and the southern ones, that still exist in modern Netherlands can be easily explained knowing the fragmentation consequential to the historical differences in politics and socio-economics.

The close contacts with the French-speaking communities, best represented by the city of Brussels, also explains why most grammar books the Dutch brought to Japan and based their own language's grammar books on were mostly French-Dutch manuals, as *Nieuwe Fransche en Nederduitsche spraakwyze*<sup>22</sup> by Pieter Marin, that was utilized by many *rangakusha* as the first Dutch language

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<sup>19</sup> BENIGNO, pg. 119-123;

<sup>20</sup> BENIGNO, pg. 124-126;

<sup>21</sup> BENIGNO, pg. 127;

<sup>22</sup> MARIN, Pieter, *Nieuwe Fransche en Nederduitsche spraakwyze vermeerderd met een uitvoerige syntaxis, of woord-schikking* (*New French and Low German way of speaking in addition to a comprehensive syntaxis*), By Jan van Eyl, Boekverkooper op den Dam, Amsterdam, 1752;

manual in Japan. This can be seen most evidently in *Rangaku Kaitei* 蘭学階梯 by Ōtsuki Gentaku and in *Oranda Yakusen* 和蘭訳筌 by Maeno Ryōtaku<sup>23</sup> as we will see in 3.4.3.

The skilled drainage techniques that the Dutch had to develop to create the polders that were fundamental in order to inhabit the peculiar environmental features characteristic of the Low Lands' geography and, as a consequence, the close, daily relationship with the waters played a key role in the exchange of scientific knowledge between the two civilizations. Japan, very similarly to the Netherlands, has always lived in contact with, and through the taming of, the seas and rivers that stream across the archipelago. In particular we will dive into this topic with regards to the Dutch impact in *Okayama* 岡山<sup>24</sup> in 2.12, this region, as well as much of Japan, could in fact be considered to be built on polders<sup>25</sup>.

## 1.2. The establishment of the United East India Company and why it succeeded

As a consequence of the historical events that took place in the early 16th century, in particular the impoverishment of the southern territories, the Low Lands experienced a remarkable migration from Brussels and, most evidently, from Antwerp, towards the richer northern areas. This is considered one of the factors that led to an increase in wealth<sup>26</sup> in the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Gelderland, Friesland, Utrecht and Overijssel and favored there the foundation of the first trading companies operating in Asia as early as 1594. They are now called *voorcompagnieën* (*pre-companies*) as they preceded the official foundation and nationalization of the United East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, shortened in *VOC*) in 1602, as ruled by the States General<sup>27</sup>.

The VOC, that since 1610 had its Governor-General (*Gouverneur-generaal van Nederlands Indië*) in Batavia (Today's Jakarta)<sup>28</sup>, has been fundamental in making the United Provinces the wealthy and influential country they were during the Golden Age (*Gouden Eeuw*), in particular the northern

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<sup>23</sup> KAZUO, Katagiri, *Edo jidai no tsūyakukan - Oranda tsūji no gogaku to jitsumu (The interpreters of the Edo period - The study of the language and the job of the interpreters of Dutch)*, Tōkyō, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2016, pg. 99;

<sup>24</sup> Okayama is a city located in the south of the *Honshū* 本州, Japan's main island. As we will see it has been an important place with regards to the Dutch studies;

<sup>25</sup> HARA, Ken'ichi, *Okayama Rangaku no Gunzō 2 (The Group of the Dutch studies in Okayama, vol. 2)*, Okayama, San'yō Hōsō Gakujutsu Bunka Zaidan, 2017, pp. 167-168;

<sup>26</sup> ROGGEMAN, Tomas, *De VOC en de Gouden Eeuw (The VOC and the Golden Age)*, Universiteit Gent, 2010, pg. 2;

<sup>27</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 29-30;

<sup>28</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 30;



regions after the 16th century's migrations from the South to the northern Amsterdam, Zeeland, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuizen<sup>29</sup>. This century of flourishing culture, science and economics the Netherlands experienced is, in fact, considered having started the same year the company was officially established and has been a driving force in leading the Dutch to Japan, engaging them in intensive trade and allowing such merchants to provide the *rangakusha* with valuable books concerning Western knowledge.

The Dutch had many reasons to sail towards the Far East. It is clear that the rivalry against the Spanish Kingdom, as seen in 1.1, and also the always growing Portuguese trading net<sup>30</sup> has been a strong pull towards such a decision. As opposed to the *nanbanjin* 南蛮人<sup>31</sup>, though, the Dutch never had any interest in converting to Christianity the Asian populations they encountered. The Catholic countries of Portugal and Spain were, in fact, strongly motivated in their expansion on colonial reasons, especially since 1549, after the initiation of the missionary duty in Japan of the Italian-Portuguese Jesuit Francis Xavier<sup>32</sup> who started spreading the *Western culture* in Japan<sup>33</sup> by taking with him the first copies of the Book of Gospels<sup>34</sup>, triggering the so-called *nanbangaku* 南蛮学<sup>35</sup>, considered the predecessors of the *rangaku*, representing the forerunners of the *yōgaku*<sup>36</sup>. The Catholic barbarians were then called *bateren* 伴天連, as a Japanese adaptation of the Portuguese word *padre*, 'father'. Their presence and proselytism had been tolerated until the *shōgun* understood they could have used their converts to overthrow the *bakufu*<sup>37</sup> and eventually subdue Japan as a *kirishitan* 切支丹 (*Christian*) country. Although the reliability of the source is highly questionable, being Doeff especially involved in painting a better image of the Dutch, it is interesting to read his words about it, in his book *Herinneringen uit Japan*. He claims that the Christian faith had spread in Japan without oppositions since the arrival of Francis Xavier in 1542 until 1586, as the '*Taico*' (A

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<sup>29</sup> ROGGEMAN, pg.2;

<sup>30</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 19;

<sup>31</sup> The term literally means *southern barbarians*, and is the name the Japanese gave to the Spanish and the Portuguese as they generally moored in the southern island of Kyūshū;

<sup>32</sup> Doeff calls him Franciscus Xaverius;

<sup>33</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 20;

<sup>34</sup> CORRADINI, Piero, *Cristiani nascosti in Giappone (Christians hidden in Japan)*, in *Il Giappone che cambia: Atti del XXIX Convegno di Studi sul Giappone*, by Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi - AISTUGIA, Florence, 2005, pp. 115;

<sup>35</sup> Literally the *southern barbarians' studies*;

<sup>36</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 40;

<sup>37</sup> "The Kirishitan band happened to reach Japan. Not only have they sent merchant vessels to exchange commodities, but they also spread a pernicious doctrine to confuse the right ones, so that they would change the government of the country and own the country. This will become a great catastrophe. We cannot but stop it." in HIGASHIBABA Ikuo, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan - Kirishitan Belief and Practice*, Brill, Leiden, 2001, p. 139;

term generally used to refer to the *daimyō* 大名<sup>38</sup> *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* 豊臣秀吉, from the Japanese word *taikō* 太閤) banned all things Christian. The reason Doeff provides is that such a deity could not fit in the pre-existing religious system (the *shintō* 神道) and that this could cause turbulence inside of the country, we can read his words as follow:

*"The Christian deity was first introduced in Japan by Franciscus Xaverius in 1542 and has remained there without any opposition until 1586, thus 44 years; nonetheless, in the lastly reported year the famous Emperor Taico ordered the demolishment of all the Christian churches, a ban on all his subjects to worship that deity any longer, and on the foreign missionaries, not, said Taico, because the deity was not good per se, but because He is irreconcilable with the older beliefs and morals of the land, and could have caused agitations in the Empire."*<sup>39</sup>

Doeff also gives the readers reasons why the Spanish and the Portuguese failed at building the same trustful trading relationship the VOC obtained. His words seem to be trying to discredit the value and intelligence of these Iberian populations as he claims he had been told that two were the main events that caused such a response from the *Hof van Taico* (The court of *Taico*). The first being the fact that a Portuguese priest apparently showed a lack of respect out of *foolish pride* (*dwazen hoogmoed*) when meeting with the government council<sup>40</sup>. The second one being a Spanish who was caught trying to leave with a chart of the Japanese archipelago, which was absolutely not permitted to anybody<sup>41</sup>. His response, allegedly, was that he needed that because the Kingdom of Spain was planning to conquer Japan after converting a sufficient part of the population<sup>42</sup>. Once again Doeff does not refrain himself from directly questioning the cleverness of his trading rivals, as he

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<sup>38</sup> Literally *great name*, it represented one of the highest charges a feudal lord could be invested with, at least until the end of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (安土桃山時代) in 1603. He was appointed by the *bakufu* to rule over a certain territory called *han* 藩;

<sup>39</sup> Full quote: "Eerst in 1542 is de Christelijke Godsdienst door FRANCISCUS XAVERIUS in *Japan* ingevoerd, en heeft, zonder eenige tegenkanting, tot in 1586, en dus 44 jaren lang plaats gehad; doch in laatstgemelde jaar gelastte de beroemde Keizer TAICO het afbreken van alle Christenkerken, verbood an alle zijne onderdanen, langer die Godsdienst te volgen, en verbande de vreemde Zendelingen, niet, zeide TAICO, omdat die Godsdienst op zich zelve niet deugt, maar omdat zij niet strookt met de oude eeredienst en zeden des lands, hetwelk onlusten in het Rijk zou verwekken." DOEFF, pg. 36-37;

<sup>40</sup> DOEFF, pg. 37;

<sup>41</sup> KURATA, Minako (Editor-in-chief), *Edo no Rangaku (Dutch Studies of Edo)*, *Bessetsu takarajima* 2483, Tōkyō, Takarajimasha, 2016, pg. 34;

<sup>42</sup> Full quote: "*Wij beginnen*, zeide hij, *met Geestelijken te zenden in de landen, die wij veroveren willen; deze halen het volk tot hunne Godsdienst over, en zoodra zij hierin verre gevorderd zijn, zendt men krijgsvolk, dat zich bij de nieuwbekeerden voegt, en de overigen zonder veel moeite ten onder brengt.*" DOEFF, pg. 37-38;

comments the words of said individual as spoken out of *foolish self-conceit or frivolity* (*dwaze laatdunkendheid of ligtzinnigheid*). Whether such events actually happened or not is highly questionable as the conflict of interests Doeff was immersed in are obvious and explicitly stated in the preface to his memoir, where he writes that one of the reasons for him to publish this book was to let people know how the Dutch succeeded into becoming trading partners with the Japanese, while the other countries failed, regardless of the numerous attempts to win over the United Provinces' hegemony<sup>43</sup>.

The Catholic countries of the Iberian Peninsula were not the only ones to aspire to receive the permission to open intensive trade routes with the shogunate. The British *East India Company* (EIC), in fact, approached Japan a few years after the arrival of the Dutch, also helped by Williams Adams, who already managed to give the VOC the privileges they demanded. The EIC showed a big amount of suspicion towards Adams, since they thought he could be actually sided with their competitors. They could also not trust the intentions of the *shōgun* when he initially offered them to build their trading post near *Edo* 江戸<sup>44</sup>, since the region *Kantō* 関東 seemed a worse strategic location than *Hirado* 平戸, in the Kyūshū, where the Dutch were settled<sup>45</sup>. A combination of low trust and bad decisions, along with the poor competitiveness of the products the British were exporting ultimately sentenced the relationship with Japan in 1623 with their willing retreat<sup>46</sup>. That did not stop them, nevertheless, to frequently attempt to bring down the overgrowing companionship between the Netherlands and Japan, as also complained by Doeff in his book:

*"The English have attempted in two occasions, through the most miserable means, to remove that flag from Decima; one should reference to the years 1813 and 1814, what kind of machinations they have operated and, thus can judge whether such a severe tribulation afforded them such a soft treatment, as presentend in a recent publication about the Dutch flag."*<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> DOEFF, pg. VI;

<sup>44</sup> Today's *Tōkyō* 東京, it used to be the capital of Japan during the eponymous period, and the place where the *shōgun*'s palace was located.

<sup>45</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 45-48;

<sup>46</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 48-52;

<sup>47</sup> Full quote: "Tot tweemaal toe hebben de Engelschen, door de allerslechtste middelen, gepoogd, die vlag van Decima te doen verdwijnen; men zal hier in de jaren 1813 en 1814 zien; van welke kuiperijen zij zich hebben bediend, en alsdan kunnen oordeelen, of zulk eene zware beproeving eene zoo vlugtige behandeling had verdiend, als in een onlangs uitgekomen werkje over de Hollandsche valg voorkomt.", DOEFF, pg. VI-VII;

To reinforce the opinion according to which the absence of religious purposes permitted the Dutch trades to flourish<sup>48</sup>, it could be also argued that, being the VOC subsidized by one of the world's first private stock-based systems and predecessor of the modern days limited companies<sup>49</sup>, its merchants were mostly motivated by what we could call *capitalistic* goals, meaning that their main interests were not political nor religious (the distinction between the two was especially blurred at that time), but rather on earning the most profit out of the expedition so that the shareholders were encouraged to keep foraging the company.

### 1.3 Japan's trade net in Asia: a *forced* interruption

The 16th century's trading context in Asia was extremely flourishing as it developed from the eastern countries, namely China, Taiwan, *Ryūkyū* 琉球<sup>50</sup>, Japan and Korea, all the way to Indonesia, India, Persia and Eastern Africa. China was of course at the core of such a thick net, favored by the policies the Ming dynasty put into place to regulate the sea trade of their kingdom. Such policies repurposed the three ports of Canton, Quanzhou and Ningbo to respectively get specialized in trading with Southwestern Asia, Ryūkyū Islands and Japan, in particular in the Kyūshū and Honshū islands.

Japan was also relatively operative in the commerce with Eastern Asia and mainly had two routes: the southern one mostly towards the Ryūkyū Islands, China, Taiwan and Southeastern Asia; and the western one, concerning the trades with Korea. The goods they exported were mostly silver and copper, while showing a high demand in silk and porcelain produced by China and India, and spices, pepper, tea, cotton and wood from Southeastern Asia. Such an intensive mobility also caused a notable presence of Japanese communities and *Nihon-machi* 日本町, *Little Japan*, all over Asia. Such neighborhoods were also used as shelters by the Christian-converts as soon as the *bakufu* started persecuting them<sup>51</sup>.

Nonetheless, the relationship with China has always been troubled, as freebooting was not a rare activity many Japanese sailors would engage in, the difference between Japanese merchants and

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<sup>48</sup> Being this a consequence of the fact that the Dutch, as seen in 1.1, were mostly Protestant, making them uninterested in missionary activities;

<sup>49</sup> ROGGEMAN, pg. 2;

<sup>50</sup> The Ryūkyū islands, now belonging to Japan, in the 16th century were still a different kingdom;

<sup>51</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 15;

pirates (*wakō* 倭寇) could be, in fact, considered blurry<sup>52</sup>. This issue, despite of the frequent appeals from the Chinese emperor to improve controls from the Japanese side, has never really been addressed by the *shōgun*, worsening the diplomatic contacts between the two countries, leading to many bans on Japanese trade, that ultimately escalated with the expansionary plans of the *daimyō* Toyotomi Hideyoshi in the second half of the 16th century<sup>53</sup>.

The gap between the Chinese and the Japanese, the markets of which still relied strongly on each other's products, was thus filled in by the Portuguese *naus da prata*, *silver ships*, which would sell Chinese silks and porcelains to Japan and then carry the precious Japanese silver to China, which undoubtedly has always had a thicker trading net in East Asia than any Western country ever had<sup>54</sup>, reaffirming their monopoly in Asian trades<sup>55</sup>.

The first Portuguese ship to reach the Japanese coast shipwrecked in 1543 in the city of *Tanegashima* 種子島, in southern Kyūshū, and its accidental arrival was happily welcomed by the *shōgun* who was incredibly interested in their artillery and, in particular, their arquebuses which are now actually called *tanegashima* in Japanese. The fascinating advancement of Western weaponry has, thus, been one of the main reasons why the *shōgun* decided to open to Portuguese<sup>56</sup> and Dutch trade<sup>57</sup>.

The first signs of deterioration of the friendship between the Japanese and the Portuguese could be traced back to 1576, when pope Gregory XIII instituted the diocese of Macao, owned by Portugal<sup>58</sup>, claiming its jurisdiction in China and Japan, incentivizing the Iberian missionaries to operate in Eastern Asia<sup>59</sup>. This and all the aforementioned factors led to the intensive persecutions against the *kirishitan* in the years 1614-15, that made the trading alliance even weaker and allowed the VOC to take advantage of it, also while assaulting Portuguese and Spanish ships sailing the Asian seas<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> CARIOTI, Patrizia, *Il cosiddetto sakoku: nuove linee e interpretazioni della storiografia giapponese circa la politica di "chiusura" varata dal bakufu Tokugawa del secolo XVII (The so-called sakoku: new interpretations of Japanese historiography with regards to the politics of "closure" enforced by the Tokugawa bakufu in the 17th century)* in *Giappone - Il futuro del passato: Atti del XXI Convegno di Studi sul Giappone*, by Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi - AISTUGIA, Rome, 1997, pg 99;

<sup>53</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 15-17;

<sup>54</sup> CARIOTI, pg. 92;

<sup>55</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 19;

<sup>56</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 18;

<sup>57</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 32;

<sup>58</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 19;

<sup>59</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 23;

<sup>60</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 36-37;

The shogunate was already oriented towards closing the country as it had already limited sea-trade to only the harbors of Hirado and Nagasaki in 1614<sup>61</sup>, and then issuing a first ban on books about the West in 1630, called *kinsho* 禁書, by third *shōgun Tokugawa Iemitsu* 徳川家光<sup>62</sup>. As we can understand, Japan was not able to maintain good diplomacy with the other Asian countries, all while fearing becoming a Christian colony of Portugal or Spain, leading them to prefer the isolationist policy that eventually escalated in the *sakoku*.

#### 1.4 The *sakoku* and the privileged relations with the VOC

The intensified persecutions against the Christians in the 1630s were followed by the 1636 decision to definitively move and confine the Portuguese trades in the artificial island of *Dejima* 出島<sup>63</sup> in Nagasaki and close the trading post of Hirado<sup>64</sup>, also as a compromise to the contrasts between those who were against and those who favored the foreign presence in Japanese territory<sup>65</sup>. This friction between the *bakufu* and the Portuguese ships created the perfect environment in which the Dutch could make their trades flourish and earn the trust of the *shōgun*. In 1637, in fact, they claimed to have come to know about an alleged alliance between Portugal, Spain and some Christian *daimyō* who apparently wanted to overthrow the shogunate<sup>66</sup>. In 1637-38 the Dutch artillery has also been fundamental in helping the *shōgun* suppress the Shimabara Rebellion (*shimabara no ran* 島原の乱), providing ultimate evidence of their trustworthiness and loyalty to the feudal lord of Japan<sup>67</sup>.

As a consequence<sup>68</sup>, in 1639, Iemitsu issued the *sakoku-rei* 鎖国令 policy, with the purpose of completely banning Christian missionaries from Japan once and for all with the installment of the Office for the Investigation of the Christians (*kirishitan shūmon aratame yaku* 切支丹宗門改役)<sup>69</sup> and ceasing the diplomatic contacts with Portugal, to which it has now been forbidden any mooring in Japanese territory. The *sakoku* also made it almost impossible for the Japanese to set sail for

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<sup>61</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 37;

<sup>62</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 43;

<sup>63</sup> Sometimes also romanized in *Deshima* or, especially in old Dutch documents, *Decima*;

<sup>64</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 67;

<sup>65</sup> GOODMAN, Grant Kohn, *Japan and the Dutch - 1600-1853*, Richmond, Routledge Curzon, 2000, pg. 11;

<sup>66</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 74-75;

<sup>67</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 76;

<sup>68</sup> An increase in ferociousness in Chinese competition is also believed to be one of the causes for the *sakoku*, see CARIOTI, pg. 96;

<sup>69</sup> The Christians were at times forced to participate to the *fumie* 踏み絵 ceremony in a Buddhist temple, consisting in stepping on the Christian cross as to deny their faith, CORRADINI, pg.117;

overseas countries, and the Japanese communities were, as well, treated with austere measures. Most of the infringements to these crimes were punishable by death, deeply conditioning the history of Japan until the forced abrogation of the *sakoku* in 1853<sup>70</sup>.

Despite the expectations of the *shōgun* were to limit the trades and contacts with foreign nations to the least encounters possible, the effect of the *sakoku* policy was to actually incentivize local merchants to rely massively on the commerce with the Dutch<sup>71</sup>. To regulate directly such trades the *bakufu* decided to move, in 1641 (two years after the Portuguese were expelled), the VOC's headquarters, *oranda shōkan* オランダ商館, in the island of Dejima where two *bugyō* 奉行<sup>72</sup> had been instituted by Hideoshi in 1592<sup>73</sup>, as they were commissioners directly controlled by the *shōgun*<sup>74</sup>. These local governors were charged with special duties concerning the bureaucratic processes with regards to the entrance of a new ship in the bay of Nagasaki<sup>75</sup>, as we will see in 3.2.

### 1.5 The bureaucracy of Dejima, the new offices and the interpreters

The creation of the Dutch trading post in Dejima required the formalization of new institutions and offices, both from the Japanese side and the VOC's, also considering that the island was actually rented by the *kōmōjin* who had to also take care of the furniture themselves<sup>76</sup>. The aforementioned *Nagasaki bugyō* 長崎奉行 held full executive power and were at the top of the administrative hierarchy<sup>77</sup>. They directly represented the central government in Edo and were asked to respond to any responsibility of what happened in Nagasaki<sup>78</sup>. Below the *bugyō*, inspecting the administration, there were the city elders, *machi-doshiyori* 町年寄 (the Dutch called them *stadburgmeester*, *mayor*), while to guarantee the fairness of the trades the *otona* 乙名 (called *wijkmeester*, *district masters* by the Dutch) were hired, who were also appointed to (dis)approve of the mooring of a Dutch ship and holding the keys to the *suimon* 水門, the gates of Dejima for the entrance by sea<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 67-76;

<sup>71</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 73;

<sup>72</sup> The *bugyō* was an *administrator* at the top of the bureaucratic management of a city;

<sup>73</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 25;

<sup>74</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 78;

<sup>75</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 3-4;

<sup>76</sup> GOODMAN, pg. 19;

<sup>77</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 81;

<sup>78</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 7;

<sup>79</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 81;

The structure of the *oranda shōkan*, was also formalized in a hierarchical structure, with the *opperhoofd*<sup>80</sup>, the head master, on top of it, with his vice-masters called *onderkoopmannen*. The *opperhoofd* was often accompanied by the *schrijver*, the scribe, appointed to take care of the compilation and recording of the diary of the masters. Probably, the most interesting figure for the Japanese people, as they were connected to the study of Western medicine, were the *oppermeesters* or *opperchirurgijnen*, the doctors, with their subordinates the *ondermeesters*. There was also a warehouse custodian (*pakhuismeester*) a bookkeeper (*boekhouder*) and many assistants (*assistent*) between whom also the Negros were counted, for a total of about 20 Dutchmen residing in Dejima at the same time. The presence of the slaves was a strong point of contention for the Japanese who disapproved of and despised strongly the way they were treated by the *kōmōjin*<sup>81</sup>. Ōtsuki Gentaku also writes about this issue in his *Ransetsu Benwaku* 蘭説弁惑 (*A clarification of misunderstandings in thoughts about the Dutch*) as a response to such misconception, most likely spread by the Dutch themselves, that would describe the Negros as *monkeys extremely good at swimming*. The *rangakusha* dismisses these claims asserting that "Among Negroes there is certainly a distinction between the noble and the lowly and the wise and the foolish, and people [there]... are no different from the rest of the mankind"<sup>82</sup>, a statement one could argue to be (one of) the first stance(s) against the racism that the colonizing West used to motivate its world-wide slavery.

The exit and entrance of any individual was strictly controlled through the only gated bridge that connected the island to Nagasaki. It was generally not allowed to any Dutch to cross the doors of Dejima, while the Japanese could only enter the city under permission, like the *teishiki dehairi shōnin* 定式出入り商人<sup>83</sup>, and only prostitutes and other rare exceptions were allowed to stay<sup>84</sup>. For these reasons, and because of the little number of Dutchmen residing in Dejima their daily routine must have been especially dull, encouraging them into indulging in frequent smoking, that became a characteristic of these foreigners (along with the Chinese) as evidenced by Gentaku in the aforementioned *Ransetsu Benwaku*<sup>85</sup>.

The presence of the VOC in Dejima also called for the recruitment of interpreters, *tsūji* 通詞, to mediate between the Dutch merchants and the locals. Nonetheless, at first, the interactions between

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<sup>80</sup> The *opperhoofd* was also sometimes called *opperkoopman* by the Dutch, and *shōkanchō* 商館長, or *oranda kapitan* オランダカピタン, by the Japanese, from the Portuguese word *capitão*, *captain*;

<sup>81</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 20-24;

<sup>82</sup> GOODMAN, Grant Kohn, *A translation of Ōtsuki Gentaku's Ransetsu Benwaku in Occasional Papers - Center for Japanese Studies No. 3*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1952, pg. 84;

<sup>83</sup> Traders who had the permission to meet the Dutch, DOEFF (2008), pg. 94;

<sup>84</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 82;

<sup>85</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pg. 83-84;



the two were mainly carried out in Portuguese, since it used to be the *lingua franca* of trading and all ships generally had a Portuguese interpreter on board<sup>86</sup>, thus, most of the Japanese interpreters that used to work with the *nanbanjin* language started specializing in learning the tongue of their new partners<sup>87</sup>. The first organized structure of Dutch interpreters was officially founded in 1656<sup>88</sup>, but the post has always been hereditary<sup>89</sup>. They were also arranged in a hierarchical structure with four *ōtsūji* 大通詞 at the top and four lower *kotsūji* 小通詞. As a first step to become an interpreter one would initially become a trainee, called *keikotsūji* 稽古通詞<sup>90</sup>. As the number of interpreters increased, two new offices were created, namely the assistants *joyaku* 助役 and the beginner trainees *kotsūji minarai* 小通詞見習. Below the main interpreters, the *naitōji* 内通詞 operated as trading assistants for the *kōmōjin*, according to their language proficiency<sup>91</sup>. The total number of interpreters counted, as estimated by Doeff, about 60-70 people, but he also claims the Chinese interpreters were more numerous<sup>92</sup>. The presence of the Dutch in Dejima has been constant since the foundation of the residence until the forced opening of Japan, demanded by American commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry in 1854. The relationship has been uninterrupted also during the Napoleonic Wars in early 19th century when the Netherlands lost their independence and resulted in Dejima being one of the few territories where the Dutch flag was still waving<sup>93</sup>.

Table 1<sup>94</sup> is the replication of the content of a document listing all the different offices inside the hierarchy of interpreters that, as it comes along with a Dutch translation of the Japanese terms, might suggest that this structure was also known to the agents of the VOC.

Dutch	Japanese	Meaning
<i>hollands tolk</i>	阿蘭陀通詞 <i>oranda tsūji</i>	Dutch interpreter
<i>dwars kijker</i>	目附 <i>Mezuke</i>	Observer
<i>Oppertolk</i>	大通詞 <i>Ōtsūji</i>	Senior interpreter

<sup>86</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 21;

<sup>87</sup> MATSUKATA, Fuyuko, *Oranda Fūsetsugaki - 'Sakoku' Nihon ni katarareta 'sekai'* (The Dutch news - The 'world' as told by Sakoku Japan), Tōkyō, Chūōkōron - Shinsha, 2010, pg. 4;

<sup>88</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 149;

<sup>89</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 87;

<sup>90</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 143, 144;

<sup>91</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 149;

<sup>92</sup> DOEFF, pg. 26;

<sup>93</sup> CHAIKLIN, Martha, *Monopolists to Middlemen: Dutch liberalism and American Imperialism in the Opening of Japan* in Journal of World History, Vol. 21, No. 2, University of Hawai'i Press, 2010, pg. 251;

<sup>94</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 150;

<i>Ondertolk</i>	小通詞 <i>Kotsūji</i>	Junior interpreter
<i>vies ondertolk</i>	小通詞並 <i>kotsūji-nami</i>	Junior interpreter, middle grade
<i>provisseneer ondertolk</i>	小通詞末席 <i>kotsūji-masseki</i>	Junior interpreter, lowest grade
<i>Leerling</i>	稽古通詞 <i>keikotsūji</i>	Apprentice interpreter
<i>leerling secunde</i>	稽古通詞見習 <i>keikotsūji-minarai</i>	Lower apprentice interpreter
<i>particulier tolk</i>	内通詞組頭(=小頭) <i>naitsūji-kumigashira</i>	interpreters who took a commission for interpreting during the annual sale of Dutch goods

**Table 1: Interpreters' offices with Dutch translation.**

## 1.6 The expedition to Edo, homage to the *shōgun*

The second *shōgun Tokugawa Hidetada* 徳川秀忠, as a way to reinforce his control over the distant regions that were ruled by the *daimyō*, implemented the policy of *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代. The term literally translates to *alternate attendance* and, as it suggests, required all the feudal lords to move periodically<sup>95</sup> to Edo, where their families were basically held hostage, to pay homage to the *shōgun*. This practice was a very successful way to keeping the *daimyō* reliant on the central government, and to impede their eventual gain of power in their local territories, so that they could not create any strategic alliance against the *shōgun*, while much of their wealth was required to be spent on the travel, called *Edo sanpu* 江戸参府<sup>96</sup>.

Such a pilgrimage was then extended to also the *opperhoofd* of Dejima, who had been granted the title of *daimyō* for this purpose<sup>97</sup>, it was called *hofreis* (or *hofreize*, *Court journey*) by the Dutch<sup>98</sup>, and was lived by both the *kōmōjin* and the Japanese as a unique opportunity to encounter with the foreigners and get in touch with their exotic looks, customs and items<sup>99</sup>, although, during the whole

<sup>95</sup> Initially each year, until 1764, when it started being once in two years and, ultimately, once in four years since 1790 to 1850 when it was canceled, see JANSSEN, Marius, *Rangaku and Westernization in Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Special Issue: Edo Culture and Its Modern Legacy, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 544;

<sup>96</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 101-104;

<sup>97</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 25;

<sup>98</sup> DOEFF, pg. 115;

<sup>99</sup> DOEFF, pg. 135;

journey, the Dutch were constantly controlled over as to impede any direct contact with the natives<sup>100</sup>.

The travel was divided into three main parts: the *kort landweg* (*short land trip*), ended in the city of *Shimonoseki* 下関, from which the *waterreis* (*water journey*) to *Murotsu* 室津, in the province of *Hyōgo* 兵庫, started. The last part was called *lang landweg* (*long land trip*, or *groot landweg*, according to Doeff<sup>101</sup>) and it led all the way to the *Oranda-yado* オランダ宿, the residence where the Dutch stayed during the *sankin kōtai*. As the interpreters had to compile the records, called *hikkeisho* 必携書, of what had actually been carried by the Dutch, we have gained knowledge of the presents that they usually offered to the *shōgun* and the *seishi* 世子<sup>102</sup> (*kenjōbutsu* 献上物) and those for the *bakufu kōkan* 幕府高官<sup>103</sup> (*shinmotsu* 進物), the goods they used to sell to traders during their trip and the personal belongings (*Nagasaki nimotsu* 長崎荷物) that surely were not unnoticed by the natives. The presents they carried were mostly precious cloths, but many foods (cheese and ham) and beverages (liquors) were also gifted to the *bakufu* officials. Similarly, the personal belongings were generally dairy products, cutlery, and birds that were purposed to be eaten<sup>104</sup>.

At the beginning of the official meeting between the *opperhoofd* and the *shōgun* it was codified to be occurring the *orei* 御礼 (*expression of gratitude*) by the Dutch head master offering his *kenjōbutsu*, to which the *henrei* 返礼 (*response gratitude*) was expected to follow, as the feudal lord offered his gifts (*kudasarumono* 被下物) and the *bugyō* of Nagasaki read the trading agreement (*gojōmoku* 御条目) reaffirming the permission to the VOC to engage in commerce with Japan and the possibility for them to remain settled in Dejima<sup>105</sup>. Doeff handed down to us the full text of such agreement, which he claims was also read yearly by the *bugyō* in Nagasaki at the departure of a Dutch ship. The content loosely translates as follows:

*"It has been, since ancient times, allowed to the Hollanders to come to Japan; and should they want to keep doing it, they must refrain from spreading the Christian deity in Japan. Should they come to know of any onslaught or alliance of foreigners against Japan, they must give notice to the*

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<sup>100</sup> DOEFF, pg. 4;

<sup>101</sup> Meaning *great land trip*, DOEFF, pg. 116;

<sup>102</sup> The descendants of the *shōgun*;

<sup>103</sup> The high officials of the shogunate;

<sup>104</sup> KAZUO (2008), pg. 33-37;

<sup>105</sup> KAZUO (2008), pg. 24;

governor of Nagasaki<sup>106</sup>. They must not interfere with the Chinese junks coming in and departing from Japan, they must let them sail freely. Similarly they must let the liquors sail freely, as Japan's subjects."<sup>107</sup>

## 1.7 The *Oranda fūsetsugaki*: an opening towards the West

On the occasion of the 1641 *Edo sanpu*, the *bakufu* provided the *shōkanchō* with two rules: first he limited the mooring of Dutch ships to the port of Nagasaki, secondly he forbade the introduction of a Catholic individual in Japan through a trading ship, if it was then proven that his presence had been willfully concealed to the Japanese authorities a complete ban on Dutch ships would have been put in place. At the same time, after having banned both the Portuguese and the Spanish, the *shōgun* realized he could not have access to any information about the Western forces he hugely felt threatened from. This convinced him to demand the VOC to provide the so called *Oranda fūsetsugaki* オランダ風説書 (*Dutch news document*) every time a new ship would arrive in Japan, ordered for the first time to the *opperhoofd* Jan van Elserack in 1641 by *shōgun* Iemitsu<sup>108</sup>. Such a document contained, as might be expected, information about the most recent as possible (most of the times meaning *old*) events in the world<sup>109</sup>.

