



Universiteit  
Leiden

The Netherlands

## **A tale of one city: actors of globalization versus bakufu hegemony in early modern Nagasaki, c. 1571-1800**

Knoest, J.J.A.

### **Citation**

Knoest, J. J. A. (2023, October 24). *A tale of one city: actors of globalization versus bakufu hegemony in early modern Nagasaki, c. 1571-1800*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3645902>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3645902>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).





PART III

# Moderating Networks and Managing Globalization in The Eighteenth Century

物価の交渉

CHAPTER 6

---

Trade Negotiations  
and Cultural  
(Mis)Understandings



## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter primarily consists of research done in the context of this PhD project, but which has been previously published in my article: J.J.A. Knoest, “Doing Business by the Grace of the Shogun: Strategies, Trade Negotiations, and Cross-Cultural (Mis)Understandings in Early Modern Nagasaki” in Cátia Antunes and Francisco Bethencourt, eds. *Merchant Cultures. A Global Approach to Spaces, Representations and Worlds of Trade, 1500-1800*, pp. 135-170. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022. Sections 6.1, 6.3-6.6 (pages 189-191, 200-222) are verbatim representations of the text presented in this article (pages 135-138, 147-170). About half of the text in section 6.2 (pages 197-199) consists of verbatim text passages from my article “Doing Business by the Grace of the Shogun” (pages 143-147). The other half consists of new or rewritten information to avoid repetitiveness in regard to information given in chapter 2, and to include newly gained insights.

In his groundbreaking work on the Tokugawa political order, Luke Roberts showed how its system consisted of two separate spheres in which social and political actors operated: a formal one (*omote* 表) and an informal one (*uchi* 内), both involving management of personal, social and political spaces. *Omote* can be categorized as a set of ritualized relations in the hierarchy between an inferior and a superior, with the former expressing subservience to the latter and, in Roberts’ words, “the reassuring *performance* of signs that one accepted the hierarchy and general order of the higher authority.”<sup>480</sup> *Uchi*, on the other hand, refers to the inferior party’s acknowledged space of authority (*naibun* 内分). Behaviors in these two spheres often contradicted each other, and Tokugawa politics came down to displaying obedience to Tokugawa demands in formal *omote* situations, while at the same time informally negotiating actual needs. The informal agreements (*naishō* 内証) stipulated the mutually accepted level of deviation from *omote*, and bound the two spheres in political action: “The cautious political players relied upon investigating and following the precedents of earlier *naishō* agreements among communities of *daimyo* or within their own pasts, and the ambitious worked to set new standards for acceptable deviation.”<sup>481</sup> Whereas *naishō* were flexible, *omote* rules were rigid

480 Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, p. 7.

481 Ibid.

and unforgiving. Trying to change an *omote* rule or behavior yielded little success and was far more likely to be seen as violating decorum or, worse, as a criminal act because it could be interpreted as challenging the legitimacy of one's superiors. Therefore, even the smallest misstep in ritual and decorum in Edo would probably be more severely punished than breaking Tokugawa law in one's own domain. The Tokugