The Nagasakiya: Japanese-Dutch Intellectual Exchange in the Shogun's Capital

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During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Japanese scholars of European science, medicine, and culture, known at the time as *rangaku* in Japanese, began to form an expansive network that connected individuals in the major cities of Edo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Nagasaki and also reached into provincial areas that were separated from those metropoles. The central government was slow to realize the value of Western knowledge, and thus offered no true patronage. Even more challenging, the government created policies in the seventeenth century which ultimately impeded access to European books and people. In such a discouraging environment which could occasionally border on hostile, the network was crucial to the spread of Western medicine and science. And, it functioned remarkably effectively. United by a common spirit of curiosity and the belief that Western science would benefit Japan, and encouraged by a societal confidence in the power of information, the *rangaku* network expanded between the 1770s and the 1820s.[1]

The term *rangaku*, which can be translated as 'Dutch studies', came into use at the beginning of that period and was formed by a combination of the characters *ran* ('Holland') and *gaku* ('studies'). The word reflected the fact that the only conduit to European science and medicine for most of the Tokugawa Era (1600-1868) was through contact with a Dutch trading company. Although not all of the knowledge originated in Holland, the Dutch language was the medium of transfer. Accordingly, the portal through which intellectual and cultural contact could take place was quite small, and those that pursued Dutch studies, known as *rangakusha*, were forced to learn a lot from a little.

They had to optimize the limited 'contact spaces' available to them. In 1991, Mary Louise Pratt introduced the concept of 'contact zones' in which cultures 'meet, clash, and grapple' within 'asymmetrical relations of

[1] T. Jackson, *Network of knowledge: western science and the Tokugawa information revolution* (Honolulu 2016).

power, such as colonialism (…)'.[2] Unfortunately, Pratt's concept does not fit in this case, as Tokugawa government restrictions made the development of larger *contact zones* between the Japanese and the Dutch difficult. Nevertheless, Japanese scholars were able to craft more modest contact spaces, both physically and metaphorically, even under government limitations. These spaces were the nodes of the network woven by those interested in European science.

Two cities were particularly important for the entry of Western knowledge: Nagasaki, where the *Verenigde Oost-Indishe Compagnie* (Dutch United East India Company or VOC) traders were stationed year round, and the capital city of Edo, where Company representatives made annual visits to pay homage to the shogun and renew their trade permits. Although the court visits, known as *hofreizen* in Dutch and *sanpū* in Japanese, were relatively brief at only two or three weeks, they were crucial to the burgeoning community of Dutch studies scholars in the capital. Edo scholars could ask questions, obtain books, and establish intellectual and social ties that, however thinly, expanded their network all the way to Europe. For the Dutch, while there was great cultural value in their interactions with the Japanese interpreters in Nagasaki, the visits to Edo put them in contact with some of the most important Japanese intellectuals, writers, artists, and political officials of their time.

However, under the restrictive policies of the Tokugawa government, it is too much to claim that Edo in its entirety was a contact space for intellectual exchange. There was only one place in Edo where Japanese scholars could meet the Dutch, the Nagasakiya Inn. The Nagasakiya housed the Dutch on their trips to the capital. Their only chance to leave the confines of the inn were during two closely-monitored ceremonial audiences at the shogunal court. But, with the proper permissions, there were some opportunities for Japanese to visit the inn. This article traces the life of the Nagasakiya as an important contact space during a time of oppressive government restrictions on foreign interaction. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the inn became a place of interest for a handful of government (*bakufu*) scholars and physicians who could feel

[2] M.L. Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession* (1991) 33-40: 34. Pratt's concept of *contact zones* is grounded in her examination of the cultural aspects of European expansion. The term is meant to acknowledge the process of mutual interaction that occurred when European colonists and indigenous people occupied the same space at the same time. M.L. Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London 2008) 6-7.

secure in the safety of their official appointments. However, at the end of the eighteenth century, with the rise of a network of interested independent scholars, the arrival of several scholarly-minded Europeans, and slight relaxations of government policies under a more liberal senior councilor, the Nagasakiya became a more meaningful contact space that played a notable role in the exchange of knowledge and spread of European science in Japan.