The content of such *nieuws*<sup>110</sup> (*news*), as the Dutch used to call them<sup>111</sup>, was obviously not the whole truth the VOC knew, but rather, as admitted by Doeff, what the *kōmōjin* wanted the *bakufu* to get the knowledge of<sup>112</sup>. This was especially simple to do as the *shōgun* did not have any actual way

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<sup>106</sup> The *Nagasaki bugyō*;

<sup>107</sup> Original text: "Het is, van oude tijden af, aan de *Hollanders* toegestaan om in *Japan* te komen; zoo zij dit willen blijven doen, zullen zij zich wachten, de Christelijke Godsdienst in *Japan* te verbreiden. Zoo zij eenige aanslagen of ondernemingen van vreemden tegen *Japan* mogten vernemen, zullen zij daarvan aan den Gouverneur van *Nagasaki* kennis geven. De op *Japan* af- en aanvarende Chineesche jonken zullen zij op zee niet aandoen, maar vrij laten varen. De *Liqueërs* zullen zij, als onderdanen van *Japan*, insgelijks vrij laten varen.", DOEFF, pg. 144;

<sup>108</sup> KAZUO, Katagiri, *Oranda fūsetsu gaki shūsei (Collection of the Dutch news)*, Tōkyō, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, Rekishi Bunka Library, 1977, pg. 6;

<sup>109</sup> MATSUKATA, pg. 38-39;

<sup>110</sup> This is the name we find in the Dutch documents of the time, along with *tijdinken*, literally *time-inks*; IANNELLO (2012), pg. 97;

<sup>111</sup> As the Dutch had little participation into the compilation of the *fūsetsugaki* they did not have a name to call such document, they simply referred to them as news, MATSUKATA, pg. 17;

<sup>112</sup> DOEFF, pg. 159-160;

to (dis)prove the truthfulness of such *rumors* and they ended up being used by the Dutch as a way to discredit their competitors' reputations<sup>113</sup>.

This said, the *nieuws* were considered extremely valuable by the *shōgun*, and their compilation became soon one of the main requirements for a Dutch ship to be accepted in Japan. The way they were written down and handed to the *bakufu* was extremely codified and strict bureaucratic steps were to be abided to. As the ship moored in Dejima, the *opperhoofd* was summoned by the *bugyō* as the *tsūji* transcribed the oral reporting in Dutch of the captain of the new ship. Both *ōtsūji* and *kotsūji* were instructed to translate such words into Japanese, as the *bugyō* double checked their worthiness of being sent to the *bakufu*, where the *rōjū* 老中 (*Elders*) had to check them, once again. In case the letter was sentenced negatively the *bugyō* would have been held responsible and, thus, punished accordingly<sup>114</sup>.

Similarly, the traders of the VOC also used to bring over to Japan the Dutch newspapers from Batavia that at the time generally used to be translations of papers written in Italy, Germany or the United Kingdom, this is also a way the Dutch used to hinder the possibility of the Japanese to obtain detailed information about the outer world as such articles often featured English terms the *tsūji* could not quite get the meaning of, at least until the 18th century when they actually started also studying the language of the British<sup>115</sup>.

## **1.8 The misconception of *imperialism* and *protectionism***

With the knowledge we have this far acquired about the historical context from which the Netherlands and Japan rose to look like the countries they now (17th-18th century) are, we can proceed by analyzing how their interactions went about.

*Sakoku* Japan became rather obviously a quite isolationist feudal country, from the fear of the *bakufu* towards the rush of many European lands to conquer, subdue and, ultimately, found in such foreign countries their own colonies. Edo Japan can be confidently considered a *protectionist* land as a consequence of their limited contacts and export-imports with foreign countries. Although this is said to have had positive impact in domestic production and originated an increase in artisanship's

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<sup>113</sup> MATSUKATA, pg. 200;

<sup>114</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 7-11;

<sup>115</sup> MATSUKATA, pg. 81-87;

production, that can hardly be described as the *shōgun's* intentions, as the *itowappu* 糸割符<sup>116</sup> policy was enforced in 1604 by Ieyasu, as a way to halt the arbitrary increase in Portuguese-imported silk cost<sup>117</sup>. That said, Japan can also not be considered a *closed* country<sup>118</sup> because, as argued by Kazuo, Matsukata, and Sugimoto, the contacts it had were extended, yet limited, to the *four entry points, yotsu no kuchi* 四つの口 as Matsukata calls them, being, in the south-west, *Nagasaki-guchi* 長崎口 for the *kōmōjin* and the Chinese; in the north-west, *Tsushima-guchi* 対馬口 for the *Joseon* Korean dynasty; in the extreme south of the Kyūshū, *Satsuma-guchi* 薩摩口 as an opening towards the Ryūkyū islands; and *Matsumae-guchi* 松前口 with the Ainu populations, natives to the northern island *Hokkaidō* 北海道<sup>119</sup>.

This, in combination with the *nieuws* we have written about in the previous paragraph, surely makes it easier to debate in favor of the thesis mostly defended by Matsutaka in her book, according to which Japan, during the Tokugawa *bakufu*, actually was not as closed to the foreign as it is generally believed. Such misconception might have originated from the subconscious perception of the Ainu populations and the Ryūkyū kingdom as not being *foreign* enough, seen from the point of view of our modern national identity discernment.

Furthermore, thanks to the presence of the Dutch in Dejima, the Japanese actually managed to get - indirectly - in touch with most of what we could consider the Western world, not only through their newspapers and stories, but also via the foreign books they brought to Japan that oftentimes were Dutch translations of European works. This is especially true when we talk about science, as the first European books imported in Japan were *Naeukeurige Beschryving van de Natuur der Viervoetige Dieren, Vissen en Bloedlooze Water Dieren, Vogelen, Kronkel Dieren, Slangen en Draken*<sup>120</sup> and *Cruydt-Boeck*<sup>121</sup>, both being biology books. Although their introduction was not technically allowed by the *bakufu*, it was not rare for a *shōgun* to order one to be provided to him with a Japanese translation<sup>122</sup>. It may, thus, appear that the *rangakusha*, yet with many exceptions<sup>123</sup>,

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<sup>116</sup> This policy mainly consisted of freezing the price of imported goods to a certain cost set by the Japanese government so that Portuguese traders could not arbitrarily increase the price of the valuable Chinese raw silk, IANNELLO (2012), pg. 26;

<sup>117</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 26-27;

<sup>118</sup> For these reasons many historians started suggesting a change in terminology, proposing the use of the Chinese-derived term *kaikin* 海禁, literally *sea ban*, instead of the original *sakoku*; see CARIOTI, pg. 99;

<sup>119</sup> MATSUKATA, pg. 4-11;

<sup>120</sup> *Detailed description of the nature of quadruped animals, fishes and bloodless water animals, birds, worms, snakes and dragons*, Amsterdam 1660, J. Jonstons, edited by J. J. Schipper, Amsterda, 1600;

<sup>121</sup> *Herbarium*, Antwerp, 1664, Rembertus Dodonaeus;

<sup>122</sup> KURATA, pg. 14;

were relatively open to the introduction of Western knowledge, languages and concepts, sometimes questioning the pre-existing beliefs, other times assimilating the two, as shown by the prototypical example of Sugita Genpaku. This is, nonetheless, most likely to be considered a misled evaluation of the reasons and purposes for which both the *bakufu* and the independent individuals neared Western books. As for the institutions, we can say that it appears to be the case that their main goal was to obtain practical knowledge to improve the country's wealth and competitiveness, while reinforcing the authority of the *bakufu*<sup>124</sup>.

On the other hand, the economically expansionist United Provinces, albeit their openness to trade with any country, carried out most of their Asian expeditions with little interest in learning, preserving and, eventually, consciously absorbing some of their features. One might say that, from a strictly cultural-anthropological point of view, the Dutch were mostly *imperialistic* in their attitude towards Asia, with some notable exceptions like Hendrik Doeff and Philipp Franz von Siebold as we will see in 2.4, and thus describe them as *closed*.

The term *imperialistic* we are here using is an extension of the concept idealized by Robyns which he defines as "*based on a paradox: on the one hand, people underline the absolute specificity of their own identity, on the other hand, they state that their identity is universal*"<sup>125</sup>. The attitude of superiority towards the foreign is represented at its most by the introduction to the 1844 Dutch grammar book *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst*, where it is clearly stated that "*Not every population has an equally perfect language. It [language] is closely related to the development of such civilization.*"<sup>126</sup>

We will dive deeper into this topic in the next chapter, where we will analyze the theories of Robyns and, thus, study the approach both countries had towards each other and themselves.

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<sup>123</sup> Like Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, see FRIEDMAN, Jonathan, *De geneeskundige intelligentia als dragers van sociale bewegingen in het Japan van de late achttiende eeuw - Framing van nieuwe ideeën in een oude denkwereld (The medical intelligentia as a pull towards social movements in the Japan of the late eighteenth century - Framing of new ideas in an old system fo thought)*, University of Gent, 2013, pg. 49-67;

<sup>124</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 8;

<sup>125</sup> Direct quote: "Een imperialistische houding is gebaseerd op een paradox: enerzijds benadrukt men de absolute specificiteit van de eigen identiteit, anderzijds poneert men dat deze identiteit universeel is."; ROBYNS, pg. 354;

<sup>126</sup> Original quote: "Niet bij ieder volk is de taal even volkomen. Zij staat in het naauwste verband met den bij hetzelfde plaats hebbenden trap van beschaving."; WEILAND, pg. 9;

## II

### Social Analysis

#### A mutual *mis*understanding

##### 2.1. Preliminary tools for understanding

Now that we have become acquainted with the historical context that characterized Japan and the Netherlands in the period right before and during the development of the *rangaku* we can utilize such knowledge to investigate the social perceptions of both countries about each other and themselves and how these visions interacted with and influenced one another. In particular, knowing the reasons why both countries engaged in this long-term relationship is necessary to understand why they interacted the way they did and for which reasons certain elements were welcomed, while others have been rejected or overlooked.

We should also stress the fact that, with the exception of the scholars, the institutions and the few individuals who happened to encounter the Dutch, being them Nagasaki or Edo resident, or personnel working in the inns along the *Edo sanpu* route most of the population in Japan had very vague ideas about what the Dutch were and their actual presence in Japanese territory. This is a misconception Gentaku dealt with in *Ransetsu Benwaku*, where he asserts that *ignorant and stupid women think that Nagasaki is a place in China, and there are those who think that the people of this country [Japan] are mixed with the people of that country [Holland]*. He also claims that many people have no idea about the fact that the Dutch only entered Japan less than two hundred years before (the book was completed in 1788), let alone any knowledge of the past relations and events concerning the preceding century with Portugal, regardless of the fact that many customs, foods and daily words were imported by these *nanbanjin*, their past presence on Japanese soil was an enlightenment only affordable to highly educated scholars<sup>127</sup>.

For this reason we must keep in mind that when we will analyze the attitude of the Japanese towards the Dutch we are actually taking into consideration only a tiny sample of the population,

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<sup>127</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pp. 87-88;



oftentimes being represented by the *chōnin* 町人 elite, what one might compare to the European bourgeoisie.

## **2.2 Analysis in two levels, presenting the *inside-outside* vision**

To examine the ways in which both civilizations envisioned their worlds, their cultures and their identities and how they used to describe their respective *foreign* worlds, we will analyze the documents, and the behaviors therein recorded, by different and diverse individuals that provide us with samples of such instances.

One should not believe that such examples could actually be used to represent and describe the Dutch and the Japanese, as civilizations, in their absolute envision of their socio-cultural environment. These instances will be, instead, taken into consideration as examples of the many possible ways in which a Dutch and a Japanese person could, individually, react to the outside impulses by means of the cultural tools they were immersed into.

We will thus try to evaluate such words and behaviors in the frame of an *inside-outside* vision, stressing the eventual contrast between how one's own (*inside*) vision of their own culture might differ from the vision of another individual and, most interestingly, from the *outside* vision of the *foreign* individual.

This will come in aid to us in order not to generalize while using terms such as Dutch and Japanese and one should, thus, remember that these concepts will be utilized assuming the subjectivity of their meanings, that ultimately represents a relevant focus of this research and this chapter in particular.

This modus operandi will also be extended to Chapter III and IV, while analyzing the linguistics of the Dutch-Japanese encounters since, as already presented in the Introduction, we have assumed a strong connection between one's envision of a culture and their surroundings, and their own language.

We will, to make it simple, analyze each aspect of the interactions from the *inside* towards the *inside* (e.g. Japanese vision of Japan), *inside* towards the *outside* (e.g. Japanese vision of the Netherlands) and *outside* towards the *outside* (e.g. Dutch vision of the Netherlands), keeping in mind the subjectivity of each, and that what is *inside* to one could be considered *outside* to another individual.

### 2.3 The attitudes towards *foreignness* according to the meditations of Robyns

As anticipated, we will, henceforth, also utilize the theories of Clem Robyns<sup>128</sup> with regards to the social attitudes towards translation. Translating is described by the scholar as a confrontation with the *other*, that being what is not belonging to the perception of what *us* is. Such a confrontation is necessary to the framing of one's own cultural identity. Without the possibility to face a differing cultural element it is not possible to contrastively construe the concept of what being *us* means and this is relevant in the context of the *inside-outside* approach to studying socio-cultural interactions.

A *culture*, as defined by Robyns, is a systematic and construed array of *discourses*, that are implicitly received by individuals belonging to the same society, through codes immediately recognized inside said group. The implicitness of such codes is almost never challenged from within the social group itself, unless they are faced with *foreign* elements questioning and querying their universality.

The ways in which a culture can behave towards the *exoticness* of the imported elements Robyns listed are four:

- **Defective:** When a culture recognizes the enrichment that the importation of certain foreign elements represents to their own system. This allows such elements to be assimilated as they are into the target culture;
- **Trans-cultural:** Occurring when the foreign elements are not perceived as being necessarily exotic, thus allowing a smooth integration into the autochthonous system;
- **Imperialistic:** Based on the paradox between the emphasis of one's own culture's absolute specificity, while claiming its universal truthfulness. This leads to perceiving someone's own culture as superior. Foreign elements will be modified according to the target culture as they will never dominate it;
- **Defensive:** It assumes at first the dangerousness of the foreign elements to one's own cultural identity and, thus, causes a counter-action to avoid such dangers. This requires the source culture to be deprived of its legitimacy to which a reinforcement of the traditional definition of the target culture's identity is bound to follow.

These concepts will be applied into the analysis of the interactions between the Dutch and the Japanese, while extending their weight, not only to the translating process, but to all the instances of intercommunications of the two cultures, also isolating the individual from the general, structured, centralized *inside* vision of them.

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<sup>128</sup> See ROBYNS, pp. 348-359;

## 2.4 Inside and outside answers to 'What is Dutch?'

First thing we have to try to define is what the word Dutch means and clarify the interesting reasons why the Low Lands have so many names used to refer to them. The English term Dutch derives from the Proto-Germanic term *\*piudiskaz*, that originally meant (*the language*) of the people and its descendants are used in many other languages to actually refer to German-y<sup>129</sup>. Until the 18th century<sup>130</sup> also the Dutch referred to themselves mostly as *Duits*, *Diets*, *Duuts* and other variations, with notable instances, for example, in the current national anthem of the Netherlands, *Het Wilhelmus*, written in the 16th century by William of Orange containing the phrasing "*van Duytschen bloet*", to mean 'of Dutch blood'<sup>131</sup> (although some argue it might have been a reference to his partial German descent), this can appear to the reader a bit odd since the term *Duits* is now used in Dutch to refer to Germany<sup>132</sup>, rather than the Netherlands, which are, in fact, called *Nederland*.

During most of their history, the populations from the Netherlands did not distinguish, and were not distinguished, clearly from the populations of today's Germany, also because the so called High German Consonant Shift phenomenon, that began the linguistic differentiation between what we call High-German and Low-German did not start any earlier than the 5th century. There was, nonetheless, a distinction between what the *Nederduits* (Low German) and the *Hoogduits* (High German) were, used to loosely identify respectively the Low Lands' variety of German, also spoken in many regions in today's Northern Germany, and the version spoken in, to make it simple, the rest of Germany. The terms *high* and *low* point to a geographical reality, being the *Netherlands* (*Nederland* in Dutch, from *neder* meaning *low*) located on a less *high* altitude as compared to the mountainous regions of Germany<sup>133</sup>.

It should, thus, be understood that the Dutch at that time (circa 17th century) still talked about their own identity in relation to the *German*<sup>134</sup>, or rather, *Duits*, ethnicity, as also suggested by the title *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* for the 1844 grammar book, and from the nickname famously attributed to von Siebold at his entrance in Japan: *yama no oranda-jin* 山のオランダ人, *the Dutch of the*

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<sup>129</sup> Notable words meaning *German* sharing the etymology with *Dutch* are: *Duits* in Dutch (from which the Japanese *doitsu* ドイツ derived), *Deutsch* in German and *Tedesco* in Italian;

<sup>130</sup> JANSSENS, Guy, *Het Nederlands vroeger en nu* (*The Dutch language previously and now*), Uitgeverij Acco, Leuven, 2005, pg. 101;

<sup>131</sup> FRITTER, Gert, *Van oerklank tot moedertaal - Over de ontwikkeling van het Nederlands* (*From primal sound to motherlanguage - About the development of the Dutch*), Kosmos Uitgevers, Utrecht, Antwerp, 1993, pg. 17;

<sup>132</sup> *Duits* meaning *German* and *Duitsland* (Land of the *Duits*) meaning *Germany*;

<sup>133</sup> FRITTER, pp. 87-88;

<sup>134</sup> MATSUKATA, pg. 84;

*mountains*. It is believed that such a name was a mistranslation of the Dutch term *Hoogduits* as, apparently, Japanese authorities noticed his non-standard accent<sup>135</sup>. It is not clear whether the VOC purposely lied about the doctor's original whereabouts or whether they simply assumed he could obtain the permission to enter as he actually was *Duits* to them. Nonetheless, what we can understand from this event is that there were still blurred lines to distinguish between the Dutch and the Germans; most likely particularly from the Japanese point of view.

As we have seen, the Japanese have always used the word *oranda* to refer to the Netherlands, and this term comes from the Portuguese word *Holanda*, meaning *Holland*<sup>136</sup>. Although it is a very common name to call the Netherlands (also by the Dutch) it is considered improper since Holland actually refers to one of the regions that make up the Low Lands, but its synecdochical use can be precisely explained by the wealth and world-wide importance of this region in the late colonial era we have talked about in 1.1<sup>137</sup>.

In *Ransetsu Benwaku* we see that the Japanese also used the term *kōi* 紅夷, meaning *red (hair) barbarians*, that Gentaku deems as inappropriate, along with the term *kōmō* 紅毛<sup>138</sup> (that could also be read *oranda*), most likely because of it not being the most flattering way to describe a population.

As an answer to the question "What is Dutch?" the Japanese artist *Hayashi Shihei* 林子平, in 1782, wrote<sup>139</sup>:

*"Holland lies between the 50° and 53° from the North Pole. It is a very cold land. These people have five remarkable characteristics: they have long noses, blue eyes, red hair, white skin and tall bodies"*

Although being a very reductive description of the Dutch and their land, we can already recognize some of what is also blatantly mirrored by the term *kōmōjin* and the Japanese artistic production of paintings portraying them with an exasperation of such physical features, namely red hair, long noses and bigger bodies as compared to the Japanese characters.

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<sup>135</sup> KURATA, pg. 26;

<sup>136</sup> The term has been written in many ways with the two most used being, in order of occurrence 阿蘭陀 and 和蘭. Nowadays the *katakana* version オランダ (replacing the older *woranda* フランダ) is most likely the preferred. See KAZUO (1977), pg. 3;

<sup>137</sup> FRITTER, pg. 7;

<sup>138</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pg. 74;

<sup>139</sup> FRITTER, pg. 17;

As anticipated in the introduction, the perception of the Japanese towards the Dutch way of seeing things is represented at its best by the words Sugita Genpaku and Ōtsuki Gentaku, respectively in *Rangaku Kotohajime* and *Rangaku Kaitei*, use to describe the difference between Chinese traditional books from the Dutch ones, representing the new to them.

Sugita writes:

*"The embellishments utilized in Chinese books make them slow to read, while the Dutch ones, as they report facts the way they come out of a dictionary, are easy to read and learn from."*<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, Ōtsuki tells the reader that:

*"In Holland, they have simple costumes as they do not use things like embellishments in their books, they stick to what is practical."*<sup>141</sup>

As Ōtsuki subsequently continues by adding that such a lack of sensitivity towards the form of writing is an obvious evidence that the Dutch culture must be unsophisticated and rather underdeveloped. This apparently *imperialistic* vision of the two *rangakusha* actually tells us about their shortcomings with regards to the Dutch language as of the time they wrote those books, since they felt such scripts as not featuring *stylistic* embellishments (文章を飾るなど云ことなき). This statement is in obvious contrast with, as an example, the introduction to *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* where Weiland writes, while dismissing the properness of dialects:

*"These different dialects are not all equally good and perfect. Manners and taste go, namely, in different regions of a land, and different circumstances, not at the same pace; but one land strikes the other in richness, prosperity and illumination. For this reason one region excels on another, in the way taste is formed. And this has an inevitable influence on the cultivation of the language*

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<sup>140</sup> Original quote: "漢学は章を飾れる文ゆゑ、その開け遅く、蘭学は実事を辞書にそのまま記せしものゆゑ、取り受けはやく、開け早かりしか。", SUGIMOTO, Tsutomu, *Rangaku to nihongo (The Dutch studies and the Japanese language)*, Yasakashobo, Tōkyō, 2013, pg. 175;

<sup>141</sup> Original quote: "文章を飾るなど云ことなき質樸なる風俗にて実地を踏み", SUGIMOTO, pg. 175;

*itself; so that the best dialect becomes the common language of all the authors, of all the cultured institutes and, thus, the language of the nation itself.*"<sup>142</sup>

and:

*"Also, the notion of beauty makes it necessary to practice a pure and correct spelling. The correctness of spelling is for the good style itself the same as for an artist, only through the correctness of each stroke of each part of their drawings, can reach the highest beauty, for the writer this is just a subordinate intention. This gives the latter no freedom to completely neglect it; because, just one fault in a writing will not be as deformed as a mistaken stroke in the painting of Venus, but it still is a fault that ought to be avoided."*<sup>143</sup>

A comparison of these four quotes, from three different authors, encourages us to meditate about two apparently similar concepts, but yet rather different as subconsciously pointed out by the two *rangakusha*. Sugita and Ōtsuki both use the verb *kazaru* 飾る, *to decorate*, while referring to the traditional Chinese manner of giving a text an embellished form, contrasting it with the *practicality* of the Dutch way of writing. The *absence of things such as text decorations* 文章を飾るなど云ことなき, gives the books of the *kōmōjin* a faster readability, but mirrors a simplicity of such culture 質樸なる風俗.

Similarly, but oppositely, Weiland talks about the necessity to practice a proper spelling in order to provide the text with an artistic value out of good *taste* (*smaak*) by the author. He describes the

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<sup>142</sup> Original quote: "Deze verschillende tongvallen zijn niet alle even goed en volkomen. Beschaafdheid en smaak gaan, namelijk, in de onderscheidene gewesten van een land, en bij onderscheidene omstandigheden, niet met eenen gelijken tred voort; maar het eene gewest streeft het andere in volkrijkheid, welvaart en verlichting voorbij. Daardoor overtreft het eene gewest het andere, in de vorming van den smaak. En dit heeft eenen onvermijdelijken invloed op de beschaving van de taal zelve; zoo dat de beste tongval tevens de algemeene taal van alle schijveren, van alle geleerde genootschappen, en dus de taal der natie zelve wordt.", WEILAND, pg. 10;

<sup>143</sup> Original quote: "Ook het denkbeeld van schoonheid maakt het noodzakelijk, dat men zich in eene zuivere en regelmatige spelling oefene. De regelmatigheid in de spelling is voor den goeden stijl hetzelfde, wat regelmatige teekening van de enkele deelen voor den beelden den kunstenaar is, met dit onderscheid alleenlijk, dat de schoonheid bij dezen de hoogste, maar bij den schrijver slechts eene ondergeschikte bedoeling is. Dit echter geeft den laatsten geene vrijheid, om haar geheel te verwaarloozen; want, schoon eene spelfeil eene schriftelijke voordragt niet zoo zeer misvormt, als de misteekening van eenig lid een Venusbeeld zou wanstaltig maken, zoo blijft zij nogtans eene feil, welke men moet vermijden.", WEILAND, pg. 10;

concept of *smaak* as not being mandatory in writing, as opposed to painting, while still recommending commitment into pursuing it as *the euphonioussness, that is especially important in a civilized language, and that provides for a refined feeling and a pure taste, thus, requires the highest caution*<sup>144</sup>.

The overlapping of the two concepts of *decorating a text* and writing it with *good taste* goes hardly unnoticed and it can be argued to coincide with writing a text in a manner that is considered elegant looking. Although neither Sugita, nor Ōtsuki actually explain what they mean by *decorating*, we have a quite direct explanation of how to write a book with *smaak*: by studying proper grammar (*spraakunst*). It is, also, self evident how much weight was put on the importance of grammar as the term that has been used literally translates to *art of speech*, while today the Latin-derived term *grammatica* is mostly used, focusing much more on the essentiality of such a study in the crafting of a *beautiful (denkbeeld van schoonheid)* text. We must emphasize, nonetheless, that the perception of a text as either well or badly written is highly dependent on the reader's own language skills.

Speaking of Latin, the historical and philological connection of the Dutch with the Latin culture and language was at that time extremely valued and boasted as proud heritage, leading Desiderius Erasmus, in 1528, to call his mother tongue one of the *prime languages (grondtaal)*, and *sister language (zuster taal)* to Latin. This absolutist attitude towards their own language can be seen clearly from the never-ending strive towards maintaining all the traditional grammatical cases in the Dutch language, visible both in Hendrick Laurensz's *Twe-spraak vande Nederduitsche letterkunst* (1584)<sup>145</sup> and in *Nederduitsche Spraakunst* (1844)<sup>146</sup>, even though, as early as the 16th century, such feature was almost completely lost in the actual spoken language<sup>147</sup>

The importance of the Latin background seems to have also been acknowledged by the Japanese *rangakusha*, as most of the times they had to translate a scientific book they generally kept, along with the Dutch term, the scientific nomenclature<sup>148</sup>. This was not always true with Sugita's

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<sup>144</sup> Original quote: "De welluidendheid, welke in eene beschaafde taal van zeer veel gewigt is, maar ook een fijn gevoel en eenen gezuiverden smaak onderstelt, en dus de hoogste omzigtigheid vordert.", WEILAND, pg. 11;

<sup>145</sup> He also defined the romance languages as *bastardized languages (basterdtalen)* since, although they derive from Latin they mutated and differed from it. See JANSSENS, Guy, *Het Nederlands vroeger en nu (The Dutch language previously and now)*, Uitgeverij Acco, Leuven, 2005, pg. 115-116;

<sup>146</sup> WEILAND, pg. 28;

<sup>147</sup> JANSSENS, pg. 122;

<sup>148</sup> IANNELLO, Tiziana, *I naturalisti europei e il progresso delle conoscenze botaniche in Giappone durante il periodo Tokugawa (1600-1867) (European naturalists and the progress of botanic knowledge in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1600-1867))* in *Giappone - Il futuro del passato: Atti del XXI Convegno di Studi sul Giappone*, by Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi - AISTUGIA, Rome, 1997, pg. 232;

translation of *Ontleedkundige Tafelen*, where he gave precedence to the Dutch words or the coinage of a new term based on Chinese characters, unless the Dutch word also did not yet exist, case in which he would use *katakana* to transcribe it from the language of the Romans, warning the reader about that by writing *raten* 羅甸, *Latin*, next to that word<sup>149</sup>. He also explains the importance of said language and its influence on the *kōmōjin* culture comparing it to the introduction of the Chinese characters<sup>150</sup> in the Japanese language, and defining it the *common language* in Europe<sup>151</sup>. This denotes an unexpectedly deep knowledge of the European cultural background one would not assume from an individual who was, supposedly, rather uneducated in linguistics.

From what we have seen so far, the attitude Sugita Genpaku approached the *rangaku* with could be described as a mix between *defective* and *trans-cultural*, closer to the second one, as he most obviously recognizes the incorrectness of the information traditionally provided to him by the Chinese books<sup>152</sup>, but never really dismissing the value of such contents<sup>153</sup> (This could have also been caused by the inability to speak freely without the fear of being prosecuted by the *bakufu*'s strict censorship policies).

This position was obviously not shared by the *defensive*, yet curious, approach of the *bakufu* and scholars like *Motoori Norinaga* 本居宣長, for example, who actually actively pursued attempts to avoid the *westernization* of Japan, trying to emphasize on the uniqueness of the Japanese culture, also trying to *purify* it from the Chinese influence, willing to recover the original ancient pronunciation of the Japanese language<sup>154</sup>.

## 2.5 East and West, *what is Japanese?*

One might say that the *inside* perception of the Japanese towards their own cultural identity has always been strongly influenced by the *outside* labels they have been attached by the foreign

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<sup>149</sup> Original quote: "間々羅甸ありて国語な者あり。かくの如きの類、羅甸を用ひてこれを訳す。即ち毎条下に羅甸の二字を載す。下これに倣ふ。" HIROSE, Hideo (Notes); NAKAYAMA, Shigeru (Notes); OGAWA, Teizō (Notes), *Yōgaku* (2), Nihon Shisō Kei No. 65, Iwanami Shoten, Tōkyō, 1972, pp. 234-235;

<sup>150</sup> The *kanji* 漢字;

<sup>151</sup> Original quote: "然れどもフランス、イギリス、イスパニヤの三州は互いに相通ずる者あり。呼びて羅甸と云ふ。", HIROSE, pg. 234;

<sup>152</sup> Original quote: "その日の解剖こと終り、とてものことに骨骸の形をも見るべしと、刑場に野ざらしになりし骨どもを拾ひとりて、かずかず見しに、これまた旧説とは相違にして、ただ和蘭図に差へるところなきに、みな人驚嘆せるのみなり。", SUGITA, 36;

<sup>153</sup> FRIEDMAN, pg. 41;

<sup>154</sup> FRIEDMAN, pg. 50-63;



countries they encountered, ever since the first contacts with the Chinese. The first name they have been put on was, in fact, the unflattering term *tōi* 東夷, meaning *eastern barbarians*<sup>155</sup>, being the Japanese archipelago located on the east from the center, represented by China, which unsurprisingly is called Middle Kingdom in both Chinese and Japanese (*chūgoku* 中国). The centrality of the Chinese country was also reinforced, and at the same time challenged, by the first world maps introduced in Japan by the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci who reached this land in 1583 and started teaching the Chinese world geography placing their country in the middle for an easier interpretation of the maps<sup>156</sup>. Both these foreign derived location-labelings also having spread in Japan can be considered to have influenced this country's own geographical perception<sup>157</sup>. Having Japan always been influenced in its language and literature by the Chinese culture, it is not irrational to believe that the terms they use to talk about the world, and themselves, are also the reflection of how the Chinese described them. In particular the so-called *kai* 華夷 perception of the world, basically expressing the dichotomy between the Chinese culture (*ka* 華) as opposed to the rest of the *barbarians* (*i* 夷), must have played a role in the creation of what they started defining themselves with<sup>158</sup>.

About the relativity of geographical labeling Ōtsuki Gentaku also expressed his doubtful opinion in *Ransetsu Benwaku*, where he argues that the term Middle Kingdom to refer to China is erroneous, being the world a sphere. Furthermore, he noticed that each culture calls different countries with similar names, the Netherlands also use that term (*Middelland*) to refer to Germany, and the Japanese also call their country *Nakatsukuni* 中国, from a *shintō* perspective. He also argues that the Chinese classics, because of this centralized vision of their own country made Japanese literates ignorant about geography<sup>159</sup>.

Similarly, the two concepts of *east*, *tōyō* 東洋, and *west*, *seiyō* 西洋, must also be analyzed, and translated with caution as the division of space acquires metaphorical significance in each language

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<sup>155</sup> See the connection with *nanbanjin*, the term the Japanese used to call the southern barbarians from the Iberian peninsula, while still using a different Chinese character for *barbarian*, namely *ban* 蛮 versus *i* 夷, although the term *foreigner* might be argualy a better rendition;

<sup>156</sup> AYUSAWA, Shintarō, *Geography and Japanese Knowledge of World Geography*, Tōkyō, Sophia University, in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol- 19, No. 3/4, pp. 279-280;

<sup>157</sup> MIYAKE, Toshio, *Seiyō ("Occidente") e Tōyō ("Oriente") in Giappone. Breve esplorazione di una geografia immaginaria (Seiyō ("Occident") and Tōyō ("Orient") in Japan. Brief exploration of an imaginary geography)* in *Il Giappone che cambia: Atti del XXIX Convegno di Studi sul Giappone*, by Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi - AISTUGIA, Florence, 2005, pg. 259;

<sup>158</sup> MIYAKE, pp. 261-262;

<sup>159</sup> GOODMAN (2000); pp. 122-123;

and culture<sup>160</sup>. For this reason the two terms *tōyō* and *seiyō*, actually carry with them different nuances as compared to the English terms we are accustomed to translate them into, respectively *occident* and *orient*. Although they have somehow reached a point of overlapping with regards to the geographical meaning they hold, the cultural background they arise from differs enormously. The English words, deriving from Latin, refer to the rising and setting of the sun, while the Japanese terms came about from the direct borrowing of the Chinese terms referring to the sailing routes they used to fare (*yō* 洋 meaning *sea/ocean*)<sup>161</sup>.

Coincidentally, also the autochthonous name the Japanese ultimately put on themselves seems to hint to a geographical location, being *Nihon/Nippon* 日本 the literal translation of *rising sun* or *origin of the sun*, apparently suggesting a connection to the Latin *oriens*, while actually being connected to the *shintō* belief that the *tennō* 天皇, the Japanese emperor, is directly descending from the god of the sun<sup>162</sup>. There is no reason, nonetheless, to dismiss this occurrence simply as a coincidence since the *outside* perception of the meaning of the name *Nihon* might have, in fact, influenced the way the modern Japanese, strongly influenced by the United States after World War II, currently envision their own position in the world.

It looks, thus, rather concrete to hold the belief that Japan's own perception of what being Japanese means has always been strongly dependent on how the others defined it. Japan's definition of Japan seems to exist mostly in a dimension of negation of what is not Japanese, as settled by the *outside* world. As we have seen, at first, *Japanese* meant not being part of the centralized Chinese world, as conveniently defined by the Chinese themselves.

In a second stance the Japanese re-evaluated the derogatory term they were defined with by the Chinese since the Han period, transforming the homophone *wa* 倭 (*dwarf*) in *wakoku* 倭国 (*Dwarves Land*) into *wa* 和 (*harmony*), that has subsequently been used to write the national name *Yamato* 大和 (The *kanji* literally translate to '*great harmony*')<sup>163</sup>. Ultimately, but not lastly, the presence of the Dutch in Dejima seemed to have influenced to some extent how the Japanese perceived themselves. This is especially visible from the term *sakoku* itself, that actually originated from the necessity to translate a Dutch document describing Japan's political situation, also

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<sup>160</sup> VAN DER HEIDE, Herman, "*The eye's kiss*": *Contextualising Cees Nooteboom's Bashō*, in *Translating Figurative Language*, by Donna R. Miller, Bononia University Press, Bologna, 2014, pg. 327;

<sup>161</sup> MIYAKE, pp. 235-236;

<sup>162</sup> MIYAKE, pp. 259-261;

<sup>163</sup> MIYAKE, pp. 259-260;

participating into marginalizing Japan's own perception of itself into the extreme margins of two worlds.

We might say that there is truth in the statement describing the attitude of the Dutch towards Japan as generally overlooking Japanese culture, mostly because the Westerners who had the most contacts with them were traders who did not necessarily develop an interest in those people's customs and languages, and we might as well define it as *lack of intellectual curiosity*<sup>164</sup>, but we also must not make the mistake to think that Japan did not experience fascinated studies by Europeans as early as the 17th century. Along with the aforementioned Doeff and von Siebold, who actually have been lucky enough to visit Japan, many scholars developed an interest in the country and its language.

Nevertheless, such studies, unfortunately did not lead to any notable consequences as, contrary to Japan's relative abundance of Western grammar books, Europe did not have many reliable sources one could study from<sup>165</sup>. It existed, actually, a Japanese dictionary written in Latin, published in 1632 by Jesuit Diego Collado, called *Dictionarium, Sive thesauri linguae Japonica Compendium* that also Doeff came to know it existed<sup>166</sup> after his return to the Netherlands, but its content was completely useless with regards to deciphering Japanese books as it was entirely romanized<sup>167</sup>. Furthermore, at least until the end of the 18th century, Chinese and Japanese were considered as being closely related, misleading the scholars' attempts to study the language of the Rising Sun<sup>168</sup>.

Between those individuals who were interested in Japanology, while never actually going to Japan, the name of VOC's employee Herbert de Jager emerges. He managed to eagerly collect some Japanese books, though never learned how to read them. He came, thus, to the conclusion that, regardless of the fact that Japan was most likely a literate civilization the content of their books could not differ that much from those written in other countries<sup>169</sup>, showing some sort of *light imperialism*, as he denied the specificity of the *foreign* Japanese culture.

On the other hand, we can see the testimony of the *opperhoofd* Doeff, who was most likely very fascinated by Japanese culture and language, that defined such civilization to be *generally brave and will not be stopped in front of any danger*<sup>170</sup>. As an evidence for their bravery (*dapperheid*) he

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<sup>164</sup> JANSEN, pg. 541-542;

<sup>165</sup> KORNICKI, Peter, *European Japanology at the End of the Seventeenth Century* in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 56, No. 3, 1993, pg. 505;

<sup>166</sup> DOEFF, pg. 267;

<sup>167</sup> KORNICKI, pg. 506;

<sup>168</sup> KORNICKI, pg. 502;

<sup>169</sup> KORNICKI, pg. 512;

<sup>170</sup> Original text: "Over het algemeen is dit volk dapper, en ontziet geene gevaren ter wereld", DOEFF, pg. 27;

displays the example of the *seppuku* 切腹<sup>171</sup> practice. Doeff proposes the thesis that the custom of the Japanese to cut their bellies open for thing we (Europeans) might call trifles, is a demonstration of the bravery of the Japanese. He, nonetheless, adds that he actually believes that there is no actual difference between the *seppuku* and the suicides that occur in Europe, seemingly confuting such position<sup>172</sup>. Doeff, also, interestingly points out a similarity between the Japanese ritual suicide and the one that used to take place in Rome as described by Tacitus<sup>173</sup>, demonstrating a tendency towards introducing and adapt foreign concepts into his own cultural background.

## 2.6 Domestic perception and rivalry between Dutch scholars

Regardless of the fact that each *rangakusha* paved the way for all of their colleagues' studies, many sources might suggest that the group was not as cohesive and necessarily prone to cooperating with one another. First we must, in fact, understand that the Dutch scholars were broadly divided into two groups: the *Nagasaki tsūji* 長崎通詞, the Dutch interpreters residing in Nagasaki; and the *Edo no rangakusha* 江戸の蘭学者, the Dutch scholars operating in the capital<sup>174</sup>. It is not farfetched to believe that the contacts between the two groups were minimal, limited to the instances in which the first ones would visit the *shōgun*, accompanying the *opperhoofd* in his court trip<sup>175</sup>; or when those from Edo would participate to a *yūgaku* 遊学, a sort of exchange study, in Nagasaki, which was, at the time, one of the most precious learning experience a scholar could engage in<sup>176</sup>.

Another element that distanced the two groups was, probably, their cultural background. The Edo scholars were generally educated individuals who were already operative in the scientific community, and just happened to be interested in Dutch studies aspiring to extrapolate the contents of Western knowledge to assuage their intellectual curiosity. This is especially evident in Sugita Genpaku's, as we have defined it, *faster is better* philosophy. On the other hand, the *tsūji* were mostly low-class individual who could pursue some level of richness by entertaining themselves

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<sup>171</sup> Also called *harakiri* 腹切り, it is the well known suicidal ritual practiced mostly by samurais after staining their name. Doeff never uses either of the terms in his book, anyway;

<sup>172</sup> Original quote: "Men weet, dat zij veelal gewoon zijn, ook om zaken, die wij kleinigheden zouden noemen, zich den buik open te snijden. Men zou kunnen vragen, of dit niet als een bewijs hunner dapperheid en doodsverachtig zou kunnen worden beschouwd. Ik voor mij geloof, dat het gelijk staat met den zelfmoord in Europa, en de lezer mag beslissen, of die in Japan verachterlijker is dan bij ons", DOEFF, pg. 28;

<sup>173</sup> DOEFF, pp. 29-30;

<sup>174</sup> SUGIMOTO, pg. 147;

<sup>175</sup> So as to alternate between the individuals who ventured into the *Edo sanpu* along with the Dutchmen one *ōtsūji* and one *kotsūji* were selected to accompany them, they were called *nenbantsūji* 年番通詞, KAZUO (2016);

<sup>176</sup> SUGIMOTO, pg. 146;

with the studying of the Dutch language as to serve as interpreter in commercial negotiations, thus looking for the best rendering of the Dutch original words into the Japanese language and vice versa<sup>177</sup>.

One might also find a connection between this *snobbish* attitude of the *Edo no rangakusha* towards the trading-concerned *Nagasaki tsūji* and the so-called *shinōkōshō* 士農工商 class system enforced by the Tokugawa shogunate. The four-level social pyramid split the Japanese society in different classes ordered according to their supposed Confucian value, this meant that at the top one would find the warriors (*shi* 士), followed by the farmers (*nō* 農), then the artisans (*kō* 工) and, at the bottom, the merchants (*shō* 商). Such a division did not represent at all the actual wealth and influence each class possessed in Tokugawa society, as the merchants were actually richer than the farmers<sup>178</sup>, and especially the samurai cast that, already in the late 17th century, started losing wealth and authority<sup>179</sup>. This, nonetheless, mirrors how traders were at that time perceived by the social context in which they were immersed and might be taken into consideration while explaining the highbrow attitude of the *Edo no rangakusha* towards their colleagues who mostly used their knowledge of the Dutch language to smoothen Nagasaki's trafficking.

One of the first and clearest testimony of such presumptuousness can be seen in Sugita's *Rangaku Kotohajime*<sup>180</sup>, where he unflatteringly defines the interpreters as *zetsujin* 舌人, *men of tongue*, and poking fun at them as he complains about their alleged poor translation of cooled-off rice with the term *samumeshi* 寒飯, instead of *hiyameshi* 冷飯. The point of contention here, used as a way to discredit his *somehow* colleagues in Nagasaki, is the clumsy use of the kanji *samu* 寒, meaning cold as related to weather, instead of *hiya* 冷, which refers to the coolness of food and beverages<sup>181</sup>.

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<sup>177</sup> HORIUCHI, Annick, *When Science Develops Outside State Patronage: Dutch Studies in Japan at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century in Early Science and Medicine*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Science Patronage in Early Modern East Asia, Brill, 2003, pg.170;

<sup>178</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 4;

<sup>179</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 43;

<sup>180</sup> Original quote: "如何さま、そのころまでは、かの家々は通弁までのことにて、書物読みて翻訳するらどいふこともなかりし時節にて、冷めしをさむめしといひ、一部一篇とも訳すべきエーンドールといふ語を、一のわかれ二のわかれと和解し、通じ合ひて事済むやうなることにてありしと見えたり。", SUGITA, pg. 52-53;

<sup>181</sup> HORIUCHI, pg. 168;

## 2.7 Acceptance of Western culture

As already discussed in 1.3 the official governmental position towards Western literature's introduction in Japan was initially rather *defensive*, as such books were feared to eventually become the cause of instability in the country, leading the *bakufu* to enforce the *kinsho* ban on foreign books. Such ban actually was not denying the introduction of any foreign book, while in particular those that contained references to the Christian religion, and especially those translated into Chinese as their contents could, actually, be understood<sup>182</sup>.

The behavior of the *bakufu* was in reality oftentimes contradictory to the *closing* policies. Many in the higher posts of the administration, in fact, showed much interest in Western things, one of them being the eighth *shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune* 徳川吉宗 who, during his 1716-45 reign actively encouraged the *rangaku* offering promotions to samurais who would engage in such research<sup>183</sup>. Another meaningful example is the tenth *shōgun Tokugawa Ieharu* 徳川家治 who requested a particular breed of Persian horse he had read about in a Dutch book he had previously asked to be translated for him. The letter, written in the language of the *kōmōjin*, actually managed to reach our times, along with its detailed drawings of the desired horse. Its heading read<sup>184</sup>:

Nangasackij den 1 november, anno, 1765  
als keÿzerlijk zaakbezorger, J: M: gennemon

This small piece of text illustrates many cultural elements one could understand had already been assimilated by the Dutch interpreters as soon as 1765.

First of all it is interesting to notice that the name of the city of Nagasaki was written according to Dutch phonetics and spelling rules, in spite of the fact that many important linguistic studies had already been carried out, in the previous centuries, by Portuguese missionaries, one might thus expect the romanization to having been standardized according to that language. This can be understood from the characteristic Dutch *ij* digraph<sup>185</sup>, and the choice of using *ng* instead of a simple *g* that could be interpreted in two ways: either it was simply used to prevent a Dutch speaker

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<sup>182</sup> IANNELLO, pg. 43;

<sup>183</sup> HORIUCHI, pg. 148;

<sup>184</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 15;

<sup>185</sup> In this context, probably, representing a long close front unrounded vowel ⟨iː⟩ instead of the modern diphthong ⟨eɪ⟩. See 3.1 for further details;

from pronouncing the letter *g* as a voiced velar fricative ⟨ɣ⟩, as it generally is in Dutch; or it might suggest that the Japanese pronunciation was actually closer to a velar nasal ⟨ŋ⟩ which, in Dutch, is actually written with the letters *ng*.

Secondly, we notice the use of the European Gregorian calendar, instead of the traditional *nengō* 年号 system, dividing time in eras according to the ruling emperor, when communicating with the Dutch, despite of its connection with Christianity<sup>186</sup>.

Thirdly, we understand that there was a structured system of official translators of the letters the *bakufu* intended to be sent to the VOC agents. This is visible from the charge statement *als keyzerlijk zaakbezorger* (*as imperial agent*), also telling us that the name of the role of the *shōgun* was appointed with was translated into *keizer* that, meaning *emperor*, one would expect to be referred to the *tennō*, although his charge might have been referred to as the autochthonous term *dairi* 内裏<sup>187</sup>.

We also witness the signing system here adopted was clearly western-styled as the name of the sender features the initials of his first name (J: M:) and the full family name (gennemon). It is believed that the name belongs to *Imamura Gen'emon* 今村源衛門, interestingly abbreviating his first name with the initials of both Chinese characters namely *ima* (J:)<sup>188</sup> and *mura* (M:) it is composed of, maybe to mirror the first name plus middle name structure many European featured. The romanization of his family name also makes us notice a wariness with regards to Dutch spelling conventions, explaining the presence of a double *n* (we now romanize with an apostrophe in Hepburn) as to, probably, refrain a Dutch speaker to pronounce the preceding *e* as a long closed mid-front vowel ⟨e:⟩, instead of the questionably better approximation offered by the short open mid-front ⟨ɛ⟩.

One should not, nonetheless, end up thinking that Western knowledge was being taken and absorbed simply as it was by the *rangakusha*. It is the case, rather, that such concepts and ideas were introduced and adapted into the pre-existing Confucian-based belief system, when accepted at all. As author *Hirata Atsutane* 平田篤胤 wrote in the 18th century, *Western ideas could be undermining Japan's power, but also serve as a means to make it greater*, suggesting that such new visions should be weighed out and only their strengths assimilated into Japan's philosophical

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<sup>186</sup> This element should not be overlooked since in 1640, when the Dutch applied a board with the Gregorian calendar on the newly built warehouse in Hirado, they received strong opposition and were ultimately forced to demolish said building, GOODMAN, pg. 15;

<sup>187</sup> Both names consistently used throughout Doeff's *Herinneringen uit Japan*;

<sup>188</sup> The overlapping of the characters I and J is discussed in 3.3;

framework<sup>189</sup>. Similarly, politician *Sakuma Shōzan* 佐久間象山, in the 19th century, proposed the slogan *tōyō dōtoku seiyō gakugei*, 東洋道德西洋学芸, *Eastern value, Western technical learning*<sup>190</sup>, which was especially used during the Meiji Restoration in the re-worded form *wakon yōsai* 和魂洋才<sup>191</sup>.

Such a blend is also epitomized by the production of Japanese styled prints in Nagasaki that started mirroring those Western elements, in particular their naturalism, with which the city came in touch via the island of Dejima. Such works could be considered as another way through which the *kōmōjin* culture could have penetrated and spread throughout Japan, although mostly in the middle-high classes. The Nagasaki print production has never been one of the most appreciated in Japan's history until that point and, particularly in the 19th century, when they ultimately superseded the previously much more popular *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵<sup>192</sup> prints<sup>193</sup>.

Along with these attempts to compromise between *tradition* and *modernity*, there were also individuals, like Motoori Norinaga that stuck with the so-called *kokugaku* 国学, or *Edo nativists*, the *studies of the country* (meaning Japan), that were, starting from their name, evidently in contrast with the *RANgaku* or the *Yōgaku*, both holding an obvious reference to the foreignness of such studies. As the *kokugaku* focused on a *shintō* revivalism, another study emerged, featuring what we can define critical Confucianism, and was called *kogaku* 古学<sup>194</sup>, meaning *ancient studies*, either names were, nonetheless, not used by Norinaga as he believed their scope could be perceived as too narrow by the use of *koku* and *ko*. He, in fact, preferred to use the name of *gaku* 学<sup>195</sup>, allowing him to render an appearance of *universality* to his concerning field of study, while *exoticizing* and *narrowing* the intellectual contents of those studies he perceived as rivals.

Interestingly, we also see in author *Takai Ranzan* 高井嵐山 in his *Shokuji Kai* 食事会 another example of *defensive* identity-settling with regards to the differences in diet. In particular, not being the Japanese traditionally a carnivore-oriented culture, Takai questions the healthiness of meat-

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<sup>189</sup> DE JONG, Janny, *Japans Oriëntalisme - Een reactie op 'Oriënt of Occident' (Japan's easternness - A reaction to 'East and West')*, in *Groniek - Historisch Tijdschrift*, nr. 131, 1995, pg. 213;

<sup>190</sup> DE JONG, pg. 220;

<sup>191</sup> MIYAKE, pg. 265;

<sup>192</sup> Literally meaning *pictures of the floating world*, is the name of one of the most famous artistic productions in Japan's tradition;

<sup>193</sup> For further details about Nagasaki prints see ALABISO, Alida, *Il mondo occidentale nelle stampe di Nagasaki e Yokohama (The Western world in the prints of Nagasaki and Yokohama)* in *Il Giappone che cambia: Atti del XXIX Convegno di Studi sul Giappone*, by Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi - AISTUGIA, Arcavacata di Rende, 2003, pp. 11-24;

<sup>194</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 4;

<sup>195</sup> FRIEDMAN, pg. 28;



eating, that was, on the contrary, rather common in Dutch cuisine. With these statements he does not simply define his own Japanese cultural identity in opposition to the *kōmōjin* one through their respective food customs, but he also rejects the empirical method, foundation of Western science, as he, acknowledging the lack of evidence to support his claims, suggests one should refrain from eating meat as handed down by traditional wisdom<sup>196</sup>. Totally in contrast with the interest *shōgun* Yoshimune showed towards Dutch culinary customs, often requesting the VOC food samples, recipes, and ordering in the 1725 *hofreis* for the Dutch to organize a banquet in front of him, so that he could witness the manners of eating of the *kōmōjin*<sup>197</sup>.

The belief that the Dutch had inferior eating customs can also be seen in *Ransetsu Benwaku*, where the misconception *that they are like the Chinese in eating inferior food*, mostly because they used to eat meats in bigger quantities as compared to the Japanese. Gentaku responds, rather rationally, that such misconception derives from the fact that they are used to eating wild beasts that are much easier to find as compared to most of Japanese cities, lying along the coasts. This diet is compared to the one found in the mountainous region of *Kisodō* 木曾道<sup>198</sup>, stating that he *heard* of places where, beside salted fish, also wild boars and deer are frequently eaten, also providing us with a broad vision of different culinary customs in Japan and how little was actually known between distant<sup>199</sup> cities' traditions<sup>200</sup>.

Further suspicion towards Western eating habits were expressed by *rangakusha* and von Siebold friend, *Udagawa Yōan* 宇田川溶菴 who talks about the popularity of the consumption of coffee between the *kōmōjin* in his book *Hakubutsu Goi* 博物語彙 (*Natural Science Glossary*). We must also remember that the introduction of the word *kōhī* コーヒー for *coffee* in the Japanese vocabulary has to be attributed to him, borrowed from Dutch *koffie*. He also established the Chinese characters 珈琲 for the rendering in *kanji* of such word. In said book he reports his reaction to the time he claims he was offered a cup of coffee by a Dutch, his comment reads: "*It smells good, but it is colored like soy sauce. I wonder if it will cause diarrhea drinking it.*"<sup>201</sup>. Similarly also the Dutch were reported to be rather suspicious about food they were not accustomed to, stating that *it is said*

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<sup>196</sup> FRIEDMAN, pp. 32-33;

<sup>197</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pp- 60-61;

<sup>198</sup> Today's *Aichi* 愛知県 and *Mie* 三重県 prefectures, in central of the Honshū;

<sup>199</sup> Gentaku was a *Edo no rangakusha* born in *Ichinoseki* 一関, a territory surely not known for its mountains and rather close to the sea;

<sup>200</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pg. 83;

<sup>201</sup> HARA, Ken'ichi, *Okayama Rangaku no Gunzō 1 (The Group of the Dutch studies in Okayama, vol. 1)*, Okayama, San'yō Hōsō Gakujutsu Bunka Zaidan, 2016, pg. 166;

that *Hollanders and others, though they be lowly persons, have no wish to eat animals and fish of unusual shapes which from ancient times they have been accustomed to eat*<sup>202</sup>.

It might be argued that the tendency of the Japanese to either object to the introduction of Western knowledge, or assimilate it into the traditional Chinese-based wisdom was, of course, not the only way they interacted with the foreign. Many were, in fact, the *rangakusha* who were simply enamored with Western culture and embraced its knowledge thoroughly in their envision of the world. This was especially true during the Tanuma era<sup>203</sup> (1760-1780), named after *rōjū Tanuma Okitsugu* 田沼意次 who one could define a *ranpeki* 蘭癖<sup>204</sup>, a *devotee of things Dutch*<sup>205</sup>. This term itself is especially interesting to investigate, as it is made up of the two characters *ran* 蘭, that we have already encountered holding the meaning of *Dutch*, and *heki* 癖 (in this case undergoing semi-voicing and turning into *peki*), signifying *vice* or *bad habit*. It can be interpreted, in fact, as indicating the indulging of somebody into things Dutch, similarly to an obsession. For this reason *Dutch fanatic* might be, arguably, presented as a better rendering of such term. As we have seen in 2.5, there were, presumably, no such people holding a *fanaticism* in things Japanese in the West at that time, but this term does not appear to be very distant, as a concept, from the modern neologism *weeaboo*, oftentimes featuring the Japanese word *otaku* as a synonym, both popularized on the internet in the English language in the 21st century, used to refer to a person who is obsessed with Japanese culture. Similarly, Sugita Genpaku in *Rangaku Kotohajime*, defines his colleague Maeno Ryōtaku's interest in learning the horizontal writings as something *unusual* (*ki* 奇) only a person with fascination for the bizarre could engage in studying<sup>206</sup>.

Most likely, another Dutch scholar who could be identified as a *ranpeki* is *Sugita Seikei* 杉田整形 who has been described by *Ōtsuki Nyoden* 大槻如電 as feeling repressed by the *bakufu* so as not to be allowed to talk about and spread the Western ideologies he so wholeheartedly admired that he could only refrain himself from engaging in such topic as long as he did not indulge in overdrinking, at which point he would start shouting the Dutch word "*vrijheit!*"<sup>207</sup>, *freedom*<sup>208</sup>.

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<sup>202</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pg. 83;

<sup>203</sup> *Tanuma jidai* 田沼時代;

<sup>204</sup> Similarly we find the term *kōmō-shumi* 紅毛趣味, literally *red-haired hobby*, clearly belittling the endeavor of the *rangakusha*, GOODMAN (2000), pg. 117;

<sup>205</sup> NUMATA, Jirō, *The Acceptance of Western Culture in Japan, General Observations*, Tōkyō, in *Monumenta Japonica*, Sophia University, Vol. 19, No. 3/4, 1964, pg. 240;

<sup>206</sup> Original quote: "かくの如く奇を好む性なりしにより、青木君の門に入りて和蘭の横文字とその一二の国語をも習ひしなり。", SUGITA, pg. 19;

<sup>207</sup> In modern Dutch it would be spelt *vrijheid*;

<sup>208</sup> JANSEN, pg. 546;

## 2.8 The attitude towards Western medicine

The Western scientific approach was a totally new way of thinking that was introduced in Japan earlier by the Portuguese, but arguably with the most impact by the Dutch, that brought along with it the concept of empiricism and investigation of nature according to pragmatism and experimentalism. These ideas were completely new in the land of the rising sun that, as already discussed, based its understanding of the world mostly on Confucian-driven Chinese texts. The extent to which such mentality was being absorbed by the *rangakusha* is questionable, as expressed clearly by Goodman's position describing the Dutch Studies as a *random accumulation of certain quasi-scientific and technological information*, the absorption of which was heavily refrained by the pre-existing conceptions of the universe (mainly in cosmology), that were evidently in contrast with the foreign interpretation of it<sup>209</sup>.

The impossibility of deeply understanding such way of reasoning was also worsened by the lack of proper vocabulary to describe and talk about those concepts Western science was accustomed to; the word *nature* itself to begin with. Such striving is evident in *Tsuboi Shindō* 坪井信道, whose manuscript *Manbyō Shijun* 万病治準 (*Standard treatments for all sorts of illnesses*), translation of the Dutch medicine book by van Swieten titled *Verklaaring der korte stellingen van H. Boerhaave over de kennis en genezing der ziektes*<sup>210</sup> from which we can understand the difficulties he had rendering that term into the Japanese language as he firstly provided a phonetic adaptation of the term using the Chinese characters 那去爾, then utilized the term *honzen* 本然 that, because of its connection with the Buddhist philosophy could not fit properly the concept of *natuur*, the meaning of which was scientifically separated from any heavenly-given abstraction. He only later settled for the currently used term *shizen* 自然, that appears more appropriate, disregarding any godly involvement in its existence. His work has been, nonetheless, considerably impactful with regards to the spreading of Western science concepts, especially as he is regarded as the pioneer in introducing the European method of induction and deduction, the dissection-based scientific research of pathologies and the revolutionary theories about germs<sup>211</sup>. Because of the popularization of the innovative practice of the medical discipline called *surgery*, as opposed to the traditional approach to healing that one might compare to internal medicine, many *rangakusha* ended up believing that western medicine only consisted of external medicine. This misunderstanding was, of

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<sup>209</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg.8;

<sup>210</sup> "Comment on the brief thesis of H. Boerhaave about the knowledge and cure of illnesses", originally written in Latin with the title "Commentaria in Boerhaave aphorismos de cognoscendis et curandis morbis", GOODMAN (2000), pg. 179;

<sup>211</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pp. 178-180;

course, originated from the fact that Japanese doctors were mostly interested in surgery books and the foreignness and innovation of this practice is what spread and caught people's attention. It is argued that Sugita Genpaku's *Kaitai Shinsho* hindered the spreading of such misconception<sup>212</sup> as also suggested by Gentaku himself<sup>213</sup>.

Along with the renewed necessity to coin modern terms to refer to organs and body parts Japan was not aware of the existence of<sup>214</sup>, a whole new vision of the ways in which to understand the human body was also called for. Similarly to how the native medical approach, that originally consisted of charms and amulets against all sorts of pathologies, had been overwhelmed and substituted in the 5th century with the introduction of the so-called *kanpō igaku* 漢方医学, *Chinese medicine*, the first translations of Western medicine books initiated a slow shifting process driving Japanese doctors towards the much more profitable *ranpō igaku* 蘭方医学, *Dutch medicine*. Chinese medicine was anything but empirical and divided the body according to the *gozōroppu* 五臟六腑 theory, literally *five viscera and six entails* and, thus, recognized the liver, the lungs, the heart, the kidneys and the spleen as the five viscera, and counted six entails, being stomach, large intestine, small intestine, gall bladder, bladder and a *heating organ*<sup>215</sup>. This broad division of the body seems to ignore the thorough pinpointing of all the smallest parts of the human body that *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* presented Sugita with. The first pages of the Dutch book present, in fact, the different fields of study anatomy consists of, namely<sup>216</sup>: osteology (bones), adenology (glands), neurology (brain), angiology (circulatory system), splanchnology (viscera) and myology (muscles). Sugita, in his translation, did not burden himself with finding a term to translate the names of such subjects into, but he simply explained what the six fields of investigation took care of. He also adds, with the exception of osteology and splanchnology, a comment stating that the contents regarding these subjects differed sensibly from the ones handed down by the Chinese<sup>217</sup>. Although this six-partitioned understanding of the body might have been somehow familiar to Sugita's Chinese background, as he proceeded reading and translating *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* he must have found himself confused by the numerous sub- and sub-sub-partitioning of each part of the body the Dutch book listed.

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<sup>212</sup> SAKAI, pg. 4;

<sup>213</sup> GOODMAN (1952), pg. 88;

<sup>214</sup> It is Sugita Genpaku's workgroup who spread in the scientific community words and concepts completely new, like *shinkei* 神經 (*nerve*), *nankotsu* 軟骨 (*cartilage*) and *zugaiktsu* 頭蓋骨 (*cranium*), while sometimes repurposing already existing terms to a new meaning, SAKAI, pg. 5;

<sup>215</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 74;

<sup>216</sup> The original Dutch book featured the Latin terms with explanation, see WEILAND, pg. 3;

<sup>217</sup> SAKAI, pg. 44;

We can, ultimately, state that Western medicine was mostly adopted without really absorbing the empirical approach to it, that one can argue represents most of its peculiarity and, generally speaking, doctors that burdened themselves with such a learning mainly did that because of the expectations of high income and business success<sup>218</sup>. Yet, many *rangakusha* actually pursued the study holding a genuine interest in learning the mentality the *oranda-ryū* 和蘭流, *Dutch style (medicine)*, was coming with, most likely Sugita himself, but most representatively inventor and author *Hiraga Gennai* 平賀源内 who harshly wrote: "*Our doctors today remember how to write Chinese poems [...] Though they call themselves such things as 'Confucian doctors' or 'old stylists', they do not see illness; they do not recognize illness; they do not remember medicines; they prescribe remedies recklessly; and they kill.*"<sup>219</sup>.

The admiration towards Western medicine was so elevated that many individuals started opening unofficial *oranda-ryū* schools the *bakufu* was rather suspicious about, leading educator *Koishi Genzui* 小石元端 to write five rules to warn his students against the supposedly fictitious Western studies<sup>220</sup>:

1. As for Dutch books, do not read any other books than medical books;
2. Do not slander people without giving any clear reason;
3. When there is no other appropriate translation available, it will be all right to use Dutch words (such as names of drugs, medical and surgical tools, and scientific signs and measurements), but otherwise do not write Dutch words, but use Japanese words;
4. Do not discuss subjects other than medicine when talking about foreign countries;
5. Also do not express foreign opinions, or carry or possess unusual tools.

Rule 1 might have been a warning against reading books that might have contained Christian proselytism or unwanted Western philosophical ideologies, as also worryingly referenced in rules 4 and 5. Rule 3 is a notice to refrain scholars to use the Latin alphabet, this could also represent an element that might have caught the attention of the censorship hammer of the *bakufu*, as happened to *Oranda-banashi* 紅毛談 (also read as *Kōmō-dan*) by *Gotō Mitsuo* 後藤光生 in 1765<sup>221</sup>.

It is, furthermore, extremely thought-provoking how *Koishi*, in rule 4, talks about *foreign opinions*. Although we must keep in mind that this document was written to please the *shōgun*, it is still a sign

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<sup>218</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 230;

<sup>219</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 193;

<sup>220</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 176;

<sup>221</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 85;

of exoticization of thoughts and ideas based on the fact that they supposedly originated in a foreign country, even though the author does not specify which *opinions* qualified as *foreign*.

Other valuable doubts about the legitimacy of the Western-style anatomical study of the human body have been put forward by Udagawa Yōan who, regardless of his involvement with the Dutch studies, held many uncertainties about the righteousness of using a dead body to investigate its viscera. He is recorded, for example, wondering whether one could understand how the human body functions by slicing open a lifeless corpse. Alluding to Confucian filial piety, he argues that, being the body the most valuable gift one inherits from their parents, it would be insensitive to cut it apart for scientific query. But he also struggles with his awareness about the fact that it is probably impossible to understand the inner parts of human anatomy without actually seeing them<sup>222</sup>.

At the same time, we can see in *rangakusha* Ogata Kōan 緒方洪庵 an apparent absorption of the Hippocratic Oath as he is quoted to have pronounced concepts as "*The medical activity is solely for the sake of the people.*" or "*I ought to give up myself in order to save human lives.*"<sup>223</sup>. Although not necessarily distant from the relatively popular opinion that *rangaku* studies (and thus intellectual advancement) had to be pursued for the good of the country<sup>224</sup>, one might argue that a sensible cultural difference in medical perspective could be found between envisioning one's own scholar endeavor to allow the land to attain successful development, as opposed to claiming to be ready to sacrifice one's own existence if that helped saving human lives. This does not mean that the *societal* purpose was completely disregarded by Kōan, as he has also written sentences like *yo no tame, hito no tame* 世のため、人のため (*For society, for the people*)<sup>225</sup>, leading one to think that the humanitarian suppositions of Western Hippocratic Oath were probably intertwined with the patriotic notion behind Japanese motivation to make scholarship advancement.

## 2.9 The problems with empiricism and the introduction of science

As already discussed, the main core of Japan's interest towards Western technologies started as being a crave for their advanced artillery and shipbuilding techniques, earlier introduced by the Portuguese and, in a second stance, by the Dutch themselves<sup>226</sup>. In particular, starting from the 18th century, as the Russian expansion in Asia started being perceived as threatening, the *bakufu* issued

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<sup>222</sup> HARA (2016), pg. 98;

<sup>223</sup> HARA (2016), pg. 187;

<sup>224</sup> SUGIMOTO, pg. 33 (left to right);

<sup>225</sup> HARA (2016), pg. 188;

<sup>226</sup> For further details see ARIMA, Seiho, *The Western Influence on Japanese Military Science, Shipbuilding, and Navigation in Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol.19, No. 3/4, Sophia University, pp. 352-379;

the translation of many Dutch books concerning warfare strategies, albeit their publishing did not influence much of Japanese foreign relations<sup>227</sup>. After this first period of warfare fascination, Western science studies in Japan reached many other fields of investigation, oftentimes led by Dutch scholars who reached Japan with the purpose of studying its geo-biological characteristics.

Such individuals include von Siebold who, while being remembered mainly for his involvement in spreading Western medicine in Japan and opening his private medicine school called *Narutaki-juku* 鳴滝塾 in Nagasaki, was also productively involved in researches in botany. He used to study Japan's flora and fauna while taking care of his own private garden in Dejima and sending samples to the Dutch settlement in Batavia<sup>228</sup>. His efforts in studying Japanese plants, particularly tea, also led to the discovery of important coal mines that are argued to have played a central role in Meiji iron industry development of Japan<sup>229</sup>. Mineralogy was, indeed, one of the main reasons that convinced the Dutch to commit in keeping the Japanese relations properly polished, thus introducing this discipline to the *rangakusha*, being the VOC mostly in search of silver and copper<sup>230</sup>. Since the first encounter with Western geology via Chomel's Dutch encyclopedia it was clear that it was rather in contrast with the traditional Chinese theories<sup>231</sup> of the five elements (wood, water, earth, fire and metal) and two fundamental forces (yin and yang)<sup>232</sup>.

The Western-styled scientific method was highly regarded by many *rangakusha*. One could take as an evidence, for example, the words of Gentaku in the preface to *Rangaku Kaitei*, where he asserts that *until now China was considered the most civilized country. Holland, however, is superior because next to literature it possesses science*<sup>233</sup>. This positivist approach seems rather in agreement with what stated by *Takahashi Shin'ichi* 高橋碩一 in *Yōgakuron* 洋学論, claiming that the *people of the red-hair country customarily do things by mental reckoning and by reason; they only use implements they can see; if a fact is not certain, they do not say so, and they do not make use of it; having a high regard for the sun, they do not talk about the 'upper regions'; they do not believe in*

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<sup>227</sup> SATŌ, Shōsuke, *Kokusaiteki Kankyō to Yōgaku no Gunji Kagakuka (The International Environment and Scientificization of Military Affairs in Western Studies)* in NAKAYAMA, Shigeru, *Bakumatsu no Yōgaku (Western studies by the end of the Bakufu)*, Kyōto, Minerva Shobō, 1984, pg. 16-17;

<sup>228</sup> KURATA, pp. 24-37;

<sup>229</sup> TSUKAHARA, Tōgo, *The Dutch Commitment in its Search for Asian Mineral Resources and the Introduction of Geological Sciences as a Consequence*, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 1994, pg. 209;

<sup>230</sup> TSUKAHARA, pg. 197;

<sup>231</sup> TSUKAHARA, pg. 205;

<sup>232</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 74;

<sup>233</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 122;

*Buddhism, and they do not accept mysterious things*<sup>234</sup>, clearly referencing the scientific approach to the investigation of reality.

The distribution of such opinions cannot, nonetheless, be considered wide-spread and, in spite of the passionate interest of some *rangakusha* to introduce and apply the Western scientific way of reasoning, it must be said that such a method was embodied to a very narrow extent; adding to the fact that the concept of science itself had not really been appropriated and understood to its depth.