The Court Journeys

Dutch-Japanese contact began in spring 1600 when the weather-battered ship *De Liefde* limped alone to the shores of Usuki (in present-day Ōita prefecture). Nine years later, prompted by a red-seal trade permit (*go-shuin*) issued by shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to the newly-formed VOC, two more Dutch ships arrived in Japan. This original license was rather liberal, allowing the Dutch entry into any port and free movement. They established an outpost in the port of Hirado on the southern island of Kyushu, but were relocated to Nagasaki by the Tokugawa government in 1641, where they were sequestered on the small artificial island of Deshima. In its efforts to shore up authority and foster political stability, the government banned its subjects from foreign travel in 1635 and in 1639 expelled the Portuguese, who had been Japan's primary European contact during the sixteenth century. These policies were driven to a great extent by the worry that an expansion of Catholicism might threaten the government's control and authority over its people. The VOC convinced the *bakufu* that it had no interest in bringing Christianity to Japan, agreeing to all the government's demands in that regard. The Dutch became Japan's only European portal, but they were under constant guard and surveillance, only able to cross the short bridge from Deshima to the mainland with the special permission of the Nagasaki governor (*Nagasaki bugyō*). The VOC was willing to endure these limitations because of the initial profitability of the trade. Despite greater restrictions and more precarious profitability in the late seventeenth century, the Dutch persisted.

One of the most significant requirements of the VOC made by the government was the court journey. In exchange for trade rights, the *bakufu* began to require the VOC to send representatives to court annually as tribute mission in 1634. These trips were performed annually until 1790, when they were reduced to every four years, though tribute was still sent

every year. They were finally discontinued in 1850. Typically, three members of the company (usually, the company chief, known as the *opperhoofd*, a scribe, and a physician) left Deshima for Edo in late winter in order to arrive for their shogunal audience on the first day of Japan's third lunar month. Their last leg of the journey was along the famous Tokaido Highway. In Edo they were required to attend an audience during which they prostrated themselves and presented their gifts and another audience during which they agreed to fulfill a number of requirements dictated by the *bakufu*. By the time they returned to Deshima, approximately one hundred days had passed.[3]

Entering the Nagasakiya

Typically, as the Dutch contingent approached Edo, it was greeted just outside the city by the proprietor of the Nagasakiya Inn, known as Nagasakiya Gen'emon. Although the inn was irregularly used for other lodging purposes and operated as an herbal drug shop specializing in Chinese ginseng, it was most famous for boarding the Dutch contingents. The name of the inn's proprietor, Gen'emon, was passed down through twelve generations until the Nagasakiya was no longer in use. Except when it was damaged by earthquake or fire, the Nagasakiya housed the Dutch every visit starting in 1641. In addition to hosting them, Gen'emon was tasked with guiding the Dutch through the city for their audiences and keeping an eye on them, thus making him in essence a government official.

The Nagasakiya was in the greater Nihonbashi area of Edo. Nihonbashi was Japan's most famous bridge, and the neighborhood surrounding it was the heart of Edo, a bustling political, economic, and cultural area. The Nagasakiya was located on the Hongokuchō sanchōme block, a mere fifteen minute walk from the bridge. Many of the greatest scholars, writers, artists, and publishers of the time made their home in Nihonbashi, and at the end of the eighteenth century its residents included a number of prolific *rangaku* researchers.[4]

[3] The longest duration was 142 days in 1787.
[4] Jackson, *Network of knowledge*, 62-63.

The structure of the Nagasakiya changed over the years as it was rebuilt multiple times following fires and earthquakes.[5] Dutch accounts indicate that Gen'emon's family and employees resided on the first floor in rooms towards the street, while the Dutch always occupied the second floor. The Dutch were not always enthusiastic about their Edo lodging. In 1740, one *opperhoofd* called the Nagasakiya a 'depressing, dilapidated inn'.[6] Later, Carl Thunberg wrote that it was tidy and adequate, but 'was not such as I expected for an embassy from so distant a part of the world'.[7] On the second floor was an area that was used for entertaining guests, equipped with European style furnishing toted by the Company. This space was often referred to as the *Orandabeya*, the Dutch room, but the physician Ōtsuki Gentaku called it the 'salon of the westerner's inn' (*seihin tabiyado no zashiki*).[8]

There could be no better place than Nihonbashi to excite the imaginations and thirst for knowledge, a seemingly ideal environment for cultural and intellectual exchange. Yet, the government severely restricted the movements of the Nagasakiya's guests. The Dutch were only allowed to leave the inn on the days of their shogunal audiences. Four guards were constantly stationed around the inn and the gate was locked between 8:00 pm and 6:00 am. When they did leave for their audiences and to distribute gifts, they were escorted by Gen'emon, interpreters, and sometimes officers of the Nagasaki governor stationed in Edo. One can imagine how stifling it must have been. In frustration, a company chief complained during his 1711 stay 'I hope we shall be released from our "prison" as soon as possible'.[9]

Much of their time in the Nagasakiya was spent receiving visitors. They entertained many scholars and doctors over the years, occasionally

[5] The Dutch were occasionally forced to stay in temples or other inns. For example, there were significant conflagrations in the late 1650s which threatened the envoy, and in 1704 they were moved to a temple due to significant earthquake damage which almost made their annual audience impossible as well. A fire in 1712 sent them to a temple for lodging and another in 1806 meant a stay at an inn in the Edo neighborhood of Ryogoku.