The main obstacle for the Japanese to actually fully trust and comprehend Western science was, most likely, its apparent mutual contradictoriness with the Christian faith. As we have seen in Chapter I, Christianity was heavily persecuted by the *bakufu* and the ban on Western books they emended surely amplified the misconception that the religious thought was, in the West, necessarily intertwined with scientific query. Although many *rangakusha* tried to draw the line between Western science and its religion, such a contrast could not be overcome by most of the contemporary individuals. We remember, for example, *Hakuseki Arai* 新井白石, who described Christianity as an *unscientific attitude towards natural science*, denouncing the general belief<sup>235</sup>.

## 2.10 Western astronomy, Chinese calendars and Japanese traditions

Astronomy in Japan has never been a frequently pursued discipline, also evidenced by the lack of utilization of astronomical tools historians have attested. In fact, time-keeping instruments were initially not allowed to be used by privates and were collected by the *bakufu*<sup>236</sup>. As expectable, most of Japanese traditional view of the cosmos was based on Chinese texts concerning Confucianism and Buddhism, but it is the case that, rather than assimilating the contents of such investigations, the Japanese government actually adopted the forms in which Chinese astronomy and calendars functioned, for administrative purposes<sup>237</sup>.

With the arrival of the *nanbanjin*, their Jesuits and, in particular, Francis Xavier whose works mostly concerned with transmitting the Western understanding of the universe, the Japanese attitude towards such study changed radically. The missionary actually claims that he managed to convert

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<sup>234</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 50;

<sup>235</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 47;

<sup>236</sup> NAKAYAMA, Shigeru, *A History of Japanese Astronomy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 71-71;

<sup>237</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pg. 13;



many intellectuals by making them aware of the superiority of Western astronomy<sup>238</sup>, the truthfulness of such a statement is, nonetheless questionable.

Since the ban on Christian books in 1630 with the *kinsho* policy, and the banishment of Portuguese presence in 1639 with the *sakoku-rei*, Japan started being isolated also from Chinese<sup>239</sup> and Christian cosmology's new publications. This surely had an impact in the acceleration towards Dutch astronomy books introduction in Edo Japan and has, consequently, caused many internal debates with regards to the value of such texts. The most fierce critiques, in fact, came from Buddhist monks, who saw such a new cosmological view as in total contrast with the Indian traditional cosmology they believed in<sup>240</sup>.

Neo-Confucians, on the other hand, were not necessarily in contrast with Western astronomy, as their main focus of concern were morals and ethics<sup>241</sup>, rather than cosmological investigation, but we can see from *Mukai Genshō* 向井元升, in *Bunmei Genryū Sōsho* 文明源流叢書, a comparison the philosopher makes between Chinese-Japanese astronomy and Indian-*nanban*-Dutch astronomy. He discredits Western astronomy for believing in the concepts of Heaven and Hell, that could arguably be included in the actual subject of astronomy, but that refers undoubtedly to the main cosmological vision spread by the missionaries. His argument goes as far as saying: "*For Westerners the sky is something special, entirely unrelated to the four elements. Their heaven does not share the nature of earthly things. Therefore heaven cannot be essential to the composition of things. Westerners are ingenious only in techniques that deal with appearances and utility, but are ignorant about metaphysical matters and go astray in their theory of heaven and hell.*"

The critique here moves in two dimensions: firstly Mukai criticizes the Christian envision of the universe, believing that Heaven and Hell are not part of the main elements that constitute reality; on the other hand he criticizes the scientific utilitarianism that does not allow the Europeans to grasp metaphysical matters, although to a modern Westerner the debate about the interference of the two scientific and religious worlds is not in any way unheard of, we should remember that the sources Mukai had access to were mostly filtered through the Catholic proselytism's aims of the Jesuits, contributing to the blurry distinction between what was considered supernatural (and unscientific) and what was considered empirical (thus, eventually, unreligious).

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<sup>238</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969); pg. 81;

<sup>239</sup> We must remember that the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci had produced many works in China, revolutionizing their traditional vision. His books were, nonetheless, also banned by the Tokugawa shogunate, see NAKAYAMA (1969), pp. 91-92;

<sup>240</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pp. 203-204;

<sup>241</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pg. 214;

Being Mukai a Neo-Confucian, he believed that both Confucianism and *Shintō* were necessary to the attainment of truth and moral balance, that is why he argues that Confucianism would have only consisted of *nominalism* and *utilitarianism* (*keimeikōri* 刑名功利) without Japan's traditional religious ethics, while *Shintō* alone would degenerate in rudimental shamanism<sup>242</sup>.

New-Shintoists, instead, were rather sympathetic towards Western study of geography, this might also be favored by the lack of pseudo-scientific approach towards the investigation of the universe in such a philosophy, as opposed to the other belief systems we have previously talked about.

And this is the reason why, even Motoori Norinaga, about whom we have discussed in 2.7, in spite of the fact that he actively pursued a hindering of the process of westernization in Japan, seeking to reintroduce and reaffirm traditional native values in Japan, had to admit that *the motive for which Western people study astronomy and geography is not merely to succeed in scholastic debate or calendrical work. Their science is of crucial importance for daily use in navigating the oceans; even a small error would result in a grave accident*<sup>243</sup>. Recognizing and, surprisingly not dismissing, the utilitarian function of Western scientific investigation.

## 2.11 The study of chemistry and the realization of linguistic shortcomings

It is believed that the first Japanese book about chemistry was translated by the aforementioned Udagawa Yōan, who is also credited to having invented the name *seimi* 舍密<sup>244</sup> for this discipline (from Dutch *chemie*, *chemistry*), when he published, in 1837, *Introduction to Chemistry* (*Seimi Kaisō* 舍密開宗)<sup>245</sup>. At this point in history, Japan still had not yet come in touch with chemical concepts such as the elements, hydrogen, oxygen or any other idea concerning Western chemistry. It is for this reason that Udagawa accepted the endeavor of studying as a pioneer such a subject and coin new terms to refer to concepts and elements of reality that nobody in Japan had ever had the need to name. Most of these terms are still used in modern Japanese and, generally, derive from a literal translation of the *kōmōjin* counterpart. For example the Japanese word for *hydrogen* is *suiso* 水素 (水-*water* + 素-*origin/source*), which is a literal translation of the Dutch word *waterstof* (*water-water* + *stof-substance/matter*). Although this also works for the English language (*hydro-* holding the meaning of *water*), there are other particular examples that seem unequivocally

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<sup>242</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pg. 94;

<sup>243</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pp. 215-216;

<sup>244</sup> Not used anymore, replaced by *kagaku* 化学, literally *study of transformations*;

<sup>245</sup> HARA (2017), pg. 143;

etymologically connected to Dutch like, for example, the word *chisso* 窒素 (窒, *to choke*), meaning *nitrogen*, is obviously derived from *stikstof* (from *stikken*, *to choke*) or the word for *oxygen* being *sanso* 酸素 (酸 - *acid*), from *zuurstof* (*zuur* means *acid*, *sour*)<sup>246</sup>. To be fair there have been other studies concerning chemistry not as the main focus, namely *Aochi Rinsō* 青地林宗 in *Kikai Kanran* 気海観瀾, and *Takano Chōei* 高野長英 in *Ensei Suishitsuron* 遠西水質論, that attempted a first translation of such Dutch terms but that did not manage to stick with the standard and modern nomenclature utilized today in Japan<sup>247</sup>. Table 2<sup>248</sup> presents a selection of the terms in the abovementioned books with their original Dutch terms.

Original Dutch word	Kikai Kanran	Ensei Suishitsuron	Seimi Kaisō
<i>Warmtestof</i>	温質	火原	浚素、温素
<i>Zuurstof</i>	酸質	酸原	酸素
<i>Zuivere lucht</i> <i>Levens lucht</i>	清氣 生氣、酸氣	清氣 生氣	酸素瓦斯
<i>Waterstof</i>	水質	水原	水素
<i>Brandbaare lucht</i>	燃氣	燃氣	水素瓦斯
<i>azote stikstof</i>	窒質	亜曾宇底 没歇都	殺素、窒素
<i>stiklucht</i>	窒氣	窒氣	殺素瓦斯、 窒氣瓦斯
<i>vaste lucht</i>	硬氣	硬氣	炭酸瓦斯

Table 2: Chemical terms comparison

By analyzing this table we notice, first, that originally the Dutch language utilized the term *lucht* (*air*) to refer to the concepts of gas, that was actually conceived of by Flemish chemist Jan Baptist van Helmont in the 17th century, who also created its name. This term was at first translated with the character *ki* 氣 (*air*)<sup>249</sup> by Aochi and Takano, while Udagawa, probably acquainted with the concept of gas, utilized the Chinese characters 瓦斯 to render the phonetic pronunciation of *gasu*.

<sup>246</sup> HARA (2017), pp. 146-147;

<sup>247</sup> See YOSHIDA, Tadashi, *Butsurigaku - Dandōgaku - Kagaku (Physics - Ballistics - Chemistry)* in NAKAYAMA, Shigeru, *Bakumatsu no Yōgaku (Western studies by the end of the Bakufu)*, Kyōto, Minerva Shobō, 1984;

<sup>248</sup> Adapted from YOSHIDA, pg. 170;

<sup>249</sup> This character has, actually, a very long list of meanings. Being the concept of air one of them, this has been selected to be utilized in this instance;

The term *stof* has been translated by Aochi with the character *shitsu* 質 (*quality, substance, matter*), by Takano with *gen* 原 (*origin, but also field*) and, ultimately, by Udagawa with *so* 素 (*origin, source*). We can say that, for the last rendering, the concept behind this decision was to create a *kango* 漢語<sup>250</sup> out of the phrasing, taking hydrogen as an example, *mizu no moto* 水の素, *the origin/source of water*.

Another interesting example is the rendering of nitrogen, that existed in Dutch both as *azote* and *stikstof*. The first term was phonetically rendered by Takano with the Chinese characters 亞曾宇, while both Aochi and Udagawa made an attempt to translate the *choking element* literally by using the character *chitsu* 窒 (*to choke*) or, in the case of Udagawa also the character *satsu* 殺 (*to kill*) is attested.

This *modus operandi* seems consistent with the three ways of translating Dutch terms Sugita conceived of while compiling his *Kaitai Shinsho*, being as follows<sup>251</sup>:

- **Direct translation** (*hon'yaku* 翻訳<sup>252</sup>): Utilizing for a Dutch term the corresponding Japanese term, when available. Sugita providing the example of *beenderen* translated as *hone* 骨, both meaning *bone(s)*;
- **Free translation** (*giyaku* 義訳): Utilizing the Chinese character to coin new terms or, creating brand new Chinese character. The example here provided is *kraakbeen* (*cartilage, literally crackbone*) translated as *nankotsu* 軟骨 (*literally flexible, soft bone*). One might also take the word *kaitai* 解体 (*anatomy, dissection*), coined as a substitute to the older term *fuwake* 腑分け that, literally meaning *viscera separation* also mirrors an important change of the conception of what such a discipline was. The new term Sugita used, in fact, consists

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<sup>250</sup> The term *kango* refers to a Japanese word using kanji that is syntactically based on the Chinese language sentence structure;

<sup>251</sup> Original quote: "訳に三等あり。一に曰く翻訳、二に曰く義訳、三に曰く直訳。和蘭呼びベンでデレンと曰ふ者は、即ち骨なり、即ち訳して骨と曰ふが如きは、翻訳これなり。また、呼びてカラカベンと曰ふ者、骨にして軟らかなる者を謂ふなり、カラカなる者は鼠の器を嚙む音の如く然るを謂ふなり、蓋し義を脆軟に取る、価なる者はベンデレンの略語なり、則ち訳して軟骨と曰ふが如きは、義訳これなり。また、呼びてキリイルと曰ふ者、語の当つべきなく、義の解すべきなきは、則ち訳してキリイルと曰ふが如きは、直訳これなり。余の訳例は皆かくの如きなり。読む者これを思へ。", HIROSE, pp. 217-218;

<sup>252</sup> Today simply meaning *translation*;

of the two kanji *kai* 解, meaning *understanding*, and *tai* 体, meaning *body*, rendering an undoubtedly much more sublime attitude towards such subject<sup>253</sup>;

- **Phonetic translation** (*chokuyaku* 直訳<sup>254</sup>): Utilizing the Chinese characters only for their pronunciation, rendering the Dutch term in its phonetic, when neither of the previous translation methods could be pursued. This method has been, subsequently, substituted by the use of the *katakana* syllabary, the standard of which has, in fact, been settled by Sugita's workgroup<sup>255</sup>.

According to Gatti, as we enter the Meiji period the most used translation techniques are found to be the phonetic translation (*on'yaku* 音訳), today strictly provided in *katakana*, after the long process of systemization of their use, corresponding to the one Sugita calls *chokuyaku*; and the conceptual translation utilizing Chinese characters to make new *kango* (*hon'yaku* in Gatti, corresponding to Sugita's *giyaku*), as for the term *ketsumakuen* 結膜炎, meaning *conjunctivitis*, from Dutch *bindvliesontsteking* (*bind* - *ketsu* 結 - *connection*; *vlies* - *maku* 膜 - *membrane*; *ontsteking* - *en* 炎 - *inflammation*)<sup>256</sup>.

## 2.12 A societal amalgam, conclusive deductions

After analyzing all the different aspects we have dealt with until now we can come to the conclusion that the mainstream position between Japanese intellectuals who had come in touch with Western knowledge was to somehow compromise between their pre-existing notions about the understanding of the world, mostly based on Buddhism, *Shintō* and Confucianism, and Western utilitarian empiricism. That was also the point of view from which the *bakufu* ordered the seemingly contradictory policies with regards to censorship and banishment of Westerners and their way of thinking, while at the same time incentivizing research in Western science and knowledge for utilitarian needs.

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<sup>253</sup> As recognized by Sugita himself: "腑分といひ古りしことを新たに解体と訳名し、且つ社中にて誰いふともなく蘭学といへる新名を首唱し", SUGITA, pp. 42-43;

<sup>254</sup> Today meaning *literal translation*;

<sup>255</sup> VITUCCI, Francesco, *Chi ha paura del katakanago? Un'analisi sociolinguistica agli albori del ventesimo secolo* (*Who is afraid of katakanago? A Sociolinguistic analysis at the dawn of the twentieth century*), published in *Riflessioni sul Giappone antico e moderno* by M. Mastrangelo, L. Milasi and S. Romagnoli, Aragne editrice, Ariccia, 2014; pg. 95;

<sup>256</sup> GATTI, Francesco, *L'invenzione delle parole. Il Giappone Meiji scopre nuovi concetti* (*The invention of words. Meiji Japan discovering new concepts*) in *Quaderni di Asiatica Veneziana*, Vol. 1, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina S.r.l., Venice, 2005, g. 60;

This position was strongly objected to by Buddhists and, less harshly, by Neo-Confucians who, one might argue, had a less flexible envision of reality more strongly based on traditions and ancient customs. Neo-Shintoists, or *kokugakusha* 国学者, were, on the other hand, rather accepting of the introduction of Western knowledge, in particular to the extent to which they could coexist with their presupposed belief system.

This compromising situation is epitomized by the construction technologies Japan requested to be applied in its own territory under the supervision of Dutch engineers, most famously Anthonie Rouwenhorst Mulder. Starting from the *bakumatsu* 幕末 period (End of the *bakufu* reign), Japan's main interest was, in fact, towards the learning of infrastructural technologies and, particularly, techniques to claim land from the waters, that has always undoubtedly been one of the most representative Dutch uniqueness.

Also in this instance were these technologies, nonetheless, absorbed and reevaluated according to the preexisting Japanese mastery in dealing with infrastructures in relation with the sea and rivers. It is, thus, not a stretch to compare the topographic structure of most of Japan's cities to Dutch ones. One could take Amsterdam and Okayama's historical infrastructural development, for example, and point out many similarities in that both cities have been, de facto, built on polders<sup>257</sup>.

It is also extremely representative the fact that such draining technologies imported from the West were not utilized to cultivate rice crops (*inasaku* 稲作), that can be understood as a symbol of Japanese (or more generally Eastern Asian) culture, but only for other cultivations<sup>258</sup>. This could be seen as a representation of the compromising between the two culture we have talked about, as the traditional dimension had not to be interfered with by Western knowledge that could, nonetheless, be adopted and integrated into those fields in which tradition was lacking and, mostly, for utilitarian purposes.

For these reasons the *Nagasaki tsūji* and the *Edo no rangakusha* started also studying the Dutch language, all while understanding that theirs was lacking in some terminology and also the linguistic investigation could have turned out to be useful from an utilitarian perspective, as we will deeply analyze in the next chapter.

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<sup>257</sup> HARA (2017), pp. 167-177;

<sup>258</sup> HARA (2017), pg. 216;

### III

## Studying the language

### Japan discovering Western linguistics

Since we have argued that an understanding of foreign concepts, ideas and customs, as well as the conception of the *other's* way of speaking, are always influenced and interfered with by one's understanding of their own native language, we will now proceed to analyze the ways in which the Dutch and the Japanese perceived their own languages in relation to their trading partners' and, most importantly, how the Japanese could study such language and how these pioneering investigations affected Japan's domestic linguistics. In other words, or how Doeff rhetorically wonders, '*How could one provide a good description of an empire, without the knowledge of its language?*'<sup>259</sup>.

#### 3.1 *Vroegnieuwederlands* or *Nieuwederlands*?

Before immersing ourselves into the analysis of Dutch linguistics in Edo Japan we have to keep in mind that both the Dutch language and Japanese were, at that time, relatively different from what they are now, but also that, having the relationship between the two countries developed throughout more than three hundred years such languages changed sensibly from their first encounter all the way to the *bakumatsu* period. For this reason, historical linguists talk about *Nieuwederlands* (*New Dutch*) and *Kinsei Nihongo* 近世日本語 (*Early Modern Japanese*) to refer to the stage of development of the two languages in such period.

*Nieuwederlands* is a term used to refer to the variety of Dutch that started developing in the early 16th century and is considered to be the one still used in modern standard Dutch, although some recognize in the first century of its transition enough differentiation from the subsequent stages of transformation persuading them to name it *Vroegnieuwederlands* (*Early New Dutch*). The main

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<sup>259</sup> Original quote: "Hoe toch zou men eene goede beschrijving van een Rijk kunnen geven, zonder deszelfs taal te verstaan?" DOEFF, pg. 1;

differences between *Nieuwnederlands* and the previous *Middelnederlands* (Middle Dutch, 1150-1500) feature<sup>260</sup>:

- The simplification of most endings in schwa ⟨ə⟩ (e.g. *bedde* becomes *bed*, *naam* becomes *naam* - respectively meaning *bed* and *name*). This caused many words to lose one syllable and, thus, to end in a consonant sound which, one might argue, made the pronunciation harder for a Japanese native speaker to render as Japanese words almost always end in vowel sounds. This partially led to the following change;
- Loss of the case system for nouns and articles, that, although having already started fading in *Middelnederlands*, it was completely dropped in New Dutch informal language, changing the phrasing *des kindes*, for example, to *van het kind* (meaning *of the child*). The difference is notable as the genitive ending for singular neutral nouns *-es* is dropped both from the noun *kindes* and from the definitive article *des*, and the concept of possession was, conversely, rendered via the preposition *van* (*of*). As we have seen, though, this has only occurred in spoken Dutch as the written language required the adoption of a language perceived as being much more sophisticated, which was believed to be closer to the prestigious Latin, thus maintaining the noun case system<sup>261</sup>. This was, as a consequence, the version of the Dutch language that was studied in Japan and one could consider it to be a somehow more conservative *bridge* language connecting Middle Dutch to New Dutch;
- Gradual merging of the masculine and feminine grammatical genders. Originally the Dutch language had three grammatical genders, namely masculine, feminine and neuter. As a consequence to the loss of schwa endings (that mostly characterized feminine nouns) and noun cases, by the 17th century the distinction between masculine and feminine terms had, in fact, already started getting blurrier and blurrier in spoken language. Non-written language, thus, was composed of only two genders: neuter and, the one we now call, common gender, where all the feminine and masculine nouns converged. One might argue that the whole concept of masculine/feminine grammatical gender was gradually lost as many obviously feminine terms (e.g. *koe*, *cow*) have been (and still are) attested to be utilized in combination with the masculine singular pronoun *hij* (*he*), instead of the feminine *zij* (*she*), repurposing the masculine pronoun *hij* for any common gender noun and limiting the use of *zij* to (almost) only human females. One might say, for example, a sentence like '*Mijn koe, hij is jong*' (*My cow, it [he] is young*), but is bound to say '*Mijn vrouw, zij is jong*'

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<sup>260</sup> FRITTER, pg. 95;

<sup>261</sup> We have taken the Dutch grammar book *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst*, published in 1744, as an example which contained detailed explanation of the case system and parallelisms with Latin grammar, see WEILAND, pg. 28;



(*My wife, she is young*)<sup>262</sup>. The three gender system was, unsurprisingly, also maintained in prescriptive written language as evidenced in *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst's* thorough explanation of which words belonged to which gender<sup>263</sup>;

- Phonetically speaking, prescriptive Dutch had, at that time, a more complex vowel system, as it still retained the long versions of the open vowels ⟨ɛː⟩ and ⟨ɔː⟩, which was also mirrored in spelling in many instances<sup>264</sup>. Those sounds all turned, in standard modern Dutch, into their close counterparts, meaning ⟨eː⟩<sup>265</sup> and ⟨oː⟩.

As already discussed in 1.1, Dutch socio-historical context accounted for a notable differentiation between the different languages spoken in the Low Lands. In particular, the economical development that characterized the Northern regions, while not occurring in the South (mostly Flanders and Brabant areas), made such distinction even deeper and caused the richer regions' varieties to be perceived as the most sophisticated.

By the 17th century, nonetheless, many Southern characteristics actually spread to the North, infiltrating into the first attempts to a standardized language. Some of these influences feature imported lexicon as *zenden* (Northern Dutch: *sturen*; *to send*), *heden* (ND: *vandaag*; *today*), *werpen* (ND: *gooien*; *to throw*); and pronunciation variations, like the diphthong *ui* (pronounced ⟨yː⟩ in most of Northern varieties, and ⟨œy⟩ in Southern and modern Standard Dutch), and the digraph *ij* (pronounced ⟨iː⟩ in the North, while ⟨ɛi⟩ in the South and in modern Standard Dutch)<sup>266</sup>. The realization of the digraph *ij* as ⟨ɛi⟩ overlaps precisely with the pronunciation of the diphthong *ei*, and, for this reason, was labeled a *bastardization*, meaning improper language use, by Weiland who, thus, also attests the changes in pronunciation according to regional varieties<sup>267</sup>.

Although, many attempts to unify and standardize the language had actually been made all throughout the centuries, it appears hard to argue that anything like a properly standardized informal, spoken Dutch actually existed before the foundation of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (*Dutch*

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<sup>262</sup> JANNSEN, pg. 163;

<sup>263</sup> WEILAND, pp. 24-28;

<sup>264</sup> Weiland talks about *zwak* (*weak*) and *scherp* (*sharp*) vowels, particularly the *sharp* (open) long vowels would be written double even in an open syllable, to distinguish them from the *zwak* (close) long versions, that are generally written singularly in open syllables. Since the open long E and O have disappeared in modern standard Dutch it is nowadays generally considered a misspelling to have a double vowel written in an open syllable, see WEILAND, pg. 14;

<sup>265</sup> This sound is also oftentimes diphthongized in ⟨ɛi⟩ by many native speakers, particularly in the Netherlands;

<sup>266</sup> FRITTER, pg. 98;

<sup>267</sup> WEILAND, pg. 16;

*Language Union*) in 1980<sup>268</sup>, and at least until the 19th century the rate of difference between the written language, that was being attempted to be unified, and the spoken language, that was still used rather freely, was considerably elevated<sup>269</sup>. The belief that the Dutch language was actually standardized was a (relative) misconception that was most likely common between the *rangakusha*<sup>270</sup>, interfering with the capability of the Dutch scholars to really grasp the essence of their discipline of study, maybe causing their inability to grasp the nuances in register Weiland defined *smaak*, as of 2.4.

In addition to this we must remember that many of the books that the Japanese used as Dutch grammar handbooks were, in reality, originally French grammar textbooks used by the Dutch. The most representative example being the extensively utilized *Nieuwe Fransche en Nederduitsche spraakwyze* published in 1752 by Marin, on which Maeno Ryōtaku and Ōtsuki Gentaku based their works.

We can, accordingly, argue that the version of Dutch that the Japanese studied was mostly a conservative and prescriptive version of New Dutch, that maintained many Middle Dutch features and was highly influenced by Latin and French grammar. This can be said to be especially true for the *Edo no rangakusha*, who had to rely more dependently on written sources, as opposed to the *Nagasaki tsūji* who actually had more chances to talk directly to the *kōmōjin*.

### 3.2 Motivations to study the Dutch language and language proficiency

Acquiring the capabilities to be able to read Dutch scientific textbooks was just one, arguably, secondary reason that motivated the *rangakusha* to start learning the language of the *kōmōjin*. Most of these translations were, in fact, carried out by *science*<sup>271</sup> scholars who, taking Sugita Genpaku as an example, could hardly be considered to having been concerned with a proper linguistic study of Dutch, particularly in the earlier periods. On the other hand, the *Nagasaki tsūji*, although studying meticulously the language, were probably not extremely proficient in the written language, as their duty was to mainly function as interpreters between Dutch and Japanese merchants, and recording transactions and various bureaucratic instances in their own language<sup>272</sup>. It is reasonable to believe

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<sup>268</sup> FRITTER, pg. 102;

<sup>269</sup> JANNSEN, pg. 130;

<sup>270</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 176;

<sup>271</sup> Or rather, the Japanese way of investigating the scientific inquiries;

<sup>272</sup> KAZUO (2016), pg. 33;

that the interpreters in Dejima used to learn most of their Dutch from direct interactions with the Red Haired Barbarians, rather than studying the language from physical handbooks<sup>273</sup>.

Because of these reasons evaluating the actual language proficiency of the interpreters is a rather difficult operation, if one is not satisfied to rely solely on the records from the Dutch side that generally complained about the unsatisfactory skills of the *tsūji* in Dutch, in particular in the 17th century<sup>274</sup>. Interestingly, though, we can read Doeff's comments on the interpreters' language abilities as he writes: "[...] *the interpreters, who learn Nederduitsch only through the encounters with the Dutch in Japan, in the occasion of the arrival of new officials, whose language is still foreign to them, have the hardest problems understanding them, while at the same time their pronunciation and the entirety of their language, distorted by the Japanese changes in speech, is extremely difficult for the newcomers.*"<sup>275</sup>. As we can read, the details Doeff offers are not particularly eulogizing of the interpreters' proficiency in Dutch, and his authority in this regard should not be dismissed without a second thought as he represents one of the *opperhoofd* who was the most engaged in the linguistic studies in Dejima, learning some spoken Japanese himself<sup>276</sup> and being the author, in 1816, of one of the most utilized rudimental Dutch-Japanese dictionary, called *Doeff Halma, Dūfu Haruma* ツーフ・ハルマ<sup>277</sup> in Japanese, based on François Halma's *Woordenboek der Nederduitsche en Fransche talen (Dictionary of the Dutch and French languages; Amsterdam, 1710)*, and consequence of an enduring cooperation between the *kapitan* and the interpreters. Other names this dictionary has been called with feature: *Nagasaki Haruma* 長崎ハルマ, with clear reference to the place of compilation and to differentiate it from the precedent in publication - *Haruma Wage* ハルマ和解 (*Japanese Translation of the Halma*), in 1796, started by *Nishi Zenzaburō* 西善三郎<sup>278</sup>, who died before finishing it, thus, completed by the *Edo no rangakusha Inamura Sanpaku* 稲村三伯, in collaboration with the *Nagasaki tsūji Ishii*

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<sup>273</sup> NUMATA, pg. 245;

<sup>274</sup> NUMATA, pg. 224;

<sup>275</sup> Original quote: "[...] de tolken, die het Nederduitsch enkel door den omgang met de *Hollanders* in *Japan* leeren, bij het aankomen van nieuwe ambtenaren, wier taal hun nog vreemd is, de grootste moeite hadden om dezelve te verstaan, terwijl tevens hunne uitspraak en hunne geheele taal, naar de Japansche spraakwendingen gewijzigd, voor die aankomelingen ten hoogste moeijelijk zijn." DOEFF, pg. 2;

<sup>276</sup> SUGIMOTO (2012), pg. 405;

<sup>277</sup> The name of the book could be also transliterated in *katakana* as ドーフ・ハルマ or ズーフ・ハルマ, the choice to utilize one version, as opposed to the others, has been made according to what explained in the Preliminaries to this research;

<sup>278</sup> NUMATA, pg. 246;

*Shōsuke* 石井庄助, which is also known with the name of *Edo Haruma* 江戸ハルマ, for these reasons<sup>279</sup>.

The belief that Dutch was a standardized language, while also being perceived as a lingua franca in Europe, by the Japanese<sup>280</sup>, persuaded many literates to engage into a debate with regards to the position and value of their native language in the context of a world that was already starting to be thoroughly open and all the countries engaged with one another. In particular the Chinese characters started being perceived as extremely complicated, requiring a whole lifetime to be learnt with a deep enough knowledge to utilize them with ease in proper scientific studies, as written by *Shiba Kōhan* 司馬江漢: "*The Western nations, instead of characters, use signs which merely indicate the pronunciation. Is it not a waste of time to read books first without understanding the meaning and only then to ask a teacher about it? Since in the West they use the sounds of their own language in writing, they have but to look at a book if they want to learn about the principles of heaven and earth. It is like reading Japanese kana.*", also seemingly trying to find an explanation for the reason why Western knowledge had managed to reach a wider range of investigations than the domestic one.

Similar negative opinions with regards to the *kanji* have also been expressed by other Japanese literates like scholars *Gotō Rishun* 後藤梨春 and *Yamagata Bantō* 山片蟠桃, and author *Morishima Chūryō* 森島中良, all of them suggesting that a phonetic alphabet like the ones used in Western languages, similar to the *kana* writing system, could have afforded a better readability of Japanese textbooks concerning more complex topics, spreading knowledge even to less literate individuals<sup>281</sup> and believed that ideograms were going to gradually die out, as they represented nothing more than a threat to the average Japanese, while suggesting the *kana* syllabaries would have eventually replaced them completely in the written Japanese of the future<sup>282</sup>. Their concerns originated from the fear that Japanese scholars had to invest a disproportionately huge amount of time to the study of their own language, thus leaving out very little time to actually investigate the rest of world's knowledge, claiming that they had to, before being able to become proper scholars/scientists, be *linguists*<sup>283</sup>, although the fitfulness of the usage of this term in this context is highly debatable.

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<sup>279</sup> SUGIMOTO (2012), pg. 177;

<sup>280</sup> TOSHIO, Doi, *The Study of Language in Japan : A Historical Survey*, Shinozaki Shorin, Tōkyō, 1976, pg.i;

<sup>281</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 197;

<sup>282</sup> SUGIMOTO (2012), pg. 176;

<sup>283</sup> GOODMAN (2000), pg. 198;

The negativity towards the Chinese characters and the foresight of their future extinction was, as argued by Sugimoto himself, in evident contrast, nonetheless, with the tendency of most *rangakusha* to coin new terms in *kango*, as we have seen with Sugita Genpaku in 2.11, and creating new Japanese-made *kanji* while translating Dutch books, like in *Ihan Teikō* 医範提綱 (*Medical examples*, 1805) by Udagawa Kenshin 宇田川玄真, in which terms like *sui* 脾, *pancreas*; *chitsu* 膻, *vagina* and *sen* 腺, *gland*, have been assessed as scientific nomenclatures in Japanese<sup>284</sup>.

The role of the interpreters in Nagasaki was also fundamental the moment in which a foreign boat approached the Japanese bay. After the *bugyō* deployed the inspection-ships, *kenshi-sen* 検使船 in Japanese documents, and *praaiboot* in the Dutch ones, the *kōmōjin* on board were made to shout in their language towards the new ship, the crew of which was expected to answer in Dutch, and that response had to be confirmed to be such language by the *tsūji* who would, ultimately, deem the ship's possibility to engage in the acceptance process by stating *kikiwakeru* 聞き分ける, *I understand what I hear*<sup>285</sup>.

After the Japanese officials acquired the certainty that the newly arrived ship actually was one of those belonging to the fleet of the VOC, via long bureaucratic steps to which the participation of the interpreters was essential, the captain of the new ship was summoned, along with the *opperhoofd* in Dejima, to compile, by the *bugyō*, the final documents with all the detailed information about the vessel's whereabouts and cargo. Such information consisted of four documents, namely: The *nieuws* or *fūsetsugaki* (See 1.7); the *monsterrollen* or *jōsenjinmeibo* 乗船人名簿, a list of the crew members; the *facturen* or *tsumini mokuroku* 積荷目録, concerning the details about the cargo; and the *brieven* or *shokanrui* 書翰類, the letters coming from the Netherlands or Batavia<sup>286</sup>.

As we have already seen, the *nieuws* were told orally in Dutch by the ship's captain while the interpreters took note of his words. Interestingly, though, it is generally believed that the crew members document was compiled by translating the pronunciation of the names of the individuals into the Japanese characters, meaning that the phonetic of the name had precedence to their spelling and suggesting that the Dutch were asked to utter their names to the interpreters who would decide which Japanese characters to use to write it. We can take a look at a partial reproduction of a *jōsenjinmeibo* with its Dutch and Japanese counterparts in Table 3, 4<sup>287</sup> and 5<sup>288</sup> below:

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<sup>284</sup> HARA (2016), pg. 2;

<sup>285</sup> KAZUO (2016), pp. 3-4;

<sup>286</sup> KAZUO (2016), pp. 6-7;

<sup>287</sup> Table 3 and 4 are a sample of an actual crew members document that is featured in its entirety in KAZUO (2016), pp. 8-11;

Monsterrol van het Schip Princes Marianne			
Qualiteit	Namen	Oud jaren	Geboorte plaats
Kapitein	J. Admiraal	38	Rotterdam
1 <sup>e</sup> Stuurman	W. Timmermans	27	d <sup>o</sup>
1 <sup>e</sup> Timmerman	J. Van der Velden	27	Vlaardingen
Matroos	W. Oldendorp	25	Rotterdam
d <sup>o</sup>	C.C. de Haan	21	Sampeer

Table 3: Part of an original *monsterrol* in Dutch

阿蘭陀人乗組人数名歳			
役職	名まえ	年齢	出身地
船頭	いあとみらある	歳三十八	ロッテルダム
上按針役	うゑていむめるまんす	同二十七	同
大工	いいはんてるふゑるてん	同二十七	フラーアルジンケン
水夫	うへをるてん	同二十五	ロッテ r ダム
同	せいではあん	同二十一	サブメール

Table 4: Table 3's *jōsenjinmeibo* in Japanese

Crew members of the ship Princes Marianne			
Post	Names	Years old	Place of Birth
Captain	J. Admiraal	38	Rotterdam
1st Steersman	W. Timmermans	27	<i>ditto</i>
1st Carpenter	J. Van der Velden	27	Vlaardingen
Sailor	W. Oldendorp	25	Rotterdam
<i>ditto</i>	C.C. de Haan	21	Sampeer

Table 5: Content of Table 3 and 4 translated in English

The most interesting details these tables show are those regarding the phonetic adaptation of the names of the Dutch ship's crew members. What we notice, in particular, is the fact that they used to keep the 'first name initials plus family name' structure they found in the original document, rather than writing down the whole name, element that was kept in the romanization of Japanese names too, as we have seen in 2.7, with Imamura Gen'emon, who signed himself as J: M: gennemon. This can be seen in, for example, the transliteration of first steersman W. Timmermans whose name has been rendered in *uwe teimumerumansu* うゑていむめるまんす, in which *uwe* is most likely an attempt to *nipponize* the name of the letter W, called *we*, in Dutch, and pronounced ⟨ve:⟩, being the

<sup>288</sup> English translation of tables 3 and 4;

labiodental approximant ⟨v⟩ absent in Japanese. If we take a look at the name of sailor W. Oldendorp, rendered as *uhe woruten* うへをるてん, besides noticing that only the first two syllables have been written down, we see that the transliteration process was still practically non-standardized, as his first name also began with a W, but in his case it has been written as *uhe* うへ. Although we now romanize the *hiragana* へ as *he*, it is most likely the case that, as we will see in the next paragraph, it was pronounced something similar to a voiceless bilabial fricative ⟨ɸ⟩<sup>289</sup>.

Going back to Timmermans' Japanese name one important detail might suggest that, in fact, the process of re-baptizing of the Hollanders was not dependent on the actual phonetic pronunciation of such names, as much as it was in spelling, also disclosing a smaller participation of the Dutch in the compilation of the *monsterrollen*. It could be argued, in fact, that, if the documents were filled in under dictation from the *kōmōjin*, listening to the native pronunciation of their names, it would appear unlikely that a Japanese would make the choice of adapting it in *teimumerumansu*. The detail triggering these doubts is, in particular, the sequence of the syllables *mume* むめ for which one can hardly find a phonetic explanation. The name Timmermans is, in fact, pronounced in standard Dutch as ⟨'tɪmərˌmɑns⟩, without the double M that appear in the written form, functioning solely as syllable-closing, and that might have explained the choice to render it as *mume* むめ from a Japanese phonetic point of view.

Dismissing the idea that the names were written down while listening to the Dutch pronouncing them is not, thus, the only thesis we can put forward. It can be, in fact, also argued that the way the Japanese used to learn Dutch did not particularly prescient from the spelling and was, expectedly, strongly influenced by the syllable-based structure of Japanese script. It could be suggested that the reason why the non-pronounced double M, in the name *Timmermans*, has been thought by the compiler of this *monsterrol* as two different characters he had to transcribe faithful to the original spelling, could not be explained according to a phonetic perception, but the necessity to render the Dutch written form as close as possible to the Japanese one. The idea is supported by the sources we have of the first Japanese handbooks dealing with Dutch phonetics, as we will see in the next paragraph.

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<sup>289</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016); pg. 54;

### 3.3 Studying Dutch phonetics, the necessity of the *kana* syllabaries

To find an early example of what one might call a proper pioneering phonetics study in Japan we should mention the book *Seion Hatsubi* 西音発微 by *Ōtsuki Genkan* 大槻玄幹 and his master *Nakano Ryūho* 中野柳圃 in 1826, where we can see one of the first investigations of Japanese phonetics in comparison with Dutch sounds. Although, of course, the content might be considered quite unpolished if read by a modern linguist, the book attempts to illustrate meticulously all of the sound combinations present in Japanese.

We can see clearly from this document that the envision of the Japanese themselves towards their own language as being based on syllables, as suggested by the writing system, could hardly be disregarded, even though, *Ōtsuki* apparently managed to take enough distance from that in the explanation of Japanese sounds. In the part of the book dedicated to the national language, titled *Kōkoku Gojūonbin* 皇国五十音弁 (*The 50 Sounds of Speech in the Language of the Empire*)<sup>290</sup>, the author utilizes the traditional fifty-sound grid to list all the syllables present in the Japanese language, voiced (*dakuon* 濁音) and semi-voiced (*handakuon* 半濁音) syllables included, although the Japanese term *dakuon* literally means *dirty sound* (*handakuon* - *half dirty sound*), as opposed to *seion* 清音, meaning *clear sound*, used to loosely refer to 'unvoiced'<sup>291</sup> sounds.

To *Ōtsuki Genkan* can also be attributed one of the first attempts to categorize Japanese consonants according to the location in the oral cavity where the sound is produced, similarly to modern linguistics. He identified five types of consonants, probably under influence of Chinese traditional linguistics, namely<sup>292</sup>:

- **gaon** 牙音, *velar*, for the consonants belonging to the *ka-gyō* 力行 (e.g. velar consonants ⟨k⟩ and ⟨g⟩);
- **shion** 齒音, *dental*, for the *sa-gyō* サ行 (e.g. alveolar affricatives ⟨s⟩ and ⟨z⟩);
- **setsuon** 舌音, *lingual*, for the *ta-gyō* 夕行 and *na-gyō* ナ行 (e.g. alveolars ⟨t⟩ and ⟨d⟩; nasal alveolar ⟨n⟩);

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<sup>290</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pp. 31-32;

<sup>291</sup> Although we translate these words utilizing such terms as *voiced* and *unvoiced*, we ought to remember that they are, in this instance, used differently as compared to modern linguistics. For example the phoneme ⟨p⟩ is considered semi-voiced (*handakuon*) according to this nomenclature, while it clearly represents a completely unvoiced sound in linguistics;

<sup>292</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pp. 32-36;



- *shin'on* 唇音, *labial*, for most of the *ha-gyō* ㄸ行 and the *ma-gyō* ㅃ行, *ra-gyō* ㄹ行, *wa-gyō* ㅍ行 (e.g. bilabial fricative ⟨ϕ⟩; bilabial stops ⟨p⟩ and ⟨b⟩; alveolar flap ⟨r⟩; labio-velar approximant ⟨w⟩);
- *kōon* 喉音, *glottal*, for the *ya-gyō* ㄹ行 (palatal approximant ⟨j⟩); particular cases from the *ha-gyō* ㄸ行 (glottal fricative ⟨h⟩, see below) and the vowels.

This categorization, of course, cannot be evaluated as sophisticated enough to consider the variation in consonant sounds occurring inside the same syllable-line. As an example: unvoiced alveolar stop /t/ becoming voiceless alveolo-palatal sibilant affricate ⟨tɕ⟩ before close front unrounded vowel /i/ as in *ta* ㄸ, *ti/chi* ㄸ, regardless of the fact that it is likely that the difference between ⟨ti⟩ and ⟨tei⟩ might have been perceived by native speakers, as suggested by the translation of the Dutch surname Timmermans into the Japanese phonetics, covered in the previous paragraph.

That said, Ōtsuki Genkan demonstrated a refined sensibility to the different sounds the *ha-gyō* consonants actually represented, subdividing them in two different categories, being *shin'on* and *kōon*. Although being partially extinct in modern Japanese, the *rangakusha* estimated the existence of four consonant sounds that could be written utilizing the *ha-gyō* in composition with each of the five vowels. Between the *shin'on* consonants he recognized the *dakuon*, most likely representing the voiced bilabial stop ⟨b⟩ (e.g. *ba* ㅃ), and the *handakuon*, we could believe represents the voiceless bilabial stop ⟨p⟩ (e.g. *pa* ㅍ), both consistent with modern Japanese. As for the 'dakuon-less' characters of the *ha-gyō*, being them categorized as *labial* consonants it is not unfounded to believe it represented the voiceless bilabial fricative ⟨ϕ⟩, as anticipated in the previous paragraph, as it would make sense that the fourth sound, that Ōtsuki places in the glottal category, represented a voiceless glottal fricative ⟨h⟩, which is the general pronunciation of such syllable-line in modern Japanese, also considering that it is widely believed that the shift from ⟨ϕ⟩ to ⟨h⟩ occurred during the Edo period<sup>293</sup>. Also seemingly suggested by Dutch scholar of German descent Johann Joseph Hoffmann's *Japansche Spraakleer (Japanese Grammar, 1868)*, in particular with regard to the pronunciation variety in Nagasaki<sup>294</sup>. It is nonetheless interesting to notice that the *unmarked* version of the *ha-gyō* was dedicated to the bilabial fricative, that in today's Japanese only exists when preceding a /u/, in the syllable *hu/fu* ㄸ. For this reason, to write the syllables rendering the voiceless glottal fricative ⟨h⟩ he suggested the use of yet another mark, the shape of a triangle, on the top right of the regular *kana*, meaning that the *ha*, *hi*, *hu*, *he*, *ho* syllables were to be respectively

<sup>293</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 57;

<sup>294</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 53;

written, according to his judgment, as  $\overset{\Delta}{ハ}$ ,  $\overset{\Delta}{ヒ}$ ,  $\overset{\Delta}{フ}$ ,  $\overset{\Delta}{ヘ}$ ,  $\overset{\Delta}{ホ}$ <sup>295</sup>. This might also explain the reason why in many records we can see that the Dutch word *hoe* (*how* - pronounced ⟨*fu*⟩) was not transcribed as *hu/fu* フ, but rather *uu* ウウ, as the vowel *kōon* sound might have been perceived closer to the Dutch *h* sound, rather than the *shin'on* ⟨ $\Phi$ ⟩<sup>296</sup>.

One importantly gross statement was, furthermore, made by Genkan with regards to the Japanese one-sound syllable character *n* ヌ. He believed it to be a newly introduced kana developed from the character *ni* ニ<sup>297</sup>, although this idea has been dismissed, and he also claimed it to belong to the *na-gyō*, and being interchangeable with many other characters, like *mu* ム, *mi* ミ, *mo* モ, *nu* ヌ, *ni* ニ. Sugimoto argues that the introduction of the concept of *n* ヌ as a separate sound from both *na-gyō* and *ma-gyō* (which, by the way, Genkan puts in different articulation categories) might have been influenced by the studies on Dutch phonology, as the characters N and M clearly represent two different sounds from a *kōmōjin* point of view<sup>298</sup>.

As for the vowels, Genkan believes they belong to glottal sounds. This idea is also consistent with Motoori Norinaga's *Jion Kanazukai* 字音仮字用格 (1776), who also categorized the five Japanese vowels according to their *weight*, ending up with a diagram that agrees with modern linguistics, although the reasoning behind the two differs substantially. He distinguished in heavy vowels 重, being *o* オ and *u* ウ; light vowels 軽, *i* イ and *e* エ; and a middle vowel 中, *a* ア. This structure overlaps precisely with modern day's linguistic categorization of vowels according to the location in the oral cavity in which the sound is produced, meaning, ⟨*u*⟩ and ⟨*o*⟩ are considered back vowels, ⟨*i*⟩ and ⟨*e*⟩ are front vowels and ⟨*a*⟩ is central<sup>299</sup>.

Ultimately, Genkan, in *Seion Hatsubi*, recreates a table to illustrate Dutch phonetics, about which one could hardly disregard the similarities with the Japanese traditional *gojūon* 五十音 structure, presenting all of the basic consonant plus vowel occurrences in the *kōmōjin* language reporting the *katakana* character he chose to render that sound with, along with examples of the Chinese characters holding similar pronunciation, and the consonant category we have dealt with above.

<sup>295</sup> Original quote: "唇音ハヒフヘホ此経ノ音前例ノ如シ、濁音バビブベボ半濁音パピプペポ也、別ニ喉音ノハ<sup>Δ</sup>ヒ<sup>Δ</sup>フ<sup>Δ</sup>ヘ<sup>Δ</sup>ホ<sup>Δ</sup>アリ 皇国此音アリテ其仮字ナシ、此論下ニ具ス", quoted in SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 35;

<sup>296</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 57;

<sup>297</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 34;

<sup>298</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 42;

<sup>299</sup> SUGIMOTO (2016), pp. 47-48;

Interestingly, he also decided to list the vowels according to the Western traditional order (A, E, I, O, U), rather than the Japanese one (A, I, U, E, O).

The table, being represented in its entirety in Image 1, could also be utilized to argue in favor of the thesis that Dutch phonetics were studied based on the way syllables were written, conceptually closer to Japanese writing system, but arguably not as functional in the context of actual pronounced phonemes, as pondered in 3.2.

Image 1: Table of Dutch syllables in *Seion Hatsubi*.

We can also see how the *ha-gyō* has been utilized to render the B- syllables, if written with *dakuon* (ハ), with *handakuon* for the P- syllables (ハ), with triangle symbol for H- syllables (ハ<sup>△</sup>) and without any mark for F- and V-<sup>300</sup> syllables (ハ).

Similar arrangements were made with regard to the R and L letters, the sounds of which are notoriously hardly discerned by Japanese native speakers, as Genkan suggests to write L- syllables with the simple *ra-gyō* (ラ) characters, while the R- syllables by applying *handakuon* to said *kana* ラ<sup>301</sup>.

<sup>300</sup> This is because in Dutch the letters F and V are, oftentimes, pronounced similarly or the same in some dialects, COLLINS, Beverley, *The Phonetics of English and Dutch, Fifth Revised Edition*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2003, pg. 48;

<sup>301</sup> For further details see SUGIMOTO (2016), pg. 61;

The table also points out the absence of the letter J, that in Dutch generally represents the voiced palatal approximant (j), while it might appear surprising that the I was considered as a consonant by Gentaku. This is explained by the fact that the letter J was yet to be identified as a stand-alone letter in spite of being a variation of the letter I. We can also see this in Sugita Genpaku's *Rangaku Kotohajime*, where he writes:

*"Many years had passed, but I had only learned how to write simple words, like zon (sun), maan (moon), sterre (star), hemel (heaven), aarde (earth), mens (people), draak (dragon), tijger (tiger), pruimboom (plum[tree]) and bamboes (bamboo) with those 25 characters."*<sup>302</sup>

and, most valuably, from Weiland's *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst*, where we can read:

*"We generally count 26 such signs [letters] in our language, although we only need 22 to write the words of Nederduitsch, being: A, B, C (in ch) D, E, F, G, (H) I, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V, W, Z; we can, thus, regard the remaining four C (stand-alone,) Q, X and Y as foreign letters"*<sup>303</sup>

Thus not referencing the letter J at all while presenting the Dutch alphabet, but only warning the reader that the letter I can appear as a J, which he calls *verlengde I - long I*, as second letter of the spelling of the *long i* sound, as the writing *ii* could have been mistaken with a letter *u* in some instances, although strongly refusing the idea that the character J could, in fact, be counted as another letter in the alphabet<sup>304</sup>.

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<sup>302</sup> Original quote"数年を重ね給ひしことなれども、漸くソン（日）、マーン（月）、ステルレ（星）、ヘーメル（天）、アールド（地）、メンス（人）、ダラーカ（竜）、テイゲル（虎）、プロイムボーム（梅）、バムブース（竹）といふ位よりかの二十五字を書き習ひ給へることのみなり。", SUGITA, pg. 18;

<sup>303</sup> Original quote:"Gemeenlijk brengt men het getal van zoodanige teekenen in onze taal, tot zes en twintig, schoon wij, tot het schrijven van echt Nederduitsche woorden, niet meer dan twee en twintig behoeven, als: A, B, C (in ch) D, E, F, G, (H) I, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V, W, Z; kunnende de overige vier, C (op zich zelve staande,) Q, X en Y als vreemde letteren beschouwd worden.", WEILAND, pg. 12;

<sup>304</sup> WEILAND, pg. 12;

### 3.4 The structure of the handbooks of Dutch grammar

Ōtsuki Gentaku's *Rangaku Kaitei*, published in 1788 is most likely the first Japanese-made book dealing with Dutch grammar<sup>305</sup>, although it could be argued that its content cannot be properly considered language study. This document presents a three-level structure that will be clearly taken as inspiration from the authors of the immediately subsequent publications<sup>306</sup>. The topics were as follows, probably collected from different books Gentaku managed to examine:

1. **AB boek** (*a be bukku* アベブック - *spelling book*) and **Letterkonst** (*retterukonsuto* レッテルコンスト - *grammar*), concerning the Dutch alphabet, its spelling rules and pronunciation, along with some grammatical explanations;
2. **Samenspraak** (*saamensupuraaka* サーマンスプラーカ - *dialogue*), collection of sentences and daily conversation samples;
3. **Opstellen** (*woppusuteruren* ヲップステルレン - *essay*), this last level teaches how to read and comprehend the content of a Dutch text.

A similar structure can be found in *Nangosen* 蛮語箋 (*Southern Languages*) published in 1789 by *Morishima Chūryō* 森島中良, in the dedicated section *Ruijūkōmōgoyaku* 類聚紅毛語訳 (*Classification of the translations of the kōmōjin language*)<sup>307</sup>:

1. **AB boek** (*a be, bukku* アベ、ブック) and **Letterkonst** (*retteru, konsuto* レッテル、コンスト);
2. **Enkel woord** (*wenkeru. uwoorudo* エンケル。ウヲールド), consisting of a small dictionary;
3. **Samenspraak** (*saamen. supuraku* サアメン。スプラク).

Thanks to Kazuo Katagiri's research we can have a rather detailed understanding of the sources from which the Japanese acquired the knowledge to compile the Dutch grammar manuals, according to the three/four level division presented above as we will now see.

#### 3.4.1 AB Boek - Letterkonst:

Thoroughly considered the first level, for total beginners. It is convincingly argued that the source books they were based on used to be spelling books aimed at Dutch children, thus containing basic

<sup>305</sup> IANNELLO (2012), pg. 107;

<sup>306</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 34;

<sup>307</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 35;

words, general spelling rules and pronunciation tips. Kazuo also argues that the original books, being made purposely for children and, in particular, to nourish the sense of patriotism in them, during a historical period in which the Netherlands sought to define their national identity, contained direct and empowering references to the Christian faith, along with an exaltation of Dutchness<sup>308</sup>.

Kazuo found, in fact, some 18th century books featuring many similarities with the *AB boek*, for example *Vaderlandsch A-B Boek voor de Nederlandsche Jeugd (Fatherland's Spelling Book for the Dutch Youth - 1781)*, on the cover of which one could read: "*Nederland is uw Vaderland. Veilig woont ge 'er in. Als gy groot zyt, hebt gy dáár ook uw huisgezin.*"<sup>309</sup>, meaning '*The Netherlands are your Fatherland. You live there safe. When you will be grown, that is where you are going to have your household.*' Furthermore, we see that the example word for the letter G, in such book, is the word *God*<sup>310</sup>, although it can be conceded that the Japanese could have learned it as translation of the Japanese native concept of *kami* 神, it is arguably naive to exclude the idea that the fact that the Dutch term actually referred to the Christian god was ignored by the *rangakusha*, regardless of the censorship of the *bakufu* towards things Christian.

### 3.4.2 Enkele woorden:

These books were small dictionaries containing the words the interpreters necessitated of in their trading encounters with the Dutch. Most of the words listed in these glossaries were concerning natural elements, some plants and animals, terms useful while sailing and the names of goods that used to be traded between the two lands. Four of them preserved to our times and by studying their contents we can understand the language proficiency of the interpreters since, as we have already seen, it is argued that they used to assimilate the Dutch language learning by words and sentences they heard the Dutch or their superiors pronounce, or read on the handbooks<sup>311</sup>.

These four books are titled: *Holland woorden boek (Dutch Dictionary)*, *Nederduitsche Taalen (Low German Languages)*, *Enkel de woord*<sup>312</sup> (*A few words*), *Oranda meimokugo* 阿蘭陀名目語 (*Dutch Lexicon*)<sup>313</sup>. *Holland woorden boek* and *Nederduitsche Taalen* are very similar in structure and content, they only differ slightly in the total number of terms they present (2001 in the first one and

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<sup>308</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 48;

<sup>309</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 41;

<sup>310</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 45;

<sup>311</sup> NUMATA, pg. 254;

<sup>312</sup> Most likely a misspelling of *Enkele Woord*;

<sup>313</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 57;

1999 the second one)<sup>314</sup>. Table 6<sup>315</sup> below presents the semantic groups such terms were divided into:

No.	Original entry	Translation	Words in <i>Holland woorden boek</i>	Words in <i>Nederduitsch e Taalen</i>
1	Van de zelfstandige naamen het hoofdstede van hemel en aarde in 't algemeene.	<i>About the nouns and the main ones with general regards to the heavens and earth</i>	131	133
2	de dagen der weeke zijn.	<i>The days of the week.</i>	7	7
3	de zeven metaalen.	<i>The seven metals.</i>	13	13
4	de vier winden der wereld.	<i>The four winds of the world.</i>	4	4
5	de twaalf maanden des yaars.	<i>The twelve months of the year.</i>	32	32
6	de twaalf teeken van zodiak.	<i>The twelve signs of the zodiac.</i>	12	12
7	de vier voornaamste reviere.	<i>The four main rivers.</i>	4	4
8	Namen van hoog Edelens ampt en tot verder kleine bedieninge.	<i>Names of the highest officials to the lowest posts.</i>	57	57
9	Namen van de bloed verwantschap.	<i>Names of blood relationships.</i>	121	121
10	Naamen van verscheijde manvacturen en kleederen.	<i>Names of many manufactured products and clothing.</i>	38	38
11	De soorten van zijden stoffen.	<i>Types of silks.</i>	48	49

<sup>314</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 57-61;

<sup>315</sup> Table 6 taken from KAZUO (2012), pp. 59- 60;

12	de soorten van linnegoed.	<i>Types of linen goods.</i>	9	9
13	de oude tijd aangebragte stoffagies.	<i>Old times' fabrics.</i>	14	14
14	de soorten van Chineesche stoffen.	<i>Types of Chinese fabrics.</i>	12	12
15	Naamen van verscheide vogelen.	<i>Names of many birds.</i>	106	104
16	Naamen van verscheide vier voetige dieren en veelderleij wormen.	<i>Names of many quadruped animals and different words.</i>	133	133
17	Naamen van veelderleij visschen.	<i>Names of different fish.</i>	80	80
18	Veelderleije maamen <sup>316</sup> van groente moestkruidje, aarde en boom vrugten.	<i>Different names of vegetables, herbs, earth and tree fruits.</i>	84	84
19	De soorten van medicijn.	<i>Types of medicines.</i>	105	104
20	soorten van olij.	<i>Types of oils.</i>	16	16
21	Verscheide scheepsgereedschap.	<i>Different naval equipments.</i>	75	75
22	de ambagts lieden zijn.	<i>Naval posts.</i>	94	94
23	de wanschepezel en misgeboorte.	<i>Malformations and impairments.</i>	23	23
24	Van de kleederen.	<i>About clothes.</i>	45	45
25	de Juffers dragen.	<i>Female clothes.</i>	51	51
26	De gedeelte van de menschen lichaamen.	<i>The parts of the human body.</i>	187	187
27	Namen van de boom.	<i>Names of the trees.</i>	23	23
28	Van de bloemen.	<i>About flowers.</i>	37	38
29	Van 't huijs raad.	<i>About the furniture.</i>	38	38
30	daar is in de keuken.	<i>What is in the kitchen.</i>	18	18
31	in de kelder.	<i>In the cellar.</i>	4	4

<sup>316</sup> The first M should be an N, and the double A should probably be a single one;



32	in de stal.	<i>In the stable.</i>	35	35
33	Hoofd stuk van de tafelen 't geen er op gebragt woord.	<i>Chapter of the tables and what is featured on them.</i>	16	16
34	Van 't huis en 't geen er afhangd.	<i>About the house and what concerns it.</i>	162	161
35	Van 't Schrijven.	<i>About writing.</i>	42	42
36	(bijbbemee)	<i>(Extras)</i>	123	122
Tot.			2001	1999

**Table 6: Contents of *Holland woorden boek* and *Nederduitsche Taalen* in comparison.**

*Enkel de woord* is, instead, a rather little list of words and lexical groups, for a total of 920 entries. The whole name is *Enkel de woord, een deel, onder of tweeden* translating to *Some words, one part, below or second* suggesting there might have existed a *Boven of eersten, above or first* which we have no actual copy of<sup>317</sup>. It is also interesting to notice that the volumes 1 and 2, in this instance, were named both the Japanese way (*boven - ue* 上 - *above* and *onder - shita* 下 - *below*) and the Western way, applying the ordinal numbers (*eerste - first* and *tweede - second*). The content of this document is presented in Table 7<sup>318</sup> below:

No.	Original entry	Translation	No. of words
1	De bloed vervantschap.	<i>Blood relationships.</i>	33
2	Veelderlijke namen van groente moeskruijden, aarde en boom vruchten	<i>Different names of vegetables, herbs, earth and tree fruits.</i>	76
3	de gedeelte van de mensen lichamen.	<i>The parts of the human body.</i>	184
4	Namen van verscheijde vogelen.	<i>Names of different birds.</i>	105
5	naamen van verschijde viervoetige dieren en	<i>Names of many quadruped animals and different words.</i>	134

<sup>317</sup> KAZUO (2012), pp. 61-62;

<sup>318</sup> Table 7 taken from KAZUO (2012), pp. 61-62;

	veelderlij wormen.		
6	naamen van veelderlij vischen.	<i>Names of different fish.</i>	78
7	De soorten van medicijn.	<i>Types of medicine.</i>	61
8	soorten van olij.	<i>Types of oils.</i>	17
9	Naamen van Verschijde manufactuuren en kleederen.	<i>Names of different manufactured products and clothing.</i>	37
10	de soorten van zijde stoffen.	<i>Types of silks.</i>	14
11	in soorten van taffaselassen.	<i>Types of taffeta.</i>	34
12	de soorten van hinne goed.	<i>Types of cotton goods.</i>	9
13	oudetijd aanbrogte stofagies.	<i>Ancient times' fabrics.</i>	11
14	de soorten van chineesche stoffe.	<i>The types of Chinese fabrics.</i>	15
15	van de kleederen.	<i>About the clothing.</i>	16
16	namen van hoogdelens ampt en tot verde klijnebedieninge.	<i>Names of the highest officials to the lowest posts.</i>	45
17	de twaalfteeken van zodia.	<i>The twelve sings of the zodiac</i>	12
18	de vier voornamste Reviere.	<i>The four main rivers.</i>	4
19	de uweelen en ectel gesteenterns. <sup>319</sup>	<i>The jewels and gems.</i>	12
20	naamen van verschijde ziektens.	<i>Names of different diseases.</i>	12
Tot.			920

**Tabella 7: Contents of *Enkel de woorden*.**

*Oranda meimokugo* is also rather concise, featuring only 577 entries, but each term is accompanied by its translation in *kanji* and phonetic adaptation in *katakana*<sup>320</sup>. The words contained in this document in particular reinforce the idea that these handbooks were mostly purposed for the use of the *Nagasaki tsūji* as it only lists words directly regarding commerce, teaching the interpreters the names of all the products the Dutch used to trade, namely fabrics, spices and medicines<sup>321</sup>.

<sup>319</sup> The terms written in this entry are particularly poorly spelled as uwelee should be written *jeuweelen* (*jewels*), while ectel is most likely *edel* (*noble*), probably caused by a misreading of the letter *d* as *c* plus *t*;

<sup>320</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 63;

<sup>321</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 62- 63;

These documents might reinforce the argument supporting the idea that the interpreter's vocabulary was rather limited and restricted to basic, daily words, and those terms they needed to carry out the trading activity as smoothly as possible. For this reason, it could be suggested that they were not necessarily familiar with Dutch (and Western as a reflection) culture, customs and way of thinking, also considering that, although they both lived in Nagasaki, the opportunities to meet each other were extremely few.

If we take into consideration the fact that, as already discussed, the post of interpreter was hereditary<sup>322</sup>, they generally studied other languages before switching to Dutch<sup>323</sup>, the *rangaku* was incentivized by many *shōgun*<sup>324</sup> and became at some point in history a very fruitful job<sup>325</sup>, we might argue that a relatively high number of interpreters have engaged in the study of the language of the *kōmōjin* only for utilitarian reasons, without any real deep interest in the tongue itself, nor in the acquisition of Western knowledge. On the other hand, the *Edo no rangakusha*, who faced much more obstacles in approaching the Dutch studies, particularly in the early period, could be considered to having started this scholarship from a more curiosity-driven point of view, explaining Sugita Genpaku's line drawn between him and the *Nagasaki tsūji*, as seen in 2.6.

### 3.4.3 Samenspraak:

*Samenspraak* means *dialogue* and, as suggested by the title, consists of a collection of sentences carrying utility in daily conversations, starting from basic greetings, sayings and aphorisms. Sugita Genpaku, in *Rangaku Kotohajime*, also writes about these conversation handbooks while claiming to know the first interpreter in Nagasaki, whom he also credits as a major influence in *samenspraak*-learning for many other *rangakusha*, to learn spoken Dutch. He names, in fact, the *tsūji Arai Shōjūrō* 荒井庄十郎<sup>326</sup>.

By looking at these books we notice the important inspiration they drew from the French-Dutch grammar book *Nieuwe Fransche en Nederduitsche Spraakwijze*, as already anticipated in 1.1. In the first dialogue that this book presents in the chapter *Beknopte en Leerzaame Samenspraaken*

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<sup>322</sup> See 1.5;

<sup>323</sup> See 1.5;

<sup>324</sup> See 2.7;

<sup>325</sup> See 2.8;

<sup>326</sup> Original quote: "さて、安永七八年の頃、長崎より荒井庄十郎といへる男、平賀源内が許に来たれり。これは西善三郎がもとの養子にして政九郎といひて通詞の業をなせし人なり。社中蘭学を興すの最初なれば、翁が宅へ招き淳庵などと共にサーメンスプレーカを習ひしこともありし。", SUGITA, pg. 59;

(*Concise and Educational Dialogues*)<sup>327</sup> we can read the same exact sentence we find analyzed in *Rangaku Kaitei*. The sentence is '*Je vous souhaite le bon jour, Monsieur. Je suis votre Serviteur.*' in French and '*Ik wensch u goeden dag Myn Heer. Ik ben uw Dienaar.*' in Dutch, translating literally into '*I wish you a good day, Mister. I am your Servant.*'.

In *Rangaku Kaitei*<sup>328</sup> we can read these two sentences analyzed and followed by two other sentences that do not appear in Marin's original, suggesting the *samenspraak* books were generally collection of sentences found from many different sources. Such sentences are '*Ouden zal men eeren jongen zal men leeren*' (*Honor the elders, educate the youth*) that sounds more plausible to be considered an aphorism, rather than the fragment of a dialogue, and '*Hy brengt gantsche nagten met leesen door*' (*He spends entire nights reading*). Ōtsuki Gentaku provides these sentences with *katakana* transliteration and word by word *kanji* translation.

イキ ウェンス ユ グーデン ダク メイン ヘール  
*J k wensch u goeden dag m y n h e e r.*

イキ ベン ユ ディーナアル  
*J k ben u d i e n a a r.*

オウデン サル メン ヌーレン ヨンゲン サル メン レーレン  
*O u d e n z a l m e n e e r e n j o n g e n z a l m e n l e e r e n.*

ヘイ ブレングト ガンッセ ナクテン メット レーセン ドール  
*H y b r e n g t g a n t s c h e n a g t e n m e t l e e s e n d o o r.*

We can take a look at some of the phonetic adaptations Gentaku suggested to be used to translate the Dutch sounds occurring in these sentences and compare it to the table represented in Imagine 1:

- The word *u* (formal singular *you*), pronounced as a close front rounded vowel ⟨y⟩ is translated with the katakana *yu* ユ, pronounced ⟨ju⟩;
- In words such as *wensch* ([I] *wish*), where the letter W represents the labiodental approximant ⟨v⟩ in standard modern Dutch, but it is also realized as a bilabial approximant

<sup>327</sup> MARIN, pg. 143;

<sup>328</sup> As quoted in KAZUO (2012), pg. 99;

⟨β⟩ or labiovelar approximant ⟨w⟩ by some speakers, the syllable is translated as *u* ウ plus vowel, originating characters such as *we* ウエ;

- There was, as expected, no differentiation in spelling between open and close vowels (see 3.1) since Japanese does not distinguish in spelling, nor in pronunciation, between the two. Similarly, the pronunciation of O in the diphthong *ou* ⟨au⟩ was simplified into *ou* オウ, meaning that the *katakana* *o* オ substituted three Dutch phonemes, namely the open-mid back rounded vowel ⟨ɔ⟩<sup>329</sup>, the close-mid back rounded vowel ⟨o⟩<sup>330</sup> and open-mid back unrounded vowel ⟨ʌ⟩<sup>331</sup>;
- The velar nasal ⟨ŋ⟩, as represented by the letters *ng* is always written as *n* ン plus a *katakana* belonging to the *ga-gyō*, suggesting that the debated sound represented by that *kana* was not perceived, by native speakers, as sufficient to render the velar nasal;
- The letter G, when not in combination with the letter N, as seen above, is generally pronounced either as a voiced velar fricative ⟨ɣ⟩, as in *goed* ⟨ɣut⟩ - *good*, or voiceless ⟨x⟩, as in *dag* ⟨dax⟩ - *day*. This difference was understood by Gentaku, who utilized the *ka-gyō* for the voiceless version (*dag* becoming *daku* ダク) and its *dakuon* for the voiced one (*goeden* becoming *gūden* グーデン);
- The Dutch words ending in consonants featured, like in modern Japanese, the use of the *u* ending (e.g. *door* becoming *dōru* ドール) or *o* ending, in the case of the *ta-gyō*, as /t/ before /u/ undergoes affrication, turning into the dental affricate ⟨ts⟩, thus the word *brengt* (second or third person singular of the verb *to bring*) becomes *burenguto* ブレングト. Interestingly, though, in those consonants preceded by a near-close front unrounded vowel ⟨ɪ⟩ and, supposedly, a close front unrounded vowel ⟨i⟩ (both merging in ⟨i⟩ in Japanese) this sound seems to influence the realization of the following syllable into turning its vowel into another ⟨i⟩, we can see it from the word *jk* ⟨ik⟩ - *I*, translated into *iki* イキ by Gentaku. This phenomenon is still preserved in many Dutch loanwords utilized in modern Japan featuring these characteristics, such as *buriki* ブリキ, from Dutch *blik* - *tin*, or *inki* インキ<sup>332</sup>, from Dutch *inkt* - *ink* (also notice that the ending ⟨t⟩ is dropped). These extra vowels are

<sup>329</sup> As occurring in *jongen* ⟨'jɔŋən⟩ - *youngman*, translated into *yongen* ヨンゲン;

<sup>330</sup> As occurring in *door* ⟨do:r⟩ - *through*, translated into *dōru* ドール in this case spelling would not be enough to have the certainty that it was pronounced as a close O, but, prescriptively speaking, Weiland states this was the preferred pronunciation, see WEILAND, pg. 14;

<sup>331</sup> As occurring in *ouden* ⟨ʌudən⟩ - *oldman*, translated into *ouden* オウデン;

<sup>332</sup> These are Dutch loanwords according to DE VRIES, Jan, *Het verhaal van een taal: Negen eeuwen Nederlands (The story of a language: Nine centuries of Dutch)*, co-authors R Burger, P. Willemyns, R. Willemuns and P. Burger, Prometheus, Amsterdam, 1994;

sometimes called *parasitic* vowels and tend, in fact, to assimilate both regressively and progressively<sup>333</sup>.