[6] P. Velde and R. Bachofner eds., *The Deshima diaries: marginalia 1700-1740* (Tokyo 1992) 499.

[7] T. Screech, *Japan extolled and decried: Carl Peter Thunberg and the Shogun's realm, 1775-1796* (London 2005) 149.

[8] G. Ōtsuki, *Seihin taigo* [Conversations with foreign guests], unpublished manuscript, n.p.

[9] Velde, *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1700-1740*, 130.

forging social and intellectual ties over European wine, absinthe, tobacco, and sweet preserved fruits.[10] From its earliest decades the Nagasakiya proved to be a place where the Japanese could learn about medicine and natural history from the Dutch doctors and *opperhoofden*. Among the more educated and interested of them were Engelbert Kaempfer, Isaac Titsingh, Carl Thunberg, Henrik Doeff, and Philip Franz von Siebold, who all recorded their experiences.

Official Interest in the Nagasakiya

The Dutch performed a number of medical demonstrations for shogunal physicians in the seventeenth century, during the early decades of the court journeys, but there is no indication that they occurred at the Nagasakiya. However, VOC records show official scholars and doctors, directly in service to the shogun and his *bakufu*, coming to the Nagasakiya in greater frequency from the end of the seventeenth century. Many of these individuals became friendly enough with the Dutch to be mentioned by name in the VOC accounts.

The earliest names that appear are shogunal physician Kurisaki Dōu and shogunal scholar and advisor Arai Hakuseki. Dōu came to the Nagasakiya annually at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. Hakuseki also made a number of trips to the inn beginning in 1712. Used to visitors whose only motivation was silly curiosity, one *opperhoofd* mentioned that he was impressed by Hakuseki, whom he felt had come for intellectual reasons.[11] That year, Hakuseki brought maps and a print from the shogun's Momijiyama Library to discuss, and even made a follow-up visit to have his son's knee looked at by the Dutch physician and to ask questions about animals.

By the 1740s, the Dutch envoys also became familiar with the shogunal physician Fukami Kyūdayū, who began appearing regularly from 1728. His numerous questions about astronomy and the calendrical sciences were particularly noteworthy and have been discussed by Grant Goodman.[12] However, he also had questions on medicine and botany. Like

[10] For example, see L. Blussé et al. eds., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800* (Tokyo 2004) 38.
[11] Velde and Bachofner eds., *The Deshima diaries: marginalia 1700-1740*, 145.
[12] G. Goodman, *Japan and the Dutch, 1600-1853* (Richmond 2000) 53.

Hakuseki, Kyūdayū's official status gave him access to the shogun's library, and he brought European books, including Rembertus Dodonæus's *Cruydtboek* (1618) to the inn, with questions.[13] The Dutch had first presented a copy of this text, an herbal, to the shogun in 1659. But it had been forgotten, gathering dust on the shelves of the Momijiyama Library, until Tokugawa Yoshimune, probably intrigued by the book's hundreds of illustrations, ordered his scholars to study it in 1717. Throughout the eighteenth century the *Cruydtboek* was toted to the Nagasakiya by government intellectuals. In addition to inquiries about the books he brought, Kyūdayū also conveyed 'secret' questions on behalf of the shogun about laws and punishment, governance, geography, agriculture, religion and churches, and burial practices in the West.[14] Among the scholars that he brought with him to the Nagasakiya was a shogunal botanist, Niwa Seihaku. Seihaku too was a regular at the inn in the late 1720s and 1730s.

The 1740s at the Nagasakiya were shaped by shogun Yoshimune's push for Japan to acquire more knowledge from the West. While Yoshimune's actions fell short of expansive patronage, he ordered the shogunal scholars Noro Genjō and Aoki Kon'yō, who had a post at the shogunal library, to learn from the Dutch. Their names would appear often in the Dutch logs from 1742.[15] The Dutch must have noticed an increase in the number of official physicians and scholars visiting them, as the company chief expressed irritation in 1744 at their frequent and uninvited visits.[16] He and other VOC chiefs often found the questions that they were being asked tedious or trivial. Joining Genjō and Kon'yō in their pursuits were scholars from the shogunal astronomical bureau (*Tenmongata*) and the shogunal observatory (*Tenmondai*). For example, an official astronomer visited the Nagasakiya in 1743 in order to ask questions about 'comets, stars, and other matters related to astronomy'.[17]

In addition to Kurisaki Dōu, two other shogunal physicians appear by name in VOC reports from the early eighteenth century. Makino Sōsaku visited the Nagasakiya often in the 1710s and 20s. More important were the visits of the shogun's personal physician Katsuragawa Hochiku, who