We have to remember, nonetheless, that the phonetic adaptation into Japanese *kana* is highly dependent on the individual's perception of the sound produced by the foreign language speaker, as Quackenbush interestingly points out in his research<sup>334</sup>. His experiments on diverse Japanese native speakers, when asked to translate random meaningless words, containing non-Japanese phonetics, into *katakana* made clear that each individual perceived and adapted what they heard differently and through differing syllables<sup>335</sup>. The general process occurring in these kind of instances can be explained in the five *rules* as follows<sup>336</sup>:

1. **The rule of opening syllables**, *kaionsetsu-ka kisoku* 開音節規則: When a syllable in the original language is closed (ends in consonant) one of the vowels between *o*, *u* or *i* is added to open the syllable;
2. **Japanization of vowels and consonants**, *boin - shiin no nihongo-ka kisoku* 母音・子音の日本語化規則: Vowels and consonants from the original language are adapted into Japanese native vowel and consonant sounds;
3. **The rule of gemination**, *sokuon-ka kisoku* 促音化規則: When the original syllable structure is vowel followed by consonant, the consonant is geminated. It only happens if the vowel sound is short and the consonant is a stop, a fricative or an affricate;
4. **The rule of the devoicing of consonants after gemination**, *sokuon no kōzoku-shiin no museika* 促音の後続子音の無声化: It can optionally happen after the application of rule 3;
5. **Japanization of the accent**, *akusento no nihongo-ka* アクセントの日本語化: This is not visible from the written form, it means that the accent with which such word is pronounced follows the rules of Japanese phonetics.

Most of these *rules* can be seen in the fragment of text we have just analyzed, but the fact that throughout the Tokugawa Japan's sources consulted for this research the same words were found

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<sup>333</sup> VOS, Frits, *Dutch Influences on the Japanese Language: with an appendix on Dutch words in Korean*, in *East Asian History*, N. 34, published jointly by Australian National University and Leiden University, edited by Breuker Remco and Benjamin Penny, 2014, pp. 161-163;

<sup>334</sup> QUACKENBUSH, Hiroko, *gairaigo no hyōki ni motomerareru gen'onshugi no datōsei ni tsuite - kojinsa no yōin no kentō kara* 外来語の表記に求められる原音主義の妥当性について-個人差の要因の検討から - *Individual Differences In Perception of Foreign Sounds and Orthography for Loan Words* in TOLLINI, Aldo, *The Third Conference on Japanese Language and Japanese Language Teaching, Proceedings of the Conference, Rome, 17-19th March 2005, Venice, 2006*, pp. 130-138;

<sup>335</sup> QUACKENBUSH, pp. 133-134;

<sup>336</sup> Freely translated from QUACKENBUSH, pp. 131-132;

spelled very differently in the Japanese *kana* is consistent with the experiments carried out by Quachenbush.

These phonetic approximations were provided by Gentaku on top of the Dutch sentences, while below the text he translated each word with a Chinese character as we can see below:

我 望 你 吉 日 君 吾  
*J k wensch u goeden dag myn heer.*

我有你 臣  
*J k ben u dienaar.*

老 可 人 敬 少 可 人 習  
*Ouden zal men eeren jongen zal men leeren.*

他カレ ・ 終 夜 以 書 讀 徹  
*H y brengt gantsche nagten met leesen door.*

We can notice that each word is provided with a one-character translation, except for the word *leesen* (*to read*), that required a double *kanji* translation with *sho* 書 (*book*) and *doku* 讀<sup>337</sup> (*to read*), interestingly ordered according to the Japanese sentence structure SOV, rather than Chinese SVO, thus swapping the characters in the modern Japanese word *dokusho* 読書 (*reading*).

On the other hand, the word *brengt* features no *kanji* as a translation, this might be because of the lack of a proper Chinese character, and Japanese word, to express the concept of *bringing*, except phrasings such as *motte iku* 持っていく or *motte kuru* 持ってくる, that literally translate to *to go* [while] *holding* or *to come* [while] *holding*.

Furthermore, it must be added that the verb here utilized is not properly *brenge* but the so-called *samengestelde werkwoord* (*compound-verb*) *doorbrengen*, composit of the verb *brenge* and the preposition *door* (*through*), which is moved to the end of the sentence, in this instance, and translated with the Chinese character *tetsu* 徹, that roughly translates the concept of *through*. The meaning of the verb *doorbrengen* is, in fact, *to spend* (as in *spending time*) which is completely

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<sup>337</sup> 讀 is the traditional way of writing the kanji that is today written as 読;

unrendered in Gentaku's translation, although it must be said that these verbs were said to having been one of the hardest obstacles to be overcome for the Japanese learning Dutch<sup>338</sup> as they are divided into two groups, namely *scheidbaar* (*separable*) and *onscheidbaar* (*non-separable*) and understanding which *samengestelde werkwoord* belongs to which of the two groups cannot be done simply by the spelling but requires, rather, an arguably sophisticated sensitivity with regards to native speakers' pronunciation, as well as a deep understanding of Dutch syntax and morphosyntax.

### 3.4.4 Opstellen

*Opstellen*, meaning *essay-making*, where handbooks teaching how to read and comprehend Dutch texts but, most importantly, how to proficiently write one, as explained by Gentaku in *Rangaku Kaitei*: 文章ヲ書キ習ヒ<sup>339</sup>, *learning how to write a composition*. In *Wage Reigen* 和解例言 (*Speech Examples with Japanese Translation* - 1790) by *Motoki Yoshinaga* 本木吉永 we have an example of what was considered necessary to understand a book written in Western style. He first introduces the characters of the Dutch language, surprisingly counting up to 26 in this instance, J included, to which he adds the *furigana* 振り仮名<sup>340</sup> ī イー, as opposed to the I which was translated to *i* イ. This might be suggesting that the decision to include that letter could have been rather arbitrary, in order to help Dutch learners understand how to pronounce it, since its only occurrence at that time, as we have seen, was to render the long /i:/ sound.

He recognizes four types of characters:

1. *Merk Letter, in-moji* 印文字: Capital letters;
2. *Druk Letter, hankō-moji* 版行文字: Lower case letters utilized in printing;
3. *Schrijf Letter, shotoku-moji* 書牘文字: Lower case letters utilized in handwriting, the letter Y is written without dots in both the *Merk Letter* (Y) and *Druk Letter* (y), but it is written as *j* for the *Schrijf Letter*;
4. *Cijffel*<sup>341</sup> *Letter, sansū-moji* 算数文字: The numbers, they are written in the Roman fashion, but a list of the Arabic numbers is also provided under the name of *sansū-moji bekkei* 算数文字別形, *different form of the numeral characters*.

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<sup>338</sup> As claimed by Baba, SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 84;

<sup>339</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 113;

<sup>340</sup> *Kana* written above or on the side of a character to clarify its pronunciation;

<sup>341</sup> It should be written as *Cijffer*, Motoki mistook the R for an L and double unnecessarily the F;



### 3.4.5 Cijfering

*Cijfering* were the handbooks dedicated to the explanation of how Dutch numerals worked. As we have seen in the previous page both Roman and Arabic numerals were learnt, probably making up for a double endeavor, if we consider that the two systems function rather differently. Nonetheless, studying mathematics was mandatory with the purpose of being able to comprehend Western science, although the discipline had already been introduced in Japan a long time before<sup>342</sup>.

Japanese and Dutch numeral systems differed not only in characters utilized, but also, and with the most impact, in their way of counting, for this reason it should not be surprising to think that an accurate explanation of how to use them was also felt as necessary by Dutch learners.

### 3.5 Explaining the Dutch pronunciation, *Wage Reigen* by Motoki Yoshinaga

After presenting the Dutch alphabet and numerals in all of their different written versions Motoki Yoshinaga in *Wage Reigen*, introduces the reader to the pronunciation in context of each letter, in particular for those who can be realized with similar sounds. We now analyze his explanations with regards to these letters that could be problematic for some Japanese scholars to comprehend and distinguish between<sup>343</sup>:

- **Q and X:** In the Netherlands, although having 26 of the ABC characters, only 22 are utilized in the Dutch language. The three letters C, Q and X, although being in the Dutch language, are not frequently utilized, as they come from a foreign language. The most utilized of them is probably the letter C, that is used for the Japanese syllables *ka, ki, ku, ke, ko*, although the Dutch pronounce them *ka, se, shi, ko, kyu*<sup>344</sup>. The letter Q is not utilized in Dutch<sup>345</sup>, in its place the two letters K and W are used combined. Similarly, the letter X is not utilized, but a combination of K and S is used instead<sup>346</sup>;

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<sup>342</sup> NAKAYAMA (1969), pg. 20;

<sup>343</sup> Keep in mind that the romanizations occurring in this section do not abide to any officialized system since many characters are not used in the Japanese language, and none of the generally utilized systems was found functional for the purpose of this chapter;

<sup>344</sup> Similarly to English, the letter C is generally pronounced as /s/ before a E or an I. The vowel U, generally pronounced ⟨y⟩ or ⟨ɻ⟩ and is rendered by Motoki as *yu*, because of the absence of such sound in Japanese;

<sup>345</sup> This is generally not the case in *Vroegnieuwnederlands*, where it was generally utilized in the compound QW, now and since the 17th century evolved into KW;

<sup>346</sup> Original quote: "和蘭 ABC 文字二十六字アリト雖モ二十二字ニテ和蘭語ヲ綴ルナリ CQX ノ三字ハ和蘭語ヲ綴ルニハ不用ナリ此三字ハ和蘭語ヲ外異国語ニ用ユル文字ナリ最モ推テ和蘭語ニ用ユル寸ハ C ノ字ハ日本カキクケコ之韻ニ用テ和蘭人カセシコキユト訛リテ五韻ヲ兼ル文字ナリ別シ

- **C and K:** For the Dutch, the characters C and K correspond to the five sounds *ka, ki, ku, ke, ko*, that the Dutch pronounce *ka, ke, ki, ko, kyu*. These C and K are used for the same sounds, though, the character C, in Dutch, is not utilized and its pronunciations come from a foreign country. Generally in Dutch the letter K is used to render the pronunciations *ka, ke, ki, ko, kyu*<sup>347</sup>;
- **D and T:** As for the letters D and T, the second one corresponds to the *seidaku* of the syllables *ta, chi, tsu, te, to* that the Dutch pronounce as *ta, te, ti, to, tyu*<sup>348</sup>. Similarly, the letter D, being its *dakuon*, refers to the four syllables *da, ji, zu, de, do* that the Dutch pronounce *da, de, di, do, dyu*. These two characters D and T, being T utilized as the *clear sound* [Not *dakuon*], is pronounced more strongly and sharply, while the D, representing the *dakuon* is pronounced more softly<sup>349</sup>;
- **I and J:** The two characters I and J both represent the sound *i* イ, with I being pronounced softer, and J representing a heavier sound<sup>350</sup>. For this reason we write I as simply *i* イ and J as *ī* イー<sup>351</sup>;
- **I and Y:** The two characters I and Y both represent the sound *i* イ with I being softer and Y heavier and pronounced more strongly.<sup>352</sup>;

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テクノ韻ニ用ヒ又促呼スル字韻ナリ Q ノ字ハ和蘭語ニ不用ナリ KW ノ二字ヲ以テ和蘭語ヲ綴ルナリ X ノ字モ和蘭語ヲ綴ルニハ不用ナリ KS ノ二字\*以テ和蘭語ヲ綴ルナリ";

<sup>347</sup> Original quote:" 和蘭人 CK ノ二字カキクケコ之五韻ニ用ヒテ和蘭人カケキコキュト訛ルナリノ此 CK ノ二字ヲ促呼スル音聲ニ用ヒ又クノ韻ニ用ユルト雖モ C ノ字ハ和蘭語ヲ綴ルニハ用ヒザルナリ C ノ字カセシコキュノ韻ニ用ユルハ皆和蘭語ヲ外異國語ニ用ユル文字ナリ總テ和蘭語ヲ綴ルニハ K ノ字ヲ以テカケキコキュノ韻ニ用ヒテ和蘭語ヲ綴ルナリ";

<sup>348</sup> Notice that the Japanese pronunciations are written simply from the *ta-gyō* as they are, namely *ta* タ, *chi* チ, *tsu* ツ, *te* テ, *to* ト, while the Dutch pronunciations feature two special characters to render the non-palatalization and affrication fo the phoneme /t/ in front of /i/ and /u/ that happens in Japanese but not in Dutch, creating the characters *ti* テイ and *tyu* テュ. The same thing is also true for the letter D;

<sup>349</sup> Original quote:" DT ノ二字ハ清濁ニ韻ノ文字ナリ T ノ字ハ清韻タチツテト之五韻ニ用ヒテ和蘭人タテティトテュト訛ルナリ然ルニ D ノ字ハ濁韻ナル故ダヂヅデド之五韻ナルベキ文字ナルヲ和蘭人ダデディドデュト訛ルナリ此 DT ノ二字ト之韻ニ用ユルニハ T ノ字ハ清韻ニシテ尖ク剛ニ唱へ D ノ字ハ柔ニ濁ニシテ輕ク唱ルナリ";

<sup>350</sup> It is questionable to think that this explanation could be referring to the difference between the vowel ⟨i⟩ and the approximant ⟨j⟩ since at that time this is not the way these two letters were systematically utilized. It is more probable that Motori provided a, rather vague, explanation of the letter J that back then only occurred quite systematically in the context of the long *i* digraph IJ;

<sup>351</sup> Original quote:"IJ ノ二字ハ二字共にイノ韻ナリ I ノ字ハ輕ク J ノ字ハ重シ I 字ハ唯イト輕ク唱へ J ノ字ハイト引心唱ルナリ";

<sup>352</sup> Original quote:" IY ノ二字ハイノ韻ノ文字ナリ I ノ字ハ輕ク Y ノ字ハ重ク剛ニ尖ク堅クイノ韻ヲ出シ";

- **F, V and H:** The five syllables in Japanese *fa, fi, fu, fe, fo*<sup>353</sup> have three sounds in Dutch: 1. when it is written as F, it is pronounced harder; 2. when it is written as V, it is pronounced more softly, 3. when it is written as H, it is pronounced while opening the throat<sup>354</sup>;
- **L and R:** The Japanese syllables *ra, ri, ru, re, ro* have two sounds in Dutch, coexisting in *ra, re, ri, ro, ryu*. The first one is the L, that is pronounced moving the tongue to the palate, while the second one is the R, in which the tongue is rolled<sup>355</sup>;
- **S and Z:** As for the two letters S and Z, S represents the clear sound *sa, shi, su, se, so*, becoming *sa, se, shi, so, shyu* in Dutch. Similarly, the Z represents their *han-dakuon za, ji, zu, ze, zo*, becoming *za, ze, ji, zo, jyu*. When writing these two sounds we have to know that S is the clear sound, pronounced more sharply and strongly, while the Z is the *han-dakuon*, thus making its pronunciation softer and lighter<sup>356</sup>;

### 3.6 Conclusive thoughts on the Japanese studies of the Dutch language

To sum up the discoveries we have made in this chapter, we can state with a considerable amount of certainty that the study of the Dutch language in Tokugawa Japan was not generally pursued by the *rangakusha* holding a genuine interest in such discipline, nor where they necessarily owning a particularly sophisticated understanding of linguistics, also in the context of their time. They carried out proto-linguistic investigations, although rather thoroughly, mostly because they were in need to comprehend the code to assimilate knowledge from the books they wanted to read or, in a utilitarian agenda, to be able to handle the advantageous tradings occurring in the isle of Dejima.

Although this might have led to the rough translations we will analyse in chapter IV, it must be added that *rangaku* were most likely the first and most extensive attempts Japan made to study a foreign language beside Chinese, that also allowed many new meditations with regard to the

<sup>353</sup> As we have seen in 3.3 at that time the *ha-gyō* was pronounced as ⟨ϕ⟩, it has, thus, been preferred to romanize them with the letter F as to evidence such pronunciation, although the kana Motori utilizes coincide with today's *ha* ハ, *hi* ヒ, *fu* フ, *he* ヘ, *ho* ホ;

<sup>354</sup> Original quote: "日本ハヒフヘホ之五韻ハ和蘭ニ三韻アリ三韻共ニ和蘭人ハヘヒホヒユト訛リ其一ハ所課ル F ノ韻ニ因リテ唱レ韻ハ剛ニ唱ヘ其二ハ V ノ字ニ因リテ唱ル韻ハ柔ニ唱ヘ其三ハ H ノ字ニ因リテ唱ル韻ハ喉ヲ開キテ唱ルナリ";

<sup>355</sup> Original quote: "日本ラリルレロノ韻ハ和蘭ニ二韻アリ二韻共ニ和蘭人ラレリロリュト訛リ、其一 L ノ字ニ因リテ唱フル韻ハ舌ヲ上腮ニ着テ唱エ、其二 R ノ字ニ因リテ唱エル韻ハ舌ヲ転シテ唱フルナリ";

<sup>356</sup> Original quote: "SZ ノ二字ハ清濁二韻ノ文字ナリ S ノ字ハ清濁サシスセソ之韻ニ用ヒテ和蘭人サセシソシュト訛ルナリ然ルニ Z ノ字ハ半濁ノ韻ナル故ザジズゼゾ之五韻ナルベキ文字ヲ和蘭人ザゼジズジュト訛ルナリ此 SZ ノ二字ス之韻ニ用ユルニハ S ノ字ハ清ニシテ尖ク剛ニ唱ヘ Z ノ字ハ半濁ニシテ柔ニ輕ク唱ルナリ";

national language to take place. This is mostly evident in the context of the manuals on Dutch phonetics and the presentation of the Latin alphabet that manifested, not only the need to razionalize Japanese phonetics as basis to comparatively explain the Dutch one, but concurrently arising the debate about the functionality of Chinese characters, the necessity of the *kana* syllabaries and the realization that Japanese pronunciation actually differed more than what the spelling might have suggested. This last element being the first step to engage in in order to begin studying the phonetics of a language.

The Japanese *rangakusha* had ultimately entered, to a very relative extent, the scholar realm of linguistics, questioning the universality of their own language and starting the process of acquiring independence from the hegemony of Chinese knowledge also in this field. The continuation of this process is what will be presented in the following chapter, with regard to Dutch grammar.

## IV

### Studying Dutch

#### The relativity of grammars

The concept of grammar took shape, without any doubt, much earlier in the Western world as compared to linguistics. As we have already discussed, it can be argued that grammarians at that time were mostly prescriptivists, thus particularly valuing the systematization of rules for an allegedly proper, elegant and sophisticated speech manner. This was, consequently, the type of grammar the *rangakusha* studied and made any effort to translate into understandable terms the Japanese could be more familiar with, as we will see in this chapter.

#### 4.1 The First Grammar Books: Explaining the Concept of *Spraakkunst*

A suggestive example that could be argued as a first attempt to realize a book concerning Dutch grammar and, to some extent also linguistics, in Japan is *Seibun Kihan* 西文規範 (*Model of the Western Language [Dutch]*) by *Baba Sadayosi* 馬場貞由 that is probably based on Kornelis van der Palm's *Nederduitsche Spraekkunst, voor de Jeugt* (*Low German Grammar, for the Youth*)<sup>357</sup>. We can see the comparison of an extract of the two books in Table 8<sup>358</sup> below:

<i>Seibun Kihan</i>	<i>Nederduitsche Spraekkunst</i>	Translation
問 何ヲカ Spraakkunst ト云ウ フヤ	<b>Vr.</b> Wat is de Spraekkunst?	<b>Q.</b> What is <i>Spraekkunst</i> ?
答 Spraakkunst ト云フハ Letteren 文字 ト Sprake 言語 ト ヲ知ルノ法ヲ云	<b>Antw.</b> De Spraekkunst is eene kennis van de Letteren en Sprake.	<b>A.</b> The <i>Spraekkunst</i> is a knowledge of the Letters and of the Language.

<sup>357</sup> KAZUO (2012), pg. 133;

<sup>358</sup> Taken from KAZUO (2012), pg. 134-135;

<p>問 Spraakkunst ヲ若干ニ分別スルカ</p>	<p><b>Vr.</b> Uit hoe vele deelen bestaet de Spraakkunst?</p>	<p><b>Q.</b> How many parts is the <i>Spraakkunst</i> composed of?</p>
<p>答 コレヲ Woordgronding 詞品ト Woordkoeging 連法辞トノニツニ分ツ</p>	<p><b>Antw.</b> Zy bestaet uit twee deelen, namelyk, de Woordgronding en Woordvoeging.</p>	<p><b>A.</b> It is composed of two parts, namely, the <i>Woordgronding</i> (<i>The parts of speech</i>) and the <i>Woordvoeging</i> (<i>Conjunctions</i>)</p>
<p>問 Woordgronding 詞品ト云フハ何ヲ学ブナナルヤ</p>	<p><b>Vr.</b> Wat leert de Woordgronding?</p>	<p><b>Q.</b> What is there to learn from the <i>Woordgronding</i>?</p>
<p>答 Woordgronding ト云フハ辞ノ起因 性質 変化 併合等ヲ学ブ也</p>	<p><b>Antw.</b> De Woordgronding leert den Oorsprong, de Eigenschap, Afleiding en Verdubbeling van enkele woorden.</p>	<p><b>A.</b> The <i>Woordgronding</i> investigates the Origin, Quality, Change and Duplication of each word.</p>
<p>問 コレヲ学ハンニ何ヲ以テ要トスルカ</p>	<p><b>Vr.</b> Wat wordt daer toe vereischt?</p>	<p><b>Q.</b> What is required to do that?</p>
<p>答 コレヲ学フニ要トスルハ第一ニ文字ヲ学ブ也、コレヲ併セテ辞ヲ読ル、コレヲ Spelling 読法ト名ク、第二ニハ連読法ヲ学ブ、コレヲ Uitspraak ト名ク、コレヲ以テ真語真辞ヲ知り得ル也</p>	<p><b>Antw.</b> Daer toe wordt verscheit; vooreerst, eene kennis der letteren, waar uit de woorden t'samengesteld worden, 't welk de Spelling genoemd wordt.; en ten tweede, een onderzoek der lettergrepen, dat is, hoe die recht uittespreken zyn, 't welk men de Uitspraak noemt.</p>	<p><b>A.</b> It is necessary: firstly, a knowledge of the letters words are made out of, this is called <i>Spelling</i>.; secondly, a research of the syllables, that is, how they are pronounced. We call that <i>Uitspraak</i> (<i>Pronunciation</i>).</p>

**Table 8: van der Palm's *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* and Baba's *Seibun Kihan* samples and comparison**

The concepts presented by Baba might in this extract appear rather elementary from our perspective, but taking into consideration the context in which they have been written and introduced into a Japan that was only starting to adopt and systemize the use of phonetic characters, facing with the necessity to understand concepts like the possibility that, for example, the letter C and K could represent the same sound, but not if C was followed by the vowels E and I, in which case it is pronounced like an S. Such reasoning is not at all similar to the idea of good spelling with regards to knowing which Chinese character to use in that word, or the order and number of strokes necessary to draw it. On the contrary, they were already well established in Western grammars, as can also be seen in the first pages of Weiland's *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst*<sup>359</sup>.

<sup>359</sup> WEILAND, pp. 9-10;

## 4.2 Investigating a language: the parts of speech

Coming in contact with the rigidly prescriptive attitude of most European grammarians of that time, Dutch scholars had to face the endeavor of introducing themselves to the concept of the parts of speech. It is necessary to notice that Dutch grammar, in the period of time we are studying and, to some extent, also today, categorized the parts of speech in a rather different fashion as compared to English and other European languages. Although the parts of speech were generally considered to be nine and, as we will see, this was accurately transmitted to the Japanese handbooks, the way each part was conceived of can be regarded as quite distant from what we are now accustomed to. We can take the description of the parts of speech, or *deelen der rede* (*partes orationis*) from *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* as an example, that claims that they are three, as follows<sup>360</sup>:

1. **Naamwoorden** (*Nomina*), the *names*, composed of:

- *Zelfstandige naamwoorden* (*Substantiva*), the *nouns*, literally translating to *stand-alone names*;
- *Lidwoorden* (*Articuli*), the *articles*, the Dutch term is an approximation of the original Latin word as *lid* translates to *artus: limb, member*;
- *Bijvoegelijke naamwoorden* (*Adjectiva*), the *adjectives*, literally meaning *adjoining names*;
- *Voornaamwoorden* (*Pronomina*), the *pronouns*, translating literally the Latin term.

2. **Werkwoorden** (*Verba*), the *verbs*;

3. **Kleinere rededeelen**, meaning *smaller speech-parts*, composed of:

- *Telwoorden* (*Numeralia*), the *numerals*;
- *Voorzetsels* (*Praepositiones*), the *prepositions*;
- *Bijwoorden* (*Adverbia*), the *adverbs*;
- *Voegwoorden* (*Conjunctiones*), the *conjunctions*;

Those were the ones Weiland called *properly words* (*eigenlijk woord*), used to render our *ideas*, while the rest of the lexicon was considered by him as referring to our *emotions*, those terms were called *Tusschenwerpsels* (*Interijectiones*), *interjections*.

Interpreter and *rangakusha* Nakano Ryūho, who, as master of Ōtsuki Genkan, co-authored the aforementioned book *Seion Hatsubi*, is also one of the first scholars to engage into studying the

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<sup>360</sup> WEILAND, pg. 21;

parts of speech in Dutch, while also providing the missing terms in Japanese in his *Kyū Hinshi Meimoku* 九品詞名目 (*The Nine Parts of Speech*) presented a similar structure<sup>361</sup>:

1. **Articles**, he calls *hassei-shi* 発声詞;
2. a. **Nouns**, he calls *sei-shi* 清詞;  
b. **Adjectives**, he calls *kyo-shi* 虚詞
3. **Pronouns**, he calls *damei-shi* 代名詞, just like in modern Japanese grammars;
4. **Verbs**, he calls *dō-shi* 動詞, just like in modern Japanese grammars;
5. **Participles**, he calls *dōsei-shi* 動清詞;
6. **Adverbs**, he calls *keidō-shi* 形動詞;
7. **Conjunctions**, he calls *jo-shi* 助詞. Nowadays the word *joshi* is used in Japanese grammars to refer to the Japanese particles, while the concept of *conjunctions* is generally rendered with the word *setsuzoku-shi* 接続詞;
8. **Prepositions**, he calls *man-shi* 慢詞;
9. **Interjections**, he calls *tansoku-shi* 嘆息詞;

A first thing we notice is the presence of the participles as a stand-alone part of speech as well as the fact that they are called *verb-nouns* 動清, although in modern grammar we recognize their role to function either as an adjective or an adverb.

The word chosen to translate the concept of *adverbs* is composed of the characters for *shape* (*kei* 形) and *verb* (*dō* 動), probably to render their use as modifiers of verbs. Today the term *fukushi* 副詞 is utilized, with the *kanji* *fuku* 副 meaning *aide* or *assistant*.

The word for articles is *hassei-shi* that can be translated to *utterance-vocalization words*, and is similar to the word *hatsu-go* 発語 that was already in use between some scholars, thus probably influencing Nakano's choice. The modern word *kanshi* 冠詞, literally *crown-word*, was first attested in *Rangaku Teikō* 蘭学梯航 by Baba Sadayoshi<sup>362</sup>, although in *Seibun Kihan* he used that term for the *prepositions*, as can be seen in the next chapter.

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<sup>361</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pp. 76-77;

<sup>362</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 77;



### 4.3 Dutch grammar, a Japanese understanding of it

Being also the *Seibun Kihan* one of Baba's most representative works, we can read its rather detailed list of topics with regards to Dutch grammar, as reported in Table 9<sup>363</sup>. We will now adopt it as a guide through the analysis of how the Japanese comprehended the grammatical characteristics unique to the *kōmōjin* language, and how they tried to explain them to other Japanese native speakers. Each line is the title of a chapter dealing with a particular feature of Dutch grammar, and the whole explanation is carried out in the form of a Q&A, as exemplified in 4.1.

Dutch	Japanese	Translation (of Dutch chapter names)
Van de Spraak deelen	詞品科卜訳ス	<i>The parts of speech</i>
Van de naamvallen	変格六法	<i>The cases</i>
aanmerking over de naamvallen	運用規格の実	<i>Remarks about the cases</i>
Van de lit of geslachtwoorden	発声詞	<i>The articles or gendered words</i>
Van de naamwoorden	静詞門	<i>The names</i>
Van de buigingen der zelfstandige naamwoorden	実詞変化	<i>The inflection of the nouns</i>
Van de buigingen der toevoegelijke naamwoorden	虚詞変化	<i>The inflection of the adjectives</i>
Van de trappen van vergelykinge	比較級階	<i>The levels of comparison</i>
van de voornaamwoorden	代名詞	<i>The pronouns</i>
Van de Werkwoorden	動詞	<i>The verbs</i>
hoe de hulpwoorden, in tijdvoegingen, den werkwoorden hulp byzetten	助動因時世扶助動詞	<i>How the auxiliaries help the verbs in time concordance</i>
Van de buiging der hulpwoorden	常用動詞変化	<i>The inflection of the auxiliaries</i>
Van de buijging der werkwoorden met de hulpwoorden	動詞與常用変化	<i>The inflection of the verbs together with the auxiliaries</i>
Van de deel woorden	動静辞	<i>The particles</i>
Van de onver onderlijke en in 't bijzonder van de bijwoorden	属用辞前訳形動詞	<i>The immutable words and in particular the adverbs</i>
Van de voegwoorden	助辞	<i>The conjunctions</i>
Van de voorzetselen	冠辞	<i>The prepositions</i>
Van de tusschenverpingen	嗟嘆辞	<i>The interjections</i>

Table 9: *Seibun Kihan*'s content

<sup>363</sup> Table 9 taken from KAZUO (2016), pg. 136-138;

#### 4.4 *Zelfstandige Naamwoorden, the Nouns and their cases*

Defined as *independent* nouns, to distinguish them from adjectives, called *adjunct* nouns, were called *seishi* 静詞, from *sei* meaning *quiet* or *still*. They were accompanied by the explanation of each of the six cases - *naamvallen* - that, as already discussed in 3.1 were only existing in prescriptive written language. The words *roppō* 六法 and *rokkaku* 六格 are found to be utilized to translate the concept of the six declinations. The second term is the one that is also used in modern Japanese grammar and it is probable that its etymology could be traced to the words *declinatio* or *buiging*, meaning *declination* in Latin, respectively, and in Dutch<sup>364</sup>.

In *Halma Wage* we read the following kanji utilized to name the Dutch cases that, in such language, were called either with their Latin name, or in ordinal numbers, as follows<sup>365</sup>:

1. **Nominative:** 正, meaning *correct*, righteous. Today *shukaku* 主格 is the utilized term;
2. **Genitive:** 主, meaning *owner*. Has been today replaced by the word *zokkaku* 属格;
3. **Dative:** 与, meaning *to give, provide*. Nowadays, *yokaku* 与格 is, indeed, the term generally utilized to translate the dative case;
4. **Locative:** 所, meaning *place*. Today the similar term *shokaku* 処格 is typically used;
5. **Vocative:** 呼, meaning *to call*. Is consistent with today's *kokaku* 呼格;
6. **Ablative:** 取, meaning *to take*. Today substituted by *dakkaku* 奪格.

Nakano Ryūho presents the same names as the *Halma Wage* and explains the utilization of each case by comparing them to a Japanese particle (today's *joshi*) or copulas, as follows<sup>366</sup>:

- The **nominative** case corresponds to the Japanese particles *ha* ハ, *ga* ガ and *ya* ヤ, generally used as subject or topic markers, and to the copulas *ari* アリ and *nari* ナリ. It is interesting to note that Nakano purposely divided the list into the two groups, although not utilizing either of the terms between particles or copulas, denoting a conception of them as two separate parts of speech, similarly to how we now generally describe them as being<sup>367</sup>;
- The **genitive** case corresponds to the Japanese particle *no* ノ, functioning quite similarly to the English genitive 's;

<sup>364</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 78;

<sup>365</sup> As quoted in SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 78;

<sup>366</sup> Original quote: "正ハハガヤ徒アリナリナリ主ハノナリ与ハニナリ所ハヲナリ呼ハヨナリ取ハヨリナリヲイテナリ又ヲイテノ意ナルニモ取ナリ", in SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 79;

<sup>367</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 79;

- The **dative** case corresponds to the Japanese particle *ni* に;
- The **locative** case corresponds to the Japanese particle *wo* を, that generally identifies the object of a transitive verb, thus rendering the accusative case more closely;
- The **vocative** case corresponds to the Japanese particle *yo* よ, which is used very differently from vocatives, in that it is a sentence ending word expressing peremptory;
- The **ablative** case corresponds to the Japanese particles *yori* より or (*w*)*oite* より and, in the case its meaning is the same as (*w*)*oite*, also the particle *ni* に can be ablative.