[13] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 37.
[14] Velde and Bachofner eds., *The Deshima diaries: marginalia 1700-1740*, 350.
[15] J. Numata, *Western knowledge: a short history of the study of western science in early modern Japan*, R.C.J. Bachofner trans. (Tokyo 1992) 37-38.
[16] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 55.
[17] Ibidem, 37.

interviewed the Dutch in front of the shogun at the palace in 1724 and was ordered by the shogun to meet with the Dutch at the Nagasakiya annually.[18] As will be discussed below, Hochiku's son and grandson would also frequent the inn in later years, and used meetings in the inn to actively promote the growth of a *rangaku* network at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

As indicated above, with access to the shogun's library, these official scholars and doctors often brought books to the Nagasakiya. The Tokugawa shoguns had received many of them as tributes. During the seventeenth century, the texts had only been treated as curiosities, often lost among other books. However, during the eighteenth century, and especially with the encouragement of Tokugawa Yoshimune, Japanese scholars began to recognize their intellectual value. The Nagasakiya became a place where official Japanese scholars and physicians tried to make sense of the shogunal copies of *Cruydtboek* (mentioned above), Jan Jonston's *Naeukeurige beschryving van der natuur der vier-voetige dieren* (originally published in 1657), and Emanuel Sweerts's *Florilegium* (Frankfurt 1612). As indicated by Dutch records, when this happened, Japanese scholars would typically retire to the bedroom of the VOC physician where, with the help of an interpreter, they would ask questions. Sensitive to the political dangers of any interactions that they had, it was not uncommon for the *opperhoofden* to issue warnings to the VOC doctors to be careful to only discuss medicine and natural history with Japanese visitors.[19] The Nagasakiya was not a placeless place, free of political context, and the Dutch had to be careful about even innocent interactions.

Beyond their questions about books, Japanese physicians were attracted to the Nagasakiya in the eighteenth century by more hands-on medical demonstrations and the dissections of animals. They even brought patients on occasion to be treated by the VOC physician. In 1725, for example, doctors brought several ill children from a charity hospital funded by the shogun.[20] In 1744, the Dutch physician examined the paralyzed son of a *daimyo* at the request of a shogunal physician.[21] On other occasions, the Japanese doctors merely requested medicines.

[18] Numata, *Western knowledge*, 39.
[19] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 5 & 22.
[20] Velde and Bachofner eds., *The Deshima diaries: marginalia 1700-1740*, 298.
[21] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 55.

The Politics of Entry

Despite the growing intellectual interest of officially-appointed scholars and physicians in the Nagasakiya, entrance into the inn and contact with the Dutch could still be a difficult prospect under the tight restrictions of the *bakufu*. For example, despite his charge from the shogun, Aoki Kon'yō had to obtain permissions from an Edo governor and the Nagasaki governor residing in the capital to visit the Nagasakiya in 1740.[22] In the face of official barriers, unsanctioned clandestine trips by officials, scholars, and *daimyo* to the Nagasakiya became fairly common. An *opperhoofd* records that a shogunal physician secretly visited in 1743 so that the ill son of a high official might be examined.[23] Presumably the concern was that the *bakufu* might deny a member of an elite family entrance on the grounds that it was inappropriate contact with foreigners.

Various *daimyo* regularly visited the Nagasakiya incognito and late at night in order to avoid any suspicions or breach of etiquette. *Bakufu* authorities were sometimes aware of the unapproved visits, but overlooked the infractions as long as all parties were discreet. Indeed, years later in 1828 the VOC physician Siebold indicated that he believed that a lot of unsanctioned interaction happened within the Nagasakiya with the government's tacit approval.[24] A handful of *daimyo* made a great many open and secret trips to the Nagasakiya Inn. Historian Reinier Hesselink has determined that twenty-seven visits were made by domainal lords between 1768 and 1787. These years correspond with the relaxed governing influence of senior councilor Tanuma Okitsugu, and access to the Nagasakiya, though still monitored, was slightly easier.[25] They also correspond to the early expansion of *rangaku*.

However, access to the Nagasakiya became much tighter following the ascension of the more conservative Matsudaira Sadanobu to regent. In 1789, just a year into Sadanobu's promotion, the VOC chief reported that lords of Satsuma and Kokura had been turned away by the officials monitoring the Nagasakiya and that not even the *daimyo* Kutsuki Masatsuna

[22] J. Numata and R.C.J. Bachofner, *Western knowledge*, 40-41.
[23] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 38.
[24] S. Takenoshita et al., 'Discovered documents of von Siebold I,' *Kitakanto medical journal* 47:6 (1997) 453-60: 458.
[25] R. Hesselink, 'A New Guide to an Old Source,' *Monumenta Nipponica* 60:4 (2005) 515-523: 20.