As we can see the concept of noun cases has been understood in comparison with the Japanese native system of *joshi* particles. Grammatical genders, nonetheless, are an idea that is completely absent in the Japanese language, while prescriptive Dutch grammar still insisted for all the three traditional genders - namely masculine *mannelijk*, feminine *vrouwelijk* and neuter *onzijdig* - to be utilized<sup>368</sup>. Although for most words the grammatical gender association is totally arbitrary, in *Nederduitsche Spraakkunst* we can read an attempt to regularize and justify the use of one gender according to the word<sup>369</sup>:

*"Although it can be easily noticed, generally speaking, that, in determining the gender of words, everything to which an idea of greatness, strength, activity and dreadfulness is attached is masculine - everything that we imagine as being weak, soft, fecund, beautiful, pleasant and passive is feminine - and everything about which we had not discovered any of those qualities, or for which the perception was divergent, has been called neuter, it is nonetheless hard to indicate the reason why each word was given its gender."*

In Japanese the three genders were translated in different ways, the most frequently utilized being *dansei* 男性, *josei* 女性, *chūsei* 中性, that are those still used in Japanese today, respectively utilizing the Chinese character for gender (*sei* 性) in combination with the *kanji*, respectively, for *man*, *woman* and *middle*. Interestingly rendering the neuter, that in Dutch literally translates to *non-*

<sup>368</sup> See WEILAND, pg. 24-28;

<sup>369</sup> Original quote: "Schoon men, over het algemeen, kan aanmerken, dat, bij de bepaling van het geslacht der woorden, alles waarmede het denkbeeld van grootte, sterkte, werkzaamheid en verschrikkelijkheid verknocht was, *mannelijk*, — alles, wat men zich als zwak, zacht, vruchtbaar, schoon, aangenaam en lijdend voorstelde, *vrouwelijk*, — en alles, waaraan men geene dezer eigenschappen ontdekte, of waaromtrent de gewaarwording verdeeld was, *onzijdig* genoemd werd, blijft het echter zeer moeilijk, in alle bijzondere woorden, de reden aan te wijzen, waarom dezelve tot dit, en niet tot een ander geslacht gebragt zijn.", WEILAND, pg. 24;

sided, with the concept of *middle*, depriving the term of the meaning of neither of the two given by the suffix *on-* (*non-*). *Yoshio Gonnosuke* 吉雄権之助 in *Zokubun Kinnō* 属文錦囊 also notes the fact that two other nomenclatures were currently in use. The first one categorizing in: *yōsei* 陽性, meaning *positive*, for masculine; *insei* 陰性, meaning *negative*, for feminine; and, again, *chūsei* 中性, for neuter. The other system called *fusei* 父性 the masculine; *bosei* 母性 the feminine; and *shisei* 子性 the neuter<sup>370</sup>. This terminology could have risen from an explication of the three genders by means of word examples, as *fusei*, that translates to *father's gender*, is masculine, and so is the Dutch word *vader*. The same thing is also true for *bosei*, meaning *mother's gender*, with *moeder*, the Dutch word for *mother* as feminine; and also true for *shisei*, meaning *child's gender* as *kind* - Dutch for *child* - is a neuter word.

Also, in *Rangaku Hizō* 蘭学秘蔵 (*Dutch Studies Treasure*), co-authored by Maeno Ryōtaku and *Udagawa Genzui* 宇田川玄随, we can read the authors' expression of confusion towards the distinction between the genders, as they say<sup>371</sup>:

*"Comprehending this difference is extremely difficult. Furthermore, there also are words that have more genders. For example 'oorlogs god mars' [Mars the god of war] is masculine, while 'mars' [march] is feminine. Similarly, the word for wife, beign 'wif', is unexpectedly not feminine but neuter. I have once expressed these doubts to a Dutchman, but I could not obtain any detailed explanation. For this reason we can only wait for somebody with better knowledge of this."*

#### 4.5 *Werkwoorden*, the Verbs and their use

The understanding of how Dutch verbs functioned was probably one of the hardest tasks to master for a Tokugawa Japanese, not only because of the aforementioned *onscheidbare werkwoorden*, but also as a consequence of the frequent use of auxiliaries to render nuances in meaning for which the Japanese language would use an agglutination of the verb itself.

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<sup>370</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 79;

<sup>371</sup> Original quote: "コノ差別甚タ弁シ難シ。或ハ曰ク。ソノ言自ラ異ナリト。然トモ oorlogs god mars ハ。z.m.ニシテ船上ノ mars ハ z.v.ナリ。又曰婦人ニ附タル語。及ヒ陰物ノ名ト。然トモ wif ト云寸ハ婦人事ナレトモ。尚 z.v ニ非スシテ。z.g.ナリ。其定難キヤ此ノ如シ曾テ蘭人ニ問ヘトモ亦ソノ詳ナル事ヲ得ズ。因テ之ヲ闕テ知者ヲ待ノミ。", as quoted in SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 124;

We can take a look at what conclusions *Okamura Chibiki* 岡村千曳 came to in his *Joji-kō* 助辞考 with regards to verbs (in)transitivity. Okamura utilized concepts that he probably drew from Chinese traditional grammar, like *kyoji* 虚字 (also 虚辞) and *jitsuji* 実字 (also 実辞), although their utilization has probably been re-evaluated by the *rangakusha*. Traditionally, *kyoji* were those parts of speech that only held grammatical meaning (generally including prepositions, conjunctions etc.), while the *jitsuji* were the words referring to actual real world objects and phenomena (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives)<sup>372</sup>.

Okamura, nonetheless, connects the concept of abstraction expressed by the Chinese character *kyo* 虚 with the concept of activity, *katsu* 活, thus assigning verbs to this group and dividing them into those verbs who *move the other*, calling them *dōtashi* 動他詞, and those who *move the self*, calling them *jidōshi* 自動詞. He was, basically talking about transitive and intransitive verbs utilizing names similar to those with which we refer to them as in modern Japanese (respectively *tadōshi* 他動詞 and, indeed, *jidōshi*).

This distinction has been utilized in the context of also explaining a couple of Dutch auxiliary verbs, as we see in the quote below<sup>373</sup>:

"konnen ヲ漢字ニテ訳スルハ二義アリ、動他ノ語ニテ云フニ、een man die Spreken kan ト云寸能ノ字当ル、動カスモノニカカル故ナリ、動カサルル者ニカカル寸ハ、wolden<sup>374</sup>ト合シテ可字ニ当ル、仏家ニ能所ノ二義アルカ如シ  
能所ト動カスモノト動カセルル者トヲ云"

Okamura starts explaining that the Dutch verb *konnen*<sup>375</sup> (similar to English *can*), if one were to translate it in *kanji*, would coincide in two concepts. In the case of *transitive* (*dōta*) words, as in '*een man die spreken kan*' [*a man who can speak*] it renders the character 能 (*ability, skill, capability*), as it is used for *things that move*. For those *things that are moved*, together with the word *worden* (*to*

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<sup>372</sup> Definitions of *kyoji* and *jitsuji* as provided by The Japanese Britannica encyclopedia (*buritanika kokusai daihyakkajiten* ブリタニカ国際大百科事典);

<sup>373</sup> As quoted in SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 93;

<sup>374</sup> Misspelling of *worden*;

<sup>375</sup> In modern Dutch, and henceforth, *kunnen*;

become, but if used as an auxiliary, it makes the verb into its passive form), it becomes the character 可 (*can, may*).

To provide the Japanese reader with an example to which they might be more accustomed, he refers to the duality expressed in Buddhism by the term *nōjo* 能所, expressing the contrast between the one who enacts an action, the *nōke* 能化, and the receiver of such action, the *shoke* 所化<sup>376</sup>.

The concepts of an active verb and a passive one, construed in Dutch through the use of the auxiliary *worden*, and the concept of capability, expressed in Dutch by the auxiliary *kunnen*<sup>377</sup>, could not be further from each other. Nonetheless, Okamoto presents them interconnecting their meanings and translating each with two Chinese characters that do not appear extremely distant in meaning, nor necessarily fitting. Although Sugimoto abandons this sentence while still holding the doubt that maybe the scholar confused the intransitives with the passives, we can come up with two more theories that are hardly ever going to be confirmed or dismissed totally, as the true intentions of Okamura will never be known.

The first theory is the one reading that period as an attempted explanation of the uses of the auxiliary *kunnen* and, particularly, in its combination (*wolden ト合シテ*) with the auxiliary *worden*. One could, in fact, use both auxiliaries together on a verb to make the passive potential form of it (e.g. *kunnen worden gegeten - can be eaten*). In this case those we have previously understood as *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs ought to be re-described as, respectively, *active* and *passive*, also taking into consideration an eventual change in meaning of those terms (*dōta* and *jidō*) in modern Japanese.

The second theory could evidence the incapability of Okamura not to mix up the two auxiliaries because of his own linguistic background, and explain this by proposing the idea that in Tokugawa Japanese the concepts of capability and passivity were especially blurry. This is evident from the fact that the verb we have previously translated with the passive '*to be moved*' (*ugokasaruru* 動カサルル) could actually be also referring to a potential '*can move*', making the whole explanation much more different. Letting alone the fact that the Chinese character chosen to translate the *ugokasaruru*

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<sup>376</sup> The Japanese Britannica encyclopedia, defines *nōjo* as: "仏教用語。ある行為をなす行為者を能といい、その行為がなされる目的または対象を所という。教科指導する人を→能化(のうけ)といい、教科指導される者を→所化(しょけ)というのはその一例である。";

<sup>377</sup> It is worth to stress on the fact that the verb *kunnen* only refers to actual bodily capabilities, as for possibility, in the sense of permission, the auxiliary *mogen* is utilized;

- *worden* concept is 可, the *kun'yomi* 訓読み<sup>378</sup> reading of which is *beshi/beki*, which is generally considered to be rendering the potential form in Classical Japanese grammars<sup>379</sup>.

This theory questions the existence of the passive form in Japanese as a native concept and suggests that we might have to think of a new grammatical nomenclature to cover the structures that are generally described as expressing passivity, possibility and transitivity. According to Martin<sup>380</sup> we can distinguish between three types of passives, in the Japanese language, that are construed utilizing the agglutination *.arer.u* (for *go-dan* 五段 verbs, or *.rarer.u* for *ichi-dan* 一段 verbs, but for simplicity we will refer to this structure as *.arer.u*) substituting the final *.u* sound of a verb<sup>381</sup>:

- **Translational passives**<sup>382</sup>: Are those passives expressing a nuance in meaning closer to European languages [and, thus, the Dutch *worden*]. The direct object of the non-passive sentence is turned into the subject and the agent is marked with the indirect-object marker - *ni* に<sup>383</sup>. We can take the following sentences, featuring the verb *yob.u* 呼ぶ, *to call*, as an example<sup>384</sup>: **A ga B o yob.u** (*A calls B*) becomes **B ga A ni yob.arer.u** (*B is called by A*). According to Martin, and in agreement with the theory here presented, this type of passives are a rather modern creation, influenced by Western languages and, in particular, English (thus, not any earlier than the Meiji period). This is the only passive construction that can be applied exclusively to transitives, and not to intransitives, because of the core meaning of it<sup>385</sup>. For these reasons we might argue this structure out of the scheme as it is a modern, translational - meaning it is a *translation* of another language's grammatical structure - that could not have influenced Okamura in any way, as it allegedly did not exist yet<sup>386</sup>. It should not be simply overlooked, nonetheless, the fact that the Western-styled concept of passivity has been *chosen* to be rendered in Japanese with this particular *.arer.u* agglutination;

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<sup>378</sup> Japanese native reading of a *kanji*, as opposed to *on'yomi* 音読み, the Chinese-derived reading;

<sup>379</sup> As reference to classical Japanese grammar the book by KOMAI, Akira and ROHLICH H. Thomas, *An Introduction to Classical Japanese*, Bonjinsha Company, Tōkyō, 1991 has been consulted;

<sup>380</sup> MARTIN, Samuel Elmo, *A Reference Grammar of Japanese*, University of Hawaii Press, 2003 edition, pg. 287;

<sup>381</sup> We will, in this section, utilize the dot to divide the stem of the verb from its agglutinative markers. Thus writing *.u* after the stem of the verb indicates that the *go-dan* verb is conjugated in its informal, positive, non-past form, colloquially known as dictionary form;

<sup>382</sup> Martin generally refers to those as Pure or Natural passives. The term *translational* is also suggested by the scholar and is believed to be more fitting in the context of this research;

<sup>383</sup> MARTIN, pg. 295;

<sup>384</sup> To comprehend this section we must specify the use of Japanese particles as follows: *ga* が as subject marker; (*w*)*o* を as direct-object marker; *ni* に as indirect-object marker;

<sup>385</sup> MARTIN, pg. 295;

<sup>386</sup> Although Komai dismisses this idea as *misleading*, KOMAI, pg. 118;

- **Affective passives**<sup>387</sup>: Through which the *.arer.u* agglutination is utilized to render an affection caused by the events described in the sentence. The victim of the happenings is marked as a subject, the real subject is marked as indirect object and the direct object is marked as expected. See the example **C ga A ni B o yob.arer.u** (*C is affected by A calling B*) where there is no actual word translating *affected* as this message is transmitted solely by the *.arer.u* agglutination. It could also be argued that this type of passive might have been influenced by Chinese grammar, since this peculiar nuance in meaning is also present in the language of the Middle Country. McEnery and Xiao's researches pointed out that the passive form in modern Chinese is utilized, in most cases, with a negative connotation<sup>388</sup>. This is also suggested by the fact that those grammatical structures that are generally referred to as passives in Chinese are created through the use of terms the original meaning of which is generally comparable to the English verb *to suffer*<sup>389</sup>. A sinologist is surely best entitled to assert whether the utilization of the nomenclature of *passive* properly fits these structures, although the scholars seem to also point in the direction of relative difference between Indo-European (more precisely English in the referenced research) passives and Asian (Chinese) ones<sup>390</sup>. If this reasoning is to be trusted, one could put forth the argument that affective passives are also not necessarily native to the Japanese language;
- **Potential passives**: The sense of *potentiality* is, in this case, expressed by marking the ability as a subject, while the possessor of such capability becomes an indirect object, marked either with *ni* or *ga*<sup>391</sup>; It must be said that in modern Japanese a process of distinction between potential and translational/affective passives is taking place, generating the - generally prescribed - *.er.u* agglutination to *go-dan* verbs expressing solely potentiality, while maintaining the *.arer.u* form for *ichi-dan* 一段 verbs, probably manifesting the necessity of modern Japanese native speakers to distinguish between these two ideas we are

<sup>387</sup> Martin calls them either *avversative* or *victimizing*, although the negative sense could be considered the most often utilized context, as Alfonso points out, it is not necessarily the only case in which this structure is used. It has been, for this reason, chosen to refer to them as *affective* in this research, being that the term Alfonso utilized, and arguably regarded as a more comprehensive word, MARTIN, pg. 295;

<sup>388</sup> MCENERY, Tony and XIAO, Richard, *Passives constructions in English and Chinese: A corpus-based contrastive study*, Department of Linguistics, Lancaster University, 2005, pg. 19;

<sup>389</sup> McEnery and Xiao assert that the term *bèi* 被 originally means *to suffer*, and is the most utilized among the so-called passive structures; *ái* 挨 means *to suffer* or *to endure*; *shòu* 受 means *to suffer* or *to be subjected to* and; *zāo* 遭 means *to suffer* or *to meet with*, all of them requiring the patient to be the subject, in evident contrast with English (and Dutch) and partially with Japanese, MCENERY, pg. 13;

<sup>390</sup> Also because other Chinese terms are generally called passives, like *ràng* 让 (*to allow* or *to concede*), *jiào* 叫 (*to call* or *to order*) and *gěi* 给 (*to give*), but McEnery and Xiao dismiss the idea that those can be considered fully grammaticalized passives, MCENERY, pg. 12;

<sup>391</sup> MARTIN, pg. 287;



arguing to having coexisted in the past. In most of Northern Japan and in the area of the city of Ōsaka 大阪 the *.arer.u* agglutination is still commonly used for both structures<sup>392</sup>. Another way of expressing potentiality exists in Japanese grammar, utilizing the word *deki.ru* (Generally preferred by non-native speakers, but second-choice for natives<sup>393</sup>) after subjectivizing (with subject marker *ga*) and substantivizing (with the word *koto*) the unmarked sentence. A sample sentence as **kodomo ga kore o tabe.ru**<sup>394</sup> (*The child eats this*) can be, thus, made into its potential form (*The child can it this*) in the following ways:

1. With *deki.ru*: **kodomo ga/ni kore o tabe.ru koto ga deki.ru**;
2. With *.arer.u* and the *possession* as subject: **kodomo ga/ni kore ga tabe.rarer.u**;
3. With *.arer.u* and the *possession* as direct object: **kodomo ga kore o tabe.rarer.u**;

In addition, it must be pointed out that the word *deki.ru* could also be used in some *pseudo-passive* sentences like **tatemono ga deki.ta**<sup>395</sup>, that we could translate in English as *A building was/has been made*, thus utilizing a passive<sup>396</sup>.

The blurriness of the two concepts of passivity and potentiality in the Japanese language also gets intertwined with the causative structure and some transitive forms of some verbs. The causative form of a verb is that linguistic tool through which the ending *.aser.u*<sup>397</sup> is agglutinated to the verb to render the idea of coercion, translating to *making somebody do something*. The agglutination *.aser.u* can, furthermore, be contracted in *.as.u*<sup>398</sup> in some instances. If we take the examples provided by Martin with regards to the verb *ugok.u* 動く (*to move*, intransitive), which is providentially the same verb Okamura utilized, we can see the following agglutinations:

**ugok + .u** (non-past, positive, informal mark) = *ugok.u* 動く, *to move* (intransitive)

**ugok + .aser.u** (causative mark) = *ugok.aser.u* 動かせる, *to make something move*

<sup>392</sup> MARTIN, pg. 300;

<sup>393</sup> MARTIN, pg. 302;

<sup>394</sup> The vocabulary in this sentence: *kodomo* 子供 is *child*; *kore* これ is *this*; *tabe.ru* 食べる is *to eat*;

<sup>395</sup> The vocabulary in this sentence: *tatemono* 建物, is *building*; *.ta* is a suffix marking the past form of a verb;

<sup>396</sup> Also to note the existence of some verbs, particularly *mie.ru* 見える and *kikoe.ru* 聞こえる, respectively coming from the verbs *mi.ru* 見る, *to see*, and *kik.u* 聞く, *to hear*, that can also be translated both into a potential and a passive form in sentences like **umi ga mie.ru** 海が見える (*The sea can be seen/You can see the sea*);

<sup>397</sup> Similarly to passives, the *ichi-dan* verbs actually get their causative form with *.saser.u*, we will nonetheless refer to this structure as *.aser.u*, the *go-dan* verbs version, for simplicity;

<sup>398</sup> MARTIN, pg. 288;

**ugok** + **.as.u** (abbreviated causative mark) = *ugok.as.u* 動かす, *to make something move*

The verb *ugok.as.u* is generally treated simply as the transitive version of the verb *ugok.u*, thus suggesting that some intransitive verbs may have originated from causative forms of intransitive verbs and, ultimately, forgoing the argument that, in those instances, the sense of causativity rose earlier than transitivity.

If we, then, take the verb we have just obtained, namely *ugokas.u* (originally *ugok.as.u*), and make the potential form of it, with the *.er.u* rule we get *ugokas.er.u*, which is a homophone of *ugok.aser.u*, as in the causative of the intransitive verb *to move*, *ugok.u* (+*.aser.u*). This does not only work for the verb we have taken into consideration, but also with a considerable number of those verbs construing their transitive and intransitive versions from the same stem<sup>399</sup>.

The example of the use of the verbs *ugokas.u* 動かす and *ugokas.ar.u.ru* 動かサルル, by Okamura, is consistent with what we have just argued, since the agglutination *.as.u* could be used as causative (thus, *ugok.u* becoming *ugok.as.u* in its causative)<sup>400</sup>. Similarly, the *.asar.u* ending could be used in classical Japanese to render, supposedly, three concepts<sup>401</sup>: potentiality, passivity and spontaneity<sup>402</sup>.

To argue that Okamura, while explaining the word *kunnen*, just happened to confuse its meaning with *worden* does not explain why he did confuse them.

It can be thus argued, given these data and as an explanation for Okamura's confusion, that it may be that originally Japanese grammar did not actually move in the dimensions of passivity, potentiality, causativity and transitivity, as to conveniently mirror Western languages' grammars, but rather in the binary level of *spontaneity* (today's *.arer*) and *causativity* (today's *.aser*). We might rationalize them as follows:

- **Spontaneity**: Is the quality by which a member of the sentence (generally marked by *ni* or *ga*) *spontaneously* enacts the activity expressed by the verb. Comparing it with Western grammars it could represent a **potential** form as the one member of the sentence that in Western languages is called direct object, becomes the subject that idly allows the spontaneous activity to happen, and the subject becomes the patient of the action, thus having the possibility to carry the indirect-object marker. For example, the sentence<sup>403</sup> **kodomo ga/ni ringo ga tabe.rarer.u** could be thought as *The apple lets the child develop*

<sup>399</sup> MARTIN, pg. 305;

<sup>400</sup> KOMAI, pg. 94;

<sup>401</sup> Four if we include the honorific;

<sup>402</sup> KOMAI, pg. 121-122;

<sup>403</sup> The word *ringo* りんご meaning apple;

*the ability to eat the apple*. This idea also explains why the verb *kir.er.u* 切れる<sup>404</sup> is generally thought to be the translation of both *can cut* and *is sharp*<sup>405</sup>, as both refer to a quality developed spontaneously by the tool in question; and also the double use of *deki.ru*, as discussed above. Because of the relatively recent developments of the Japanese language it is not possible to claim that the sense of spontaneity is exhaustively expressed by the agglutination *.arer*, but we might argue that we are able to find this concept also in the way Japanese expresses appreciation. Saying **ringo ga suki**<sup>406</sup> is the Japanese version of *(I) like apples*, although *apples* is not the direct object, but the subject, suggesting that this could also be thought as *the apples let me develop my appreciation towards them*<sup>407</sup>. The idea of spontaneity is epitomized by the structure that Komai properly calls *spontaneity* (*jihatsu* 自発), also construed in classical Japanese with the same agglutination as potentials and passives, and exemplified by the sentence he provides: *fude toreba mono kakeru* 筆取ればもの書ける, which he translates to *Whenever I pick up a writing brush, I automatically start writing something*<sup>408</sup>;

- **Causativity**: Is the condition by which the subject directly receives the motion to enact the action expressed by the verb from a grammatically sentient agent. It is construed in Japanese with the agglutination *.aser*, identified as the **causative** form, and broadly corresponding to the English *making* or *letting somebody do something* type of phrasing<sup>409</sup>. The sentience of the agent is what most likely led to many causatives to become transitives of verbs that were previously exclusively intransitives, thus connecting the idea of causativity with the one of **transitivity**.

It could be argued that it is for this reason that Okamura combined the meanings of the Dutch verbs *kunnen* (potentiality) and *worden* (passivity) in a single string of explanation. He, in fact, intertwined with the Chinese characters 能 and 可 that we, generally, both regard as expressing *ability* and *potentiality*, while he might have just utilized them to render the division between two concepts that in Western languages are conceived of as being totally unrelated to each other, while, maybe, they were traditionally both belonging to the idea we have labeled *spontaneity*, making

<sup>404</sup> From *kir.u* 切る, *to cut*;

<sup>405</sup> MARTIN, pg. 305;

<sup>406</sup> The word *suki* 好き is, generally, called an adjective expressing appreciation;

<sup>407</sup> Note that this kind of wording is also witnessed in Romance languages like in Italian *Mi piacciono le mele* or Spanish *Me gustan las manzanas*, in which *the apples* (*le mele/las manzanas*) are the subject to the verb *to like* or, rather, *to please* (*piacere/gustar*), while *I* becomes direct object *me* (*mi/me*);

<sup>408</sup> KOMAI, pg. 121;

<sup>409</sup> MARTIN, pp. 292-294;

them hard to distinguish between for a Japanese native speaker that, furthermore, expressed both concepts with similar, if not identical, grammatical structures.

It can also be added that modern Japanese could, probably, be in the process of distancing itself from this binary idea, as many forms unique to one of the nuances in meaning belonging to the idea of spontaneity or causativity are developing, evidencing the linguistic necessity of Japanese speakers to render these concepts in an unrelated way to one another. It is also important to stress on the fact that the contact with Western languages and linguistics, started with the *rangaku*, but probably mostly impactful in the case of English, might have changed the way of perceiving of the Japanese, and this is mirrored in the changes in their language. Further investigations in this direction are clearly required.

#### 4.6 Other parts of speech

Personal pronouns do not seem to having caused much confusion, although they effectively are considered case-inflected word. It is interesting to notice how they have been explained in *Rangaku Hizō*<sup>410</sup>, as the Japanese language does not have different forms for the personal pronouns, contrary to Dutch and English, but renders the difference in meaning through the application of the *joshi* particles. The first person, he explains, (*eersteperson*) coincides with the Chinese character 我 and is split into three: *ik* (subject), *mĳ* (object) and *mĳn* (possessive). *Ik* holds the meaning of the initiating subject (吾起テ物ニ先タツノ意アリ。); *mĳ*, in the presence of a subject, is the one who awaits the action of the subject (吾居テ物ヲ待テ) or the receiver of the action of the subject (物来ヲ吾ニ客タルノ意アリ); while *mĳn* is the owner of something (我ソノ物事ノ主タルナリ), as an example he translates three sentences to illustrate the use of each, respectively: *ik sal ú geven* (*I will give you*) translated as 吾汝ニ与シ; *gĳ zult mĳ geven* (*You will give me*) translated as 汝吾ニ与フベシ; and *mĳn kind* (*my child*) translated as 我カ子. In the case we are talking about two or more people, similarly to the Japanese form *ware-ra* 我ラ, the respective *wĳ* (*we*), *ons* (*us*) and *onse* (*our*) are used (但二人以上ノ語ナル故。我ラト云カ如シ。而テ wĳ ハ。ik ノ如ク。ons ハ。mĳ ノ如ク。ons ハ。mĳn ノ如シ。). As for the second person plural we can read that he attests the

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<sup>410</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pp. 128-129;

utilization of the word *gylieden* (from *gij* - you and *lieden* - people), also discussed by Weiland with some contempt about this modern (to him, of course) phrasing as follows<sup>411</sup>:

*"For the plural gij and u, to distinguish them from the singular, sometimes the word lieden is added after it as in: gijlieden, ulieden. Nonetheless it has been rightfully noticed that this distinction is necessary, a good writer can and should exist without it."*

It is worth to notice that these forms were, thus, not yet accepted in prescriptive grammar, although this is a phenomenon that has become undoubtedly settled in modern Dutch in the ending *-lie* in the word *jullie* (from *jij*, a word etymologically connected to *gij* that ultimately replaced it in modern standard Dutch, and *lieden*), and is also visible in the Afrikaans ending *-le* in the words *julle* (you plural) and *hulle* (they).

The concept of prepositions, that is completely absent in Japanese, preferring post-position to modify words, was also new, and an appropriate term for them was required. One might expect the scholars to come up with a direct translation of the Dutch word *voorzetsels*, which technically is a direct translation of the Latin word *praepositiones* on its own, literally meaning *placed-before*. The word we could expect to be utilized is probably something similar to the modern *zenchishi* 前置詞 (*zen* 前 corresponding to *prae-* or *voor-*; *chi* 置 corresponding to *positus* or *zetten*), which was actually utilized by Baba, but was far from being the most common term<sup>412</sup>. The most recurring term is *shozaishi*, written either 所在詞 or 处在詞, which is composed of the characters *sho* 所/处 and *zai* 在, rendering the sense of location, suggesting that the term was ideated independently of the Dutch name and, thus, we might have to take this as a nomenclature originated as rendering their function, similarly to a definition.

Sugimoto suggests that these words were widely called this way because they are generally used in combination with a place name, as in the frequently-found phrasing *te Jedo, in Edo*. These instances, nonetheless, cover a very limited usage spectrum concerning Dutch prepositions, the basic meaning of which is inherently connected to a grammatical idea of space we do not find in Japanese, nor in English. It is not surprising, anyway, also for an English speaker to think of prepositions as

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<sup>411</sup> Original quote: "Om het meervoudige *gij* en *u* van het enkelvoudige te onderscheiden, voegt men somwijlen het woord *lieden* achter hetzelfde, als: *gijlieden, ulieden*. Doch men heeft te regt aangemerkt, dat deze onderscheiding niet noodzakelijk is, en een goed schrijver, zonder dezelve, duidelijk kan en moet wezen.", WEILAND, pg. 36;

<sup>412</sup> SUGIMOTO (2013), pg. 83;

identifying location even when they do not technically refer to places. If we take the particle *in*, for example, the concept of *inside* is probably the first one we might think of but, in many instances, such particle is not utilized to refer to any actual space or location as in the sentence *I believe in his ideas*, where *in* functions solely as connector between the predicate and the object. If we translate this sentence in Dutch which, opportunely, also uses the preposition *in* in combination with the verb *gelooven*, to believe, it would be *Ik geloof in zijn ideeën*. In case we were to use a relative pronoun, the more prominent sense of location is amplified in the Dutch language, as in the sentence *The ideas in which I believe*, where *which* is the relative pronoun referencing to *the ideas*, we would have to use the word *waar*, meaning *where*, to translate the English *which* that, per se, holds no spatial indication and that last sentence would become *De ideeën waarin ik geloof*, with *waarin* being the pronominal adverb substituting the English *which*, composed of *waar* + *in*. This also works with other words referencing spatiality like *daar* (*there*), *hier* (*here*) and *er* (general spatial locator that does not have a direct English counterpart, similar to *there* as in *there is*). An example for each could be *Ik geloof daarin* (*I believe in that*), *Ik geloof hierin* (*I believe in this*) and *Ik geloof erin* (*I believe in it*), and is mandatory contrarily to the English *therein* and *such*, which belong to a much less common and, arguably, more literate way of speaking.

#### **4.7 The influence of Western linguistics, conclusive thoughts**

As we have seen, the idea according to which Japanese modern domestic linguistic has been strongly influenced by the Western one, is not in any way new and could hardly be argued against. While it is undoubtedly true that most of the latter influences have come from the studies regarding the English language, we have proposed the idea that many of those features had already realized during the early period of *rangaku* scholarship. The degree to which the Dutch studies affected the *yōgaku* and, ultimately, the study of the English language is not categorically clear, but it is certain that many concepts and terms used nowadays in linguistics have preceded the involvement of the Japanese with other Europe-native languages aside from Dutch.

We cannot, in conclusion, assert that the studies of grammar and linguistics that have occurred in the context of the *rangaku* definitely shaped modern Japanese internal linguistics nor, necessarily that the language of the Rising Sun has therefore sensibly bent according to them. We could, rather, in the context of the Westernization of Japan, argue that the process that led the Asian country to be perceived as less Eastern infiltrated likewise the core of its language, also if we take into consideration the alleged loss of the binary system of spontaneity and causativity, as of 4.5.

The impact of the English language on the Japanese one, that began developing starting from the precise moment Japan was officially re-opened and the *bakufu* government forcibly dismantled, and has continued hegemonically ever since, in combination with Japan's subsequent modernization and the technological discoveries enabling faster communications is, believably, what brought Japan closer to the West than what originally was.

For this reason, having already studied the language and culture of the West, though filtered by the Dutch ones, it could be argued that Japanese scholars had already solved many problems linked to the difficulties in comprehending terms and ideas that could be considered rather basic in the Western world, that had aided them with their subsequent American encounters avoiding the misconceptions and misunderstanding we are going to present in the next chapter.

## V

### Analyzing the Gap

#### Understanding translators' difficulties

In this last chapter we will expand the idea of learning from the '*mistakes*', meditating over what had caused the loss of the original supposed intended meaning of samples of text translated by the Japanese from the Dutch sources, apparently exposing the lack of real comprehension of them and the ability of the Japanese language - or the translator - to render those foreign ideas in their native language.

##### 5.1 The concept of *mistake*: how to envision it

Before analyzing the selected problematic translations, we have to concretely comprehend the approach by which we are going to dissect them and, most importantly, how we are going to regard the *mistake*-making process in a way that is functional to the study we want to carry out.

The examples we have taken into consideration will be limited to those instances in which the intended meaning of the original sentence is left completely unrendered in the translated text, sometimes leading to a completely opposite sense, while other times consciously skipped from the *rangakusha* as, admittedly, he could not quite grasp the message the original author sought to express. As we will see, this is particularly the case of Sugita Genpaku who honestly leaves some parts untranslated or warns the reader about the poor adaptation of that sentence as he too had not understood its meaning.

This chapter will not, thus, represent a collection of *faults* committed by the *rangakusha* for the sake of marking those faults with a red pen, while instead, the idea is to elevate those instances, regardless of the concept of *wrong*, through their reevaluation from the perspective that a misunderstanding between two cultures lets us learn much more than a smooth conversations without obstacles between two people totally accustomed to the *other's* way of thinking ever could.



Our focus will be, in particular, oriented towards the analysis of the miscomprehensions we have found in the *Kaitai Shinsho*, Sugita Genpaku's translation of *Ontleedkundige Tafelen*<sup>413</sup> by Gerardus DICTEN, actually being itself a translation from the German original *Anatomische Tabellen* by Johan Adam KULMUS, and some samples of legal texts as presented by Verwayen<sup>414</sup>.

Reading these sources in comparison with their original versions will grant us the capability to ponder about what foreign words and concepts was the Japanese language lacking, at that time, also triggering a second thought about the specificity of some of those ideas as originally belonging to a particular culture, discussing their universality. As argued by Robyn, the questioning of those concepts - or *discourses* - that are implicitly understood and decoded by members of the same *culture*, is a process that is almost never initiated, unless they get in contact with a foreign element which destabilizes the grounded conventions<sup>415</sup>.

## 5.2 Sugita Genpaku's difficulties and translation choices

As we have already seen in many instances throughout the investigation, Sugita Genpaku is probably one of the most representative and self-explanatory *rangakusha*, in the context of understanding the background behind his translational endeavors. His New Book of Anatomy, which has been accompanied by its widely known comment Rangaku Kotohajime, is probably the most famous example of the difficulties the *rangakusha* had to overcome while dealing with this new foreign language, culture, disciplines, knowledge and its representation. Such struggle is probably best represented by the well-known story of him and his colleagues trying to understand the meaning of the Dutch word *furuhehendo* フルヘツヘンド or, rather, *verhevend(e)*, *elevated*, with regards to the description of the nose as being an organ elevated from the face. This story also presents us the time-consuming process of translating a book without a Dutch-Japanese dictionary, but only being able to refer to monolingual dictionaries, from which one could understand the meaning of a term only by comparing it in the context of the examples presented in the entry for that word that, in this case, he ultimately decided to translate as *uzutakaku naru* 堆くなる (literally: *to get piled up high*). That said it has to be added that Sugita actually never used that term while

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<sup>413</sup> DICTEN, Gerardus, *Ontleedkundige Tafelen (Tables of Surgery)*, Janssoons van Waesbergr, Amsterdam, 1734; Dutch translation of KULMUS, Johan Adam, *Anatomische Tabellen*, 1725;

<sup>414</sup> VERWAYEN, F. B., *Tokugawa Translations of Dutch Legal Texts*, in *Monumenta Nippoica*, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 335-358, Sophia University, 1998;

<sup>415</sup> ROBYNS, pg. 348;

describing the nose but only while describing the breasts<sup>416</sup>, nor was it utilized by Dicten in his version, where the term *vooruitsteekend* (*protruding*) is actually used<sup>417</sup>.

Although this particular word has become the most representative out of the Kaitai Shinsho translation process, Sugita also reports trouble in understanding many other words. In particular we read the sentence<sup>418</sup>:

*"Back then, I could not even grasp with ease the meaning of the many particles like de, het or als and welke. Although I slowly started memorizing them, I could not understand much of it all throughout."*

As expected, the words he claims he had the most difficulties in grasping the meaning of are those that are not present in the Japanese language, namely the definite articles *de* and *het*, utilized respectively for masculine singular, feminine singular and plural nouns and for the singular neuter nouns, along with the hypothetical conjunction *als* (*if*), which in Japanese is generally rendered as a verbal agglutination.