and shogunal physician Katsuragawa Hoshū, who had been frequent visitors in the past, could get past the gate. The chief was told by officials that no one was allowed to visit the Dutch, the interpreters, or even the servants at the inn.[26] This continued the following year, and additionally the rooms of the Dutch were inspected daily on Sadanobu's orders.[27] The *opperhoofd* expressed great relief when in 1802 *daimyo* Masatsuna could openly return to the Nagasakiya with ease, though room inspections continued.[28]

Tight restrictions at the Nagasakiya from the late 1780s were the result of Sadanobu's Kansei Reforms that sought to strengthen the government's authority by reversing the 'excesses' of the Tanuma Okitsugu governance. Sadanobu was not an enemy of *rangaku*, but insisted on the orthodoxy of Neo-Confucianism.[29] The government kept a particularly keen eye on *daimyo* during these years. Indeed, the Satsuma *daimyo*, who had great interest in the Dutch and in European science, also faced difficulties getting into the Nagasakiya. For years he had taken great care in cultivating friendships with members of the VOC, visiting them when he could and sending gifts. He was a zealous promoter of *rangaku* studies inside and outside his domain.[30] Like the *daimyo* Masatsuna, he was forced to make secret visits to the inn during Sadanobu's tenure as senior councilor. However, even clandestine trips became impossible for him in 1788. Once, unable to visit the Nagasakiya openly, the Satsuma *daimyo* planned a late night visit. When he never showed up at the inn, the *opperhoofd* made an inquiry to one of the *daimyo* representatives and learned that the domainal lord had been under the surveillance of the Nagasaki governor to prevent any unsanctioned visits. The governor had been made aware of the *daimyo* plan to sneak into the inn by the interpreters assigned to the VOC.[31] Once Sadanobu had fallen from grace in 1793, some of the restrictions loosened

[26] Blussé et al. eds., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 594.
[27] Ibidem, 622.
[28] N. Gakkai, *Nagasaki Oranda shokan nikki vol. 1* [Diaries of the Dutch in Nagasaki] (Tokyo 1989) 171.
[29] Jackson, *Network of knowledge*, 117.
[30] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 329; 404.
[31] Ibidem, 571. Although their Japanese title seems to be unclear, *opperbongiois* were officers charged by the Nagasaki governor with various inspection and supervisory duties. One of their jobs was to escort the Dutch on the court journeys and monitor them.

up again, but not entirely. Siebold records that the lord of Nakatsu domain, another *daimyo* who was fond of the Dutch, was also forced into a clandestine visit in 1826.[32] Alas, *daimyo* were not the only ones who had to make secret visits to the Nagasakiya. Shogunal physician Katsuragawa Hoshū, son of Hochiku, made many unofficial trips to the inn. VOC records indicate that Hoshū visited the Nagasakiya covertly almost every day in 1786.[33]

The Nagasakiya as Network Node

Scholarly visitors to the Nagasakiya in the middle decades of the 1700s exclusively had *bakufu* appointments, and thus had the security of being able to claim that their interactions came with official sanction. This was important because the government since the 1630s keenly held tight to its control on Japanese interaction with foreigners. In addition, earlier in the Tokugawa Era the government had banned foreign books, and although the shogun Yoshimune relaxed the ban in 1720 to just books with Christian references, scholars at large remained skittish about the legality of working with European texts. However, Katsuragawa Hoshū represented a transition beginning in the 1770s from the supposedly officially-sanctioned Nagasakiya exchanges of shogunal researchers to an increasing number of visits by independent scholars who were involved in creating and expanding their scholarly network focused on the acquisition of European science.

The shogunal scholars were able to visit the Nagasakiya with relative ease between the 1740s and 1780s. Their official status meant that their research was specifically directed toward government interests. However, the Dutch stays at the Nagasakiya took on a new importance for Katsuragawa Hoshū from the 1770s and his colleagues as the intellectual interaction of their network expanded. Hoshū was a key facilitator of the network, but other crucial members included Sugita Genpaku, Ōtsuki Gentaku, and Udagawa Yōan, among others. For these Edoites, Nagasakiya became a link to Europe, and they were met by like-minded VOC members such as Thunberg, Titsingh, Doeff, and Siebold. In Europe, these men had come to believe that their pursuit of natural history and science was a noble

[32] P.F. Siebold, *Edo sanpū kikō* [Travel journal of the Edo court journey], Saitō Makoto ed. (Tokyo 1997) 191.
[33] Blussé et al., *The Deshima diaries: Marginalia 1740-1800*, 523 & 546.

pursuit, a belief shared by the Japanese scholars who visited them at the Nagasakiya. However, they also believed that as a noble pursuit, it should be unbridled by political or geographical limitations. Indeed, these men in particular took up their posts in the Dutch East India Company to overcome geography and with ambitions of developing a greater knowledge of the natural world and the diversity of humanity and sharing that knowledge with the minds of Europe. Unfortunately, they found in Japan governmental policies that stood in their way. Thus, the contact space that they formed in the Nagasakiya was just as important to them as it was to the Japanese who visited them. The transfer of knowledge went both ways.

Hoshū's family, the Katsuragawa, had occupied posts as shogunal physicians for generations, and during this new period at the Nagasakiya at the end of the eighteenth century Hoshū provided the official contacts that were required for non-shogunal physicians to gain access to the inn.[34] He became, in essence, their guarantor.

Hoshū was at the forefront of *rangaku*'s growth. The birth of *rangaku* (and the network that spread it) is often attributed to an incident in 1771 when a group of Edo physicians, European anatomy book in hand, witnessed the dissection of an executed person. Conducting vivisections was generally considered taboo by Japanese physicians, and so they relied exclusively on Chinese diagrams for their understanding of internal anatomy. However, examining the insides of the freshly executed criminal, they realized that the charts in their European book better corresponded, and pledged to translate it. One of the physicians in the group, Sugita Genpaku, claimed that this epiphany was the spark that launched *rangaku*. Although his explanation of *rangaku*'s origins is too simplistic, it is true that the men at that execution ground became the early core members of what would become a network of scholars. Hoshū had close connections to these men, who were friends with his father.

Members of the nascent network were excited when the VOC physician George Rudolf Bauer and *opperhoofd* Jan Crans came to Edo in the late 1760s. At the Nagasakiya, Bauer examined the gangrened tongue of a medical student whom the group had brought, and demonstrated a phlebotomy. Sugita Genpaku writes that he and his colleagues eagerly went

[34] Hoshū's importance to the Japanese-Dutch exchange and his frequent presence at the Nagasakiya were such that his young grandson came to the inn in 1810 to inform the Company of his passing. N. Gakkai, *Nagasaki Oranda shokan nikki vol. 5* (Tokyo 1994).

to the inn daily. In addition to asking questions, they were able to borrow the book *Heelkundige Onderwyzingen* by Laurens Heister from one of the interpreters.[35] Genpaku would later encourage his student Ōtsuki Gentaku to translate it. One of their group, Hiraga Gennai, became fast friends with Bauer, and made use of that friendship to acquire books.[36] Gentaku himself would start frequenting the Nagasakiya in 1794. By that time, the VOC only came to Edo every four years, but interest in Dutch medicine was growing. Gentaku visited the inn during eight Dutch court journeys, recording the happenings of six of them in a manuscript titled *Seihin taigo*.

According to Gentaku, only direct retainer (*jikishin*) physicians were permitted to go to the Nagaskiya. As shogunal physicians, the Katsuragawa met that criteria. Town doctors and physicians serving rear vassals (*baishin*), such as Gentaku, did not have the qualifications. For them, special *bakufu* permission was necessary. However, even with permission there were challenges.[37] In *Seihin taigo*, Gentaku relates how onerous it was for his group to see the Dutch in 1794. Gentaku, Hoshū, and four others without direct retainer status sought access to the Dutch. They relied on Hoshu's position as a shogunal physician to obtain their permission. Hoshū submitted an initial application to the *bakufu*'s petitions office (*gosoba goyō toritsugi*) on the day the Dutch arrived in Edo, May 21. The petitions indicated the names of the *rangaku* scholars with their feudal affiliations. Six days later, Hoshū received notice that the lords of each of the physicians had to submit additional letters of support. Once this was done, Hoshū was sent a permit, but only those of direct retainer status were allowed to ask questions. Copies of the permit were forwarded by the *bakufu* to the Nagasakiya proprietor and the Nagasaki governor, who scheduled their Nagasakiya meetings for June 1st and 2nd. However, senior and junior inspectors from his office were required to be in attendance.[38] Clearly, this

[35] G. Sugita, *Rangaku kotohajime*, Ogata Tomio ed. (Tokyo 1998) 24.
[36] Ibidem, 25.
[37] Udagawa Yōan, a member of the Edo *rangaku* network, used his connections with Yoshio Chūjirō, an official translator at the shogunal Astronomical Observatory, to meet Siebold, yet still had to travel clandestinely to the Nagasakiya because of uncertainty about the permission. See: T. Takahashi., *Shiiboruto to Udagawa Yōan: Edo rangaku kōyūki* [Siebold and Udagawa Yōan: a record of Dutch studies exchange in Edo] (Tokyo 2002) 54.
[38] Ōtsuki, *Seihin taigo*, manuscript n.p.

situation had the potential of stifling interaction. The group would continue to rely on Hoshū through similar processes in successive years.[39]