### 5.2.1 The difficulty of the language, Sugita's translating process

To practically witness his issues concerning the translation of Dutch sentences we can take a look at a first sample sentence from Kaitai Shinsho, explaining the five toes of the feet, as follows<sup>419</sup>, where we applied particular underlining and letters splitting the different sentences for reference:

"Ⓐ 古へ解体書、足の大指を名づけてハッリスと曰ふ。Ⓑ またラテンにハッキリキナーリ  
イと曰ふ。Ⓒ 余りの四指、名はいまだ詳ならず。Ⓓ 踝と爪とは手に異なることなし。  
Ⓔ 共に第五編に見たり。"

<sup>416</sup> Original quote: "乳。その形円にして堆く", HIROSE (1972), pg. 272;

<sup>417</sup> DICTEN, pg. 120;

<sup>418</sup> Original quote: "その頃はデの、ヘットの、またアルス、ウエルク等の助語の類も、何れか何れやら心に落付きて弁へぬことゆゑ、少しづつは記憶せし語ありても、前後一向にわからぬことばかりなり", in SUGITA pp. 38-39;

<sup>419</sup> HIROSE (1972), pg. 237;

A translation of this explanation would read like this:

"Ⓐ In the older anatomy books, the name of the big toe was *Hallus* [*harrisu* ハッリス]. Ⓑ In Latin it was *Hallucinari* [*harrikinārii* ハッリキナーリイ]. Ⓒ As for the name of the other four fingers, as for now, that is not specified. Ⓓ With regards to the ankles and nails, their names don't differ from those of the hand. Ⓔ Reference section 5."

The following is the original part of text from *Ontleedkundige Tafelen*<sup>420</sup>:

"Ⓐ *Digiti pedum*, de vyf Teenen, met hunne Geleding en Nagels, Ⓔ waar van in de V. Taf. zal gehandelt worden. Ⓐ De grote Teen heeft by de oude Ontleedkundigen den naam van *Hallix*, of *Hallus*. Ⓑ waar van daan het Latynsche werkwoord *Hallucinari* Ⓑ betekent aan de teen struikerlen, of stooten. Ⓒ De overige Teenen hebben gene byzondere namen. Ⓓ Eindelyk worden aan de leden of geledingen, knokken en nagels der voeten de zelfde namen als aan de handen gegeven."

The translation of which can be read below:

"Ⓐ *Digiti pedum* [Latin for *the fingers of the foot*], the five toes, with their articulations and nails, Ⓔ with regards to which will be dealt with in Table 5. Ⓐ The big toe had, between the ancient anatomists, the name of *Hallux* or *Hallus*, Ⓑ from which the Latin verb *Hallucinari* originated, Ⓑ

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<sup>420</sup> DICTEN, pg. 25;

meaning to stumble on one's toes, or bumping them into something. ㉓ The remaining toes have no particular name. ㉔ Lastly, the names for their articulations, knuckles and nails of the feet are the same as for the hands."

A first thing we notice is that two sentences from the original were not translated, being the one we have marked with  $\alpha$ , introducing the topic and the parts that make up the structure of the toes, which could arguably be considered an embellishment to make the list-structure of the book more linear, as those terms will be contextualized in the following sentences; and the  $\beta$ , explaining the etymology of the Latin term *Hallucinari*, allegedly derived from the term *Hallux*, *big toe*, apparently showing a relatively lower interest in the Latin language, that was, conversely, very much valued by the Dutch, as already argued. This is also mirrored by the fact that Sugita generally dropped the Latin term when translating, that was written as first entry in the original, only then followed by the Dutch term for it, if existing. Sugita, basically, substituted, in his re-structuring of the book, the Latin word with the Dutch one and the original Dutch one was replaced by the Japanese version of it, oftentimes he invented himself.

Secondly, we notice that the translation was rather free with regards to the order of the sentences as the A-B-C-D-E succession in Sugita's version corresponds to  $\alpha$ -E-A-B- $\beta$ -C-D in the original. This could be probably considered consistent with the *faster is better* philosophy adopted by the *rangakusha*, demonstrating that what was important to him was not compiling the Japanese version as the closest possible version to the original as much as providing, as fast as possible, Japanese medicine with a ready-to-read anatomy handbook to modernize it with the Western-styled scientific method.

In this example it might be suggested that, reading sentence B, Sugita did not quite grasp the fact that that part was an etymological explanation of how the term *Hallux* had been re-utilized by the Romans to create the word *Hallucinari*, since what he seems to be suggesting is that the term *Hallux* was the Dutch native term, while probably deriving from the Latin word for it: *Hallucinari*. That might also be proven by the fact that he utilized the alternate spelling *Hallus* (*harrisu* ハリスリ)

ス instead of, probably<sup>421</sup>, *harrikisu* ハッリキス) that did not feature the letter X, considered not to belong to the Dutch language<sup>422</sup>.

In addition, we can also meditate about the ways in which Sugita had to deal with the adaptation of a textbook that was, to its core, based on the fundamental authority of the Latin language as European lingua franca, somehow similarly to the way in which the *kanbun* 漢文 represented the proper manner of writing amongst educated Japanese scholars.

In the explanation to the talus bone we also notice that Sugita especially met difficulties while translating this part as he had probably miscopied the Dutch word for it, being *koot(been)*<sup>423</sup>, as *hōto* ホート, thus being unable to understand the literal meaning of the word, and leaving it in its original form, asking for another translator to sort this out for him<sup>424</sup>.

Another interesting mistranslation can be read in the sixth table of the Book of Anatomy, with regards to the explanation of the Adipose Tissue, that in the original was<sup>425</sup>:

"*Pinguendo* of *Adeps*, het Vet; zynde een zachte olieagtige stof, die in de blaasjes van een dun vlies, *membrana adiposa* en *cellulosa*, (het vet vlies) genaamt, verzamelt, en tot een nodig gebruik bewaart wordt. Dit vlies bedekt het gehele lighaam onder de huid, waar mede het zeer naauw vereenigt is;"

Traslated in English it would read:

"*Pinguendo* or *Adeps*; being a soft oily substance that is collected in the bladders by a thick membrane, called *membrana adiposa* and *cellulosa* (the fat membrane), and utilized or stored according to the necessity. This membrane covers the whole body beneath the skin, to which it is extremely closely united."

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<sup>421</sup> See 3.4.3;

<sup>422</sup> See 3.3 and 3.5;

<sup>423</sup> DICTEN, pg. 60;

<sup>424</sup> HIROSE (1792), pp. 251;

<sup>425</sup> DICTEN, pg. 86;

Sugita translates this part as<sup>426</sup>:

"その次は脂なり。自ら油の如し。薄膜、細嚢をなす内にあり、脂膜と名づく。能く実に能く護す。その膜皮の下にあり。"

That translates to:

"Next there is the fat. Per se it is similar to oil. It is inside a thick membrane in a small sack. We call this *shimaku* [fat membrane]. It protects really well. This membrane is found beneath the skin."

By comparing this translation with its original we can witness a rather different rendering by Sugita, who might have ended up changing the meaning of the sentence. In particular the *yoku jitsu ni yoku gosu* 能く実に能く護す/*It protects really well* part seems not to be found in Diction's version. It could be argued that this wording was Sugita's rendering to translate both the sentence *verzamelt, en tot een nodig gebruik bewaart wordt/utilized or stored according to the necessity*, in which the subject is *the oily substance*, and *waar mede het zeer naauw vereenigt is/to which it is extremely closely united*, the subject of which is *the fat membrane*.

In the Japanese version, the sentence *it protects/preserves very well* cannot be easily discerned as there is no reference to either the subject or the object (the verb *gosu* being transitive), but from the context we might assume the subject being *shimaku/the fat membrane*.

The reason why this part was translated so differently from the original is, arguably, due to two elements we have already discussed as being quite difficult for a Japanese speaker to grasp the use of, namely the pronominal adverb *waar mede* (*by which/with which*), as of 4.6; and the passive form found in *verzamelt, en tot een nodig gebruik bewaart wordt/utilized or stored according to the necessity* (*wordt* being the verb *worden*, as analyzed in 4.5 conjugated in its third person singular). The complete missed rendering of the passive form here, and the misunderstanding of which member of the sentence enacts the action (the subject) seems to reinforce the theory of spontaneity, or at least the idea that the sense of *translational* - as Martin calls it - passivity was not originally present in the Japanese language, as an isolated concept.

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<sup>426</sup> HIROSE (1972), pg. 253;

### 5.2.2 Shortcomings of Japanese science and the cultural specificity of ideas

A field of study that must have been particularly difficult to understand for a Japanese of that time was, probably, optics. This is visible from the translation the team behind the *Kaitai Shinsho* provided for the explanation of the iris<sup>427</sup>:

"鳥晴、これを眼虹と謂ふ。雑色にして光彩あり。万物の形ある者、ここに至りて縮す。"

That can be translated into:

*"The iris, we call gankō 眼虹. It shines in many colors. Anything that has a shape reaches it and shrinks."*

The original would read<sup>428</sup>:

*"Iris, de Regenboog, dewelke met veelderhande gemengde Coleuren daar door schynd. Wanneer de Ligt-stralen te meenigvuldig zyn, trekt zy zig toe, en in teegendeel verwyt zig, zoo de invallende stralen minder zyn."*

That translates to:

*"Iris, the Rainbow, that shines with many colors. When the light beams are too numerous, it closes and, otherwise it opens, so as to reduce the entering beams."*

A first thing we notice is the connection between the Dutch native term for iris, namely *regenboog*, that translates directly into *rainbow*, and still exists in modern Dutch in the word *regenboogvlies*

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<sup>427</sup> HIROSE (1972), pg. 262;

<sup>428</sup> DICTEN, pg. 110;

(*rainbow-membrane*) and was most likely utilized by Sugita to coin the new scientific term *gankō* 眼虹, composed of the characters for *eye* 眼 and *rainbow* 虹, and still existing in modern Japanese as the word *kōsai* 虹彩, composed by the Chinese characters for *rainbow* and *color* 彩, in order, thus suggesting that the word is a Dutch calque, replacing the previously utilized *usei* 烏晴.

We can also claim that the explanation of the way the iris functions was rendered rather inappropriately, as the reason for it to be shrinking (that is, to reduce the quantity of light entering the eye) was not explained, nor can we say with certainty that it had been understood by Sugita that the one shrinking was the iris and not the light itself, since the verb *to shrink* (*shuku-su* 縮す) is connected to the verb to reach (*itaru* 至る), the subject of which is *anything that has a shape*.

It would not be surprising if this sentence had been extremely hard to understand, regardless of linguistic difficulties, as the studies in optics and the whole concept of light has been a centuries long debate in Western physics, before reaching a consensus, while Japan was most likely never introduced to the idea of *light-beams* (this word was not translated, in fact, by Sugita) entering the eye as the means to allowing animals the sense of sight.

While explaining the parts of the human body the Western *Ontleedkundige Tafelen* oftentimes utilized references to daily customs and tools in order to make the reader, supposed to be accustomed to them, grasp more easily the shape and features of such body part. Since this book was targeted to a German/European audience, the universality of those examples was never questioned but, when the Japanese had to read them, those examples actually made the text harder to understand and the comparison had to be accompanied by an explanation, by the translator, of that culture-specific element. This is visible from Sugita's translation of the explanation regarding the lungs<sup>429</sup>:

"その形。これを脹れば則ち犧牛蹄を返ずる状態（和蘭の俗、犧牛必ず辜丸を去る。故にその蹄、常と異なり）に似たり。"

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<sup>429</sup> HIROSE (1972), pg. 277;



That translates to:

*"Their shape. When it swells, it looks like a reversed sacrificial bullock's hoof (A Dutch custom, you must remove the testes of the sacrificial bullock. Thus, the [shape of the] hoof differs from normality.)"*

This differs sensibly from the original<sup>430</sup>, which featured no explanation of the practice of castration, thus suggesting that the translating team had to reference somebody who held such a detailed knowledge of Western customs. Furthermore, it is, in the original, no reference made to the sacrificial function of the removal of the testes of the oxen, thus raising the suspicion that this could have been the interpretation of the practice, probably, of castration of cattle for domestication purposes, by Sugita and his colleagues.

A similar explanation process also occurred while presenting the shape of the heart that Dictus (or, rather, Kulmus) compares to a pin in the game of *kegel* (*kēgeru* ケーゲル), a game similar to bowling. Sugita translates as follows<sup>431</sup>:

"その形。上円く、下尖り、ケーゲル（和蘭人の翫器の名。その形いまだ開かざる蓮の倒に懸る如し）の如し。"

From the translation of which we can understand the double effort Sugita had to put in his adaptation to provide the Japanese reader with yet another comparison with something which shape looked like the one of the heart, with which the local audience should have been more familiar, obviously totally absent in the Dutch version<sup>432</sup>. The Japanese text goes as follows:

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<sup>430</sup> The original simply stated as follows: "*Shape*: When swollen, it appears as the reversed hoof of an ox." Original quote: "*Gedaante*: opgeblaazen zynde, vertoont de zelve een omgekeerde osse-klauw.", DICTEN, pg. 136;

<sup>431</sup> HIROSE (1972), pg. 277;

<sup>432</sup> The Dutch version translates to: "*Shape*: The shape is, from the top, round, going towards the bottom it makes a cuspidal point, in the manner of a reversed *kegel*."; original quote: "*Gedaante*: het is van boven rond van gedaante, en nederwaarts gaande maakt het, spits toelopende, een punt, op de wyze van een omgekeerde kegel.", DICTEN, pg. 143;

*"Shape: The top is round, the bottom is pointy, similar to a kegel (This is the name of a Dutch toy. Its shape is similar to an upside down lotus flower that has not opened yet)."*

One could, ultimately, wonder why did the team of translators feel the need not to remove completely the foreign references they found in the original since they actually play no role in the context of the medical inquiry, nor are they intelligible to the supposed target reader, thus denying their clarification purpose. It might be suggested that Sugita could have preferred to leave the exotic cultural references there either (or both) to provide a more faithful adaptation of the Dutch text or/and lead by a fascination towards such foreign elements.

### **5.3 The first studies of Western law and translations of Dutch legal texts**

The introduction of Western conception of law has, probably, been one of the last scholarships introduced in Japan in the context of the *rangaku*. It is generally believed that the most productive period in this regard have been the thirty years from 1868 to 1898, thus the first decades after the forced reopening of *sakoku* Japan and the collapse of the shogunate under the pressure of the United States. It is argued by Verwayen, whose research will be the main focus of this section, that the studies that have been carried out in such period have been substantially facilitated as a consequence of the sporadic translations of Dutch law books requested by the Tokugawa government, although in this first stage the issue of law has been hardly addressed<sup>433</sup>.

Nonetheless, the real influence these Dutch studies afforded to Meiji translations is debatable, as evidenced by *Mitsukuri Rinshō* 箕作麟祥 who, when appointed to translate French codes, in order to reform the government administration as to recover it from its decline<sup>434</sup>, complained about the difficulty of such an endeavor as many concepts he found were not present in Japan, thus evidencing also the lack of a proper term to translate them. We can, thus, argue that, without denying the importance in way-paving of these first Dutch law texts translations, their influence in the subsequent studies has been minimal, particularly from a linguistic point of view.

The focal Tokugawa works in providing Japan with translations of Dutch law codes, which were by and large not intended to be published, but for the sole interest of the government, were those that have been produced after the 1841 appointment by the *bakufu* to some *rangakusha* employed at the

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<sup>433</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 335;

<sup>434</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 336;

translation office in the *Tenmondai* 天文台, the observatory of the *bakufu*<sup>435</sup>, from which the work of *Mitsukuri Genpo* 箕作阮甫 (grandfather of Rinshō) managed to be realized<sup>436</sup> and that we will analyze in this research.

As a consequence of the end of the *sakoku*, the Japanese population re-obtained the capability to travel abroad, thus affording *Nishi Amane* 西周 and *Tsuda Mamichi* 津田真道 the possibility to attend to law classes led by professor Simon Vissering in Leiden, Netherlands. Their studies probably set the foundations on which Rinshō and his contemporaries could have based their translations, while his grandfather had, most likely, a very tiny selection of previous researches to draw influence from.

That said, for the reasons we have thoroughly comprehended by now, the first documents with regards to Western law were a consequence of the Tokugawa translations of Dutch law books, allowing us to analyze, in the context of this research, such translations in comparison to the original, in order to understand the differences and shortcomings of Japanese lexicon and, the translational *mistakes* made by these *rangakusha*.

Most representatively, the translations that have been produced as a consequence of the 1841 orders of the *bakufu* featured the Dutch Constitution (*Nederlandse Grondwet*) in 1843 by *Sugita Ryūkei* 杉田立卿 and his son *Sugita Seikei* 杉田成卿; and the Dutch Criminal Code (*Wetboek van Strafrecht*) and the Code of Criminal Procedures (*Wetboek van Strafvoeding*) in 1848 by Udagawa Yōan<sup>437</sup>.

### 5.3.1 The translations of Dutch law texts by Mitsukuri Genpo

Along with the many difficulties we have presented in the previous chapter, another obstacle to the rendering of an adequate Japanese version to the Dutch original law texts is probably represented by the translating method utilized by Genpo, the functionality of which could be highly questioned. His *modus operandi* consisted in translating word for word, in a rather isolationist envision of them, and applying so-called *kaeriten* 返点 marks, as to specify the order those words had to be rearranged in, in order to conform to Japanese syntax. This was no invention of Genpo as it actually was the system generally utilized to translate Chinese books<sup>438</sup>.

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<sup>435</sup> To reference the importance of Western astronomy studies in Edo Japan see 2.10;

<sup>436</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 335;

<sup>437</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 336;

<sup>438</sup> VERWAYEN, pg.339;

The text Verwayen analyzed is the partial translation by Genpo of the Dutch Code of Civil Procedure, which he argues to be hardly understandable even for Dutch native speakers because of its complicated vocabulary, thus representing the best example for our investigation. At the same time, nonetheless, since much of the research in such topic has already been done by this scholar, we will attempt, after presenting it, to expand the discussion in light of the wider context we are approaching this topic from, focusing more on the language and phrasing chosen by the *rangakusha*, rather than the content of the code itself.

In this regard Verwayen already guided us in the understanding of how his translating process went about, by noticing the fact that Genpo actually utilized different Japanese words to translate the same Dutch terms he encountered and, at the same time, he often used one Japanese word to render two very different concepts in Dutch law, also remembering the fact that the words he used to describe these new concepts were drawn from the Japanese pre-existing vocabulary and thus, connected, inevitably, to differing cultural references<sup>439</sup>.

A first example of Genpo's attitude towards translation can be understood by the way he translated the legal concept of *third parties* (*derden* in Dutch), as he repurposed the term *daisan'nin* 第三人, literally *third person*, and added an explanation of this concepts as follows<sup>440</sup>:

"原告を第一人とし所告を第二人とし其外に関係することある人を第三人と云らん"

That translates to:

*"If we consider the plaintiff as the first person and the defendant as the second person, we might call someone who, apart from them, has a concern in the matter, the third person."*

Such practice of providing the text with a term the reader is supposed not to be familiar with and adding an explanation to it, seems rather common in these translations, being featured, also, in Sugita Genpaku's books, as seen in 5.2.2. An alternative to this, would have been to provide the reader with some sort of introductory chapter presenting the vocabulary that would have been used

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<sup>439</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 342;

<sup>440</sup> Original quote and translation as provided in VERWAYEN, pg. 342;

in the corpus of the text, instead of adding explanations inside the corpus itself, as also proposed by Verwayen<sup>441</sup>, although one might wonder about Genpo's actual capability to cohesively rationalize a structured introduction to Western law, independently, without the support of a text guiding him in the language of the *kōmōjin*.

One of the main differences between Dutch/Western legal system and the Japanese one could be identified in the fundamental legitimization of justice-enactment according to the status of the members of society in the Tokugawa *shinōkōshō* caste system<sup>442</sup>. Such *rule of status* understanding of justice, epitomized by the *kirisute gomen* 切捨御免 principle affording, for example, the samurais the capability to, eventually, sentence law-breakers belonging to a lower status if they so deemed appropriate, was evidently in contrast with the *rule of law* type of reasoning expressed in Dutch law texts, that disregards the status of the individuals from the ultimate judgment<sup>443</sup>.

A core concept that is central in Western law and had no Japanese rationalized counterpart was the idea of *right*, or *recht* in Dutch, the conception of which had never been produced in Japan to that point and that, in the case of Genpo, was completely overlooked. Similarly, in Tokugawa Japan, the idea of legal judgment as not being necessarily followed by a punishment was not present in feudal Japan's imago, that explains why Genpo translates the Dutch word *vonnis*, for *judgment*, with *zaika* 罪科, that is utilized as *crime* or *punishment*<sup>444</sup>.

All these ideas were especially lacking in Japanese law conception, as well as in their vocabulary and this can be clearly seen by the translation Genpo provided to Article 342, demonstrating that he did not quite grasp the meaning of it and tried, rather than properly translating it, to explain its contents as he rationalized them<sup>445</sup>:

"三百四十二条 草卒に取行ふべからざる罪科を行ふがために上政廳に呼上すことは罪科に処すべき旨を申渡す後八日の内にこれを取行ふべからざるなり若し八日を歴ざる内に上政廳に呼出さるるときは其人上を蔑如するにはあらざれども其呼上しを承知せざることあり上官此時不承知ならば便に重てこれを取行すが故に不敬の罪なきにあらざらず輕卒に取行ふべからざる罪科を行ふは八日の間延すべし"

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<sup>441</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 342;

<sup>442</sup> Referenced in 2.5;

<sup>443</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 343;

<sup>444</sup> VERWAYEN, pg. 345;

<sup>445</sup> Original quotes and translations as provided in VERWAYEN, pg. 346;

Although translating as:

*"One shall not carry out a calling up before a higher government office in order to hold a punishment that cannot be carried out abruptly, within eight days after pronouncing the intention that it shall be dealt with by punishment. When he is summoned before the higher government office before eight days have elapsed, although it is not that that person holds his superiors in contempt, his calling up may not be taken cognizance of. If the higher magistrate this time does not take he again repeatedly calls him up. Holding a punishment that cannot be carried out abruptly shall be delayed for the duration of eight days."*

the original article actually explained what follows<sup>446</sup>:

*"Appeal of a judgment that cannot be executed provisionally shall not be instituted within the first eight days after the day of the judgment is rendered: if the appeal takes place within that period, it shall be declared inadmissible, except for the appellant's right to repeat his appeal if the term has not expired. The execution of judgments that cannot be executed provisionally shall be suspended during those eight days."*

As for the analysis of Genpo's translation with regards to his actual understanding of the content of Article 342, Verwayen extensively presents his ponderations, in particular concerning the (many) ways in which the *rangakusha* translated the concept of *appeal* and to which extent he might have actually grasped its meaning<sup>447</sup>.

From a linguistic point of view, as to reference the theory of spontaneity as of 4.5, we can notice the use of the passive form, in the original document, to be rather frequent, counting five occurrences of the verb *worden* in its conjugated forms. We can read the original text of Article 342 below:

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<sup>446</sup> Translation in English and original text as provided in VERWAYEN, pp. 345-346;

<sup>447</sup> See VERWAYEN, pp. 346-348;

"Het hooger beroep van een vonnis, hetwelk niet bij voorraad **kan worden** ten uitvoer gelegd, **kan niet worden** ingesteld binnen de eerste acht dagen na den dag van deszelfs uitspraak: indien het hooger beroep binnen dat tijdvak plaats heeft, wordt de appellan niet ontvankelijk verklaard, behoudens zijn vermogen om zijn beroep te herhalen, indien de termijn niet verstreken is. De uitvoering der vonnissen, welke niet bij voorraad **kunnen worden** ten uitvoer gelegd, wordt gedurende de acht dagen geschorst."

By reading the original we notice that, actually, in three of the five instances in which *worden* has been used it was actually accompanied by the potential auxiliary *kunnen* (*kan* in the singular form) and are all negatives. This is consistent with Genpo's utilization of the agglutination *bekarazaru* べからざる in his translated counterparts of each of those instances, holding the meaning of *prohibition* or *impossibility*. The original agglutination, is supposed to be *bekaraz.u*; could it be that Genpo felt the need to add the *.ar* agglutination as to render the passivity expressed by the Dutch verb *worden*, thus leading to the nowadays more popular *bekarazaru* phrasing, is a doubt that can hardly be dissipated. This instance could be, in actuality, utilized in support of the theory according to which the necessity of translating Western passives led to the introduction of a systemized passive form in modern Japanese.

As for the other instances of the utilization of the word *worden*, which are neither potentials nor negatives, Genpo does not add, or tries to render, the sense of passivity at all and, in particular, the *.ar* agglutination, which is supposed to represent passivity (along with potentiality, honorific and spontaneity<sup>448</sup>) in traditional Classical Japanese grammars, never occurs except for the verb *yobidas.ar.u* 呼出さる (*to summon*), that Verwayen properly translates with a passive. This occurrence although being, unfortunately, not eligible for comparison as this sentence was written totally arbitrarily by Genpo and does not have a Dutch counterpart in the original, is consistent with McEnery and Xiao findings while comparing the frequency of utilization of the passive form in English and Chinese which is, at least ten times more frequent in the Western language<sup>449</sup>.

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<sup>448</sup> KOMAI, pp. 114-121;

<sup>449</sup> MCENERY, pg. 24;

## 5.4 Evaluating translational gaps, conclusions

What we have learned from this brief comparative analysis of translations from Dutch to Japanese occurred under the Tokugawa ruling could be considered a confirmation of what we had already assumed throughout the rest of the research. Understanding the reasons behind each '*mistaken*' rendering of the original text has afforded us a more detailed comprehension of how the two cultures differed, shedding light upon the envision of the minds of the scholars, inevitably influenced by the socio-cultural and historical context they were immersed in, towards foreign concepts and, most importantly, manners of reasoning.

From a purely translational perspective, most of such instances have to be regarded as poor adaptations of the original text, according to any measurement we take into consideration. Some of the concepts we have read are, without any doubt, not transmitting the ideas and contents the source document was expressing and, for this reason, have not helped the spreading of Western knowledge and ideas, at least not the way they were originally conceived of. This was caused by the many obstacles the translators faced; an unproductive translating system, arguably more functional in the case of Chinese translations, but that is apparently not appropriate in the case of foreign languages, is probably the most obvious one.

Those '*mistakes*' can be considered, nonetheless, to be holding high value when approached with the intention of understanding the reasons behind their occurrence, the cultural gap that led to them, which is what our modus operandi was announced to be. In the case of the clarifications added to the original texts, for example, we have learned the cruciality of constantly questioning the universality of what one might believe to be basic, wide-spread understanding, while being exclusively unique to their own cultural *discourse*.

Furthermore, although not being particularly functional in the context of expressing meaning, they can be thought of as being the first instances that raised, between Japanese scholars, the necessity to widen their vocabulary, as a consequence of them dealing with concepts and ideas that were foreign to them, up to that point, and, eventually, absorb such elements, in the fashion dealt with extensively, yet not exhaustively, in this research.

This type of investigating method could be applied to all the many books the *rangakusha* produced during the Edo period, thus showing the necessity to pursue the numerous ways in which such period of unusual cultural contact occurred, in order to comprehend further details about both countries by filtering their conventions through the eyes of individuals foreign in space and, above all, time.



## Conclusions

253 years have passed since the accidental arrival of the ship *Liefde* to the enforcement, by the United States, to end the *sakoku* in 1853, a policy that affirmed the hegemony of the Dutch in Japanese trades and contacts with the Western world. We have argued the impactful extent to which these monopolistic encounters influenced Japan's history and the development of the country's *westernness* we often hear about. Engaging in the study of the Dutch language was, at that time, one of the most fruitful academic choices, although it is hard to argue that the *kokugaku* have ever really gotten superseded by the *rangaku*.

Dutch was considered the language of foreign trade and the *lingua franca* of Western-style science and medicine but, contrarily to what might be expected, the influences on modern Japan and Japanese are relatively tiny. The number of properly named loan-words is hardly close to a three figures number and mostly concern scientific and medical terminology, or more generally terms regarding technology related to that period in time. Some words have, interestingly, diverged in their meaning from their original Dutch counterpart, like *mesu* メス meaning *scalpel*, from Dutch *mes*, simply meaning *knife*; or *retteru* レッテル, mostly used in the phrasing *retteru wo haru* レッテルを貼る, meaning *to label something or someone as*, from the Dutch word *letter*, identical to English in meaning. Other terms, sharing notable Germanic roots, have either been substituted by the English counterpart or have gotten re-contextualized to a narrower meaning, most notably the word *koppu* コップ, from Dutch *kop*, meaning *cup/glass* ended up referencing to a particular type of cup, specifically a mug, while the English derived term *kappu* カップ has replaced the wider meaning of the concept of *cup*.

The Dutch influence in Japanese lexicon also lives through the calques and the *rangaku*-inspired *wasei kango* 和製漢語, the Japanese-made words utilizing Chinese characters, as seen in chapter III. But for the many reasons, including, but not limited to, shorter-ranged media, specificity of the context of use and hard accessibility, these words did not manage to be adopted by a higher amount of Japanese speakers and, consequently, to be preserved to our days.

The centrality of the Dutch language in the Japanese relations with Western countries started declining in the years 1808/9 when Doeff, J. C. Bloemhoff and *Daikokuya Kōdayū* 大黒屋光太夫

began popularizing respectively French, English and Russian<sup>450</sup>. The dismantling of the trading post in Dejima was a physical sign of the beginning of the collapse of the hegemony of Dutch influence in Japan, while the 1872 rejection by the Japanese ministry of Foreign Affairs of the request proposed by the Dutch embassy in Japan to preserve the historical teaching of the language of their *vaderland* marked definitively the loss of institutional interest from the Japanese side. Furthermore, no book concerning the Dutch language, nor dictionary thereof, have been published until 1918 in Japan<sup>451</sup>.

The number of Japanese students of Dutch was estimated, in the preface to the 1943 dictionary *Ran'nichi Jiten* 蘭日辞典, to be approximately 300. Professor *Shimizu Makoto* 清水誠 claims that this is not the case anymore, as that number, in 2007, had reached the thousands<sup>452</sup>.

That said, the necessity to study the Dutch language has undoubtedly initiated the process of expansion of the focus of linguistics in Japan. Many new concepts and categories were evidenced to be needed in Japanese wisdom, also in the context of languages, and these pioneering studies left marks that are still visible in Japanese grammatical tradition of today. As already argued, important linguistic influence, beside borrowed words, cannot be claimed to have occurred. Nonetheless, if one were to agree with the argument of the passive form not being fully native to the Japanese language, it could be suggested that the development of it might have started in this period as a necessity for educated scholars to adapt Western books' conception of passivity.

In this sense, the legacy left behind by the *rangaku* is still surviving, since the most poignant argument we have put forth through this research is that this bizarre encounter between the two cultures can still provide those who engage in such study with new keys of understanding and conceiving of both Japan and the Netherlands. Dutch and Japanese were, somehow, attempting to study and comprehend each other without much preconceived knowledge of the other culture and, particularly for Japan, the isolationist policy forced the *rangakusha* to almost solely rely on their own traditions to solve the complicated enigma this foreign, segregated civilization represented to them. As a consequence, their little knowledge of the diversity of the humanity populating the outer world, amplified those instances we have called '*mistakes*' that ultimately evidence their traditional tools of thinking and conventions that are never questioned otherwise, thus never evidenced directly in the sources of the time.

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<sup>450</sup> SHIMIZU, Makoto, *Tussen academische en dagelijkse taalvaardigheid (Between academic and daily language proficiency)*, in *The Annual Report on Cultural Science* 123, 2007, pg. 60;

<sup>451</sup> SHIMIZU, pg. 61;

<sup>452</sup> SHIMIZU, pp. 62-63;

As we have seen, not every Japanese scholar was willing to engage in such questioning and this has to be expected and understood in a country virtually segregated from most of the outside world fearing the imperialistic aims of many of those powerful rulers commanding the extremely technologically advanced vessels that represented them abroad.

Many *rangakusha*, oppositely, developed the so-called *ranpeki* mania for the Netherlands and approached the foreign with such a charm that allowed them to actually question the universality of their belief system, yet (or consequently) reinforcing the knowledge of what being Japanese meant. This is best represented by the story told in *Fūryū Shidōken Den* 風流志道軒伝, published in 1763 by Hiraga Gennai, oftentimes taken as an example of the influences of the Dutch encounter on Japanese literary production. In the book the protagonist finds himself in a fantastic adventure travelling around the unknown world where he meets with peculiar human-like creatures, generally characterized by disproportionate body parts, mirroring the twisted appearance some Japanese held towards the Dutch. The presupposition the story starts from is the one that there is no such a thing as the *different*<sup>453</sup> and the teaching the main character acquires from this bizarre experience is that *although other people's behavior might appear strange and different to the eyes of those who wrongly regard themselves as superior, only by observing the rules of one's own land and accepting to also observe those of the others one can have their own identity*<sup>454</sup>.

To ultimately end this paper, a few research suggestions appear to be necessary to be put forth, as to allow the academic community to continue investigating the many issues we have raised. Firstly, it would indeed seem appropriate to proceed with the careful comparative analysis of the translated books produced by the *rangakusha*, side by side with the original Dutch document. This process will certainly be much valued by scholars of translational studies but could, as well, make us understand the real extent to which such adaptation processes actually influenced the Japanese language and wisdom and either question or reinforce the idea of a westernized Japan. This method, for example, would be extremely useful to understand how the passive form in Japanese developed and, to which extent it could be considered either native or imported and what caused the fixation of it in the **.ar** agglutination. Could it be that it actually started as rendering of a formal speech, as the passive form in many European languages is often used to elevate the register?

Analyzing the translations should also be highly regarded in the context of cultural-transfer as the process of adaptation inevitably calls for the naturalization of exotic elements, thus, evidencing the

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<sup>453</sup> BOSCARO, Adriana, *Il Giappone e l'"altro": Il caso di Hiraga Gennai (Japan and the "other": The instance of Hiraga Gennai)* in *Quaderni di Asiatica Veneziana*, Vol. 1, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina S.r.l., Venice, 2005, pg. 33;

<sup>454</sup> Translated from BOSCARO, pg. 36.

rationalization of the translator in carrying out such operation. As in the examples raised in Chapter V, the focus should be put on the reasoning behind the choices made by the translators who, supposedly, acted as to make the reader more comfortable while reading, and the text more easily comprehensible.

Another path for future researches could be opened in the direction of historical linguistics, by analyzing all the manuals of Dutch grammar and compare their contents with what we know about commonly used Dutch language of that time, as well as the prescriptive Dutch-made grammars. New discoveries in this context are certainly going to occur and many interesting details of comparative historical linguistics can only enrich world's knowledge.

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