Gentaku records that during the first meeting the Dutch and their Japanese visitors sat lined up across from each other, but only the shogunal physicians were able to ask questions. However, the whole group was able to see several books, including one on surgery, and scientific instruments brought by the VOC physician. Those who could not ask questions were able to learn from the questions of the others, and they were able to practice their listening comprehension of Dutch. Gifts were exchanged as well, and Hoshū received a medical wax head. Perhaps just as importantly, as European culture interested them in general, the Japanese were able to enjoy European refreshments, including wine and pickles. In fact, Gentaku would try to duplicate European gatherings by hosting several Dutch-style New Year's meals at his school in Edo. The following day, the topics of conversation included windmills, optometry, and the circulation of blood. The Dutch asked questions as well. For example, the VOC physician inquired about the state of vaccinations in Japan, and the Dutch were very interested in learning more about the northern territory of Ezo. In addition, in subsequent years, Doeff and Siebold would receive botanical samples and other useful objects for their scientific and ethnographic inquiries from Nagasakiya visitors.

As with earlier generations, the members of the emerging *rangaku* network who went to the Nagasakiya valued the opportunity to see medical demonstrations and obtain books and scientific instruments. When they acquired books or instruments, whether as gifts, through exchange, or by purchase, they often made them available to other scholars through their network.[40] Hiraga Gennai bought a copy of the coveted *Cruydtboek* at the Nagasakiya in 1765, and he purchased other books there in different years. He also received one as a gift from the physician Bauer in 1761. In fact, after noticing the growing interest among Japanese scholars, the Dutch began bringing books with them to Edo at the end of the eighteenth century in hopes of selling them. Scholars were sometimes even able to use the friendships they built in the Nagasakiya to request books after the Dutch had returned to Deshima. For example, former *opperhoofd* Isaac Titsingh used his successor to send books that had been requested in letters

[39] In 1806 the Dutch were housed at an inn in Ryogoku because the Nagasakiya had been damaged by fire.

[40] Jackson, *Network of knowledge*, chapter 6.

sent to him by various Edo physicians in 1785.[41] In these acts we can see the lengths that Japanese and European scholars would go to in their quest for knowledge, as exchanges of letters with foreigners were technically illegal except when sanctioned by the government.

The *rangaku* network continued to spread through the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. But the most fruitful intellectual interaction at the Nagasakiya for both *rangaku* and the Dutch probably occurred in 1826 when Siebold arrived. Although restrictions were still in place, there seems to have been enough loosening of them that the bold Siebold was able to facilitate a tremendous amount of information exchange. Siebold appeared to know that if he performed well enough by treating patients and giving interesting demonstrations, he could win the favor of those in positions to assist him in his research of Japan. By 1826, he had managed to acquire the unthinkable permission to visit patients in Nagasaki and to open a school and clinic on the mainland. He famously taught medicine and natural history to around fifty Japanese who made the trip south. He was also able to bring some of his students to Edo, such as the famous Takano Chōei, in order to aid his research during the court journey.[42]

His entrance into Edo on April 10, 1826 was not promising, as physicians Katsuragawa Hoken (son of Hoshū) and Ōtsuki Gentaku were turned away by authorities when they tried to greet the German physician on the outskirts of the city.[43] However, once in Edo, though he did not have freedom of movement and his visitors often had to come incognito, Siebold was able to build social ties, teach, and receive botanical specimens, all within the Nagasakiya. Herbert Plutschow writes that the 'inn quickly developed into another kind of university.'[44] Siebold operated on a baby with a harelip, performed cataract surgery, examined a lump in the breast of a *daimyo* wife, gave a lecture on small pox, showed visitors how to administer a vaccination, demonstrated an operation on a pig, and provided medicine to the shogun's personal physician.

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[41] F. Lequin ed., *The Private Correspondence of Isaac Titsingh. Volume II (1779-1812)* (Amsterdam 1992) 547-8; 581-2.

[42] H. Plutschow, *Philipp Franz von Siebold and the opening of Japan: a re-evaluation* (Kent 2007) 9-10.

[43] Siebold, *Edo sanpū kikō*, 189.

[44] Plutschow, *Philipp Franz von Siebold and the opening of Japan*, 11.

Perhaps most importantly Siebold met with a variety of scholars, researchers, and physicians, establishing mutual respect and friendship, and opening up the possibility of further exchange. In addition to Hoken and Gentaku, Siebold befriended physicians Ishizaka Sōtetsu, who gave him a book on moxa and acupuncture treatments, and Udagawa Genshin, an internal medicine specialist, among others. He discussed medicine and showed them the scientific instruments that he had brought, including a microscope, thermometer, barometer, altimeter, hygrometer, sextant, and chronometer. Siebold's journal records the pleasure the physician felt at learning that Hoken and Gentaku could understand Dutch. It also indicates that he had even gifted Gentaku a book.[45]

Siebold also met with *daimyo* Okudaira Masataka and Shimazu Shigehide, who were both enthusiastic supporters of Dutch studies, as well as official geographer Mogami Tokunai, official astronomer Takahashi Kageyasu, and official cartographer Inō Tadataka, with whom he would secretly exchange a variety of materials. Tokunai lent him five maps of Ezo under 'a pledge of earnest secrecy' and Kageyasu would later send him a map of the Sakhalin Islands by Mamiya Rinzō and a map of Japan by Tadataka.[46] In exchange, Siebold sent Kageyasu a four volume set of books on world geography by Johan Huebners as well as other texts.[47] To Siebold's delight, all his Nagasakiya visitors brought gifts, typically specimens of Japanese flora. Hoken gave him books of sketches of plants native to Ezo.[48]

Although he had been in Edo for an unusually long time of over a month, so stimulating was his stay that Siebold sought the help of shogunal physicians whom he had befriended, to extend his stay at the Nagasakiya. He had probably read of the unusual opportunity that another VOC physician, Caspar Schamberger, had to stay in Edo for several months nearly 200 years earlier in 1649. Some scholars have argued that Siebold's

[45] N. Gakkai, *Nagasaki Oranda shokan nikki vol. 7* (Tokyo 1996) 80. On April 12 1818, the *opperhoofd* writes that they understand spoken Dutch well and can even write it.

[46] Siebold, *Edo sanpū kikō*, 185 & 194. There is some indication that famous cartographer Mamiya Rinzō may have been introduced to Siebold by Tokunai, though the evidence is unclear. See: S. Takenoshita et al., 'Discovered Documents of Von Siebold III', *Kitakanto medical journal*, 48:4 (1998) 314-324: 320.

[47] Siebold, *Edo sanpū kikō*, 196.

[48] Takenoshita et al., 'Discovered Documents of Von Siebold III', 317.

zeal for demonstrating surgeries and giving lectures at the Nagasakiya was a manipulative effort to ingratiate himself well enough to obtain *bakufu* permission for an extended stay in the capital.[49] After initially hearing a favorable report of his petition on May 6, just two days later he learned from his Japanese friends that traditionalist Chinese-style physicians were protesting the petition.[50] Sadly, the *bakufu*, which had become irritated with the VOC over critical comments made about the Nagasaki governors, ultimately rejected his request.[51]

Unfortunately, Siebold's friendships in Edo would also lead to a final decline of intellectual exchanges at the Nagasakiya. An illicit letter that Siebold sent to the geographer Mamiya Rinzō through astronomer Takahashi Kageyasu triggered a *bakufu* investigation. In the midst of the investigation and as Siebold was beginning his departure from Japan, the ship containing all the materials he had gathered in Japan wrecked. Included in his articles that were recovered by the *bakufu* were maps of Japan and other items forbidden by the government. His departure was delayed and after an inquiry, he was expelled. His friend Kageyasu, who was implicated in the affair, died while in prison. And the Nagasakiya was once more under a stricter, more watchful *bakufu* eye.

Conclusion

This article focuses attention on geography, or space (albeit a small one), to understand Dutch-Japanese cultural interaction in the early modern period. The intellectual exchange that took place in the Nagasakiya cannot be called natural or organic. The choices made by the *bakufu* as it crafted its authority in the first half of the seventeenth century severely limited the possibilities of foreign interaction in Edo. However, scholars and physicians in the capital had surprisingly greater access to the Dutch than any other foreigners. Representatives of the Ryūkyū kingdom and Korea came to the capital much less frequently, and the Chinese remained in Nagasaki. For the Dutch, these trips were both frustrating and energizing. The Dutch experienced the humiliation of being made spectacles by the government

[49] Takenoshita et al., 'Discovered Documents of Von Siebold III', 318.
[50] Siebold, *Edo sanpū kikō*, 218.
[51] Plutschow, *Philipp Franz von Siebold and the opening of Japan*, 15. Also see Takenoshita et al., 'Discovered Documents of Von Siebold III,' 318.

during their court appearances and the thrill of witnessing a culture very different from their own. They felt the heavy hand of a government attempting to maintain authority over the foreigners' presence and the exhilaration of sharing ideas with Japanese of like-minded curiosity. For the emerging *rangaku* community in Edo, who received no state patronage, the visits to the Nagasakiya were eagerly welcomed as precious chances to develop ties with Europe. Their network would play a significant role in preparing scholars, and ultimately the government, for the tremendous changes that would occur in Japan over the course of the nineteenth century, and the contact space at the Nagasakiya was instrumental in its growth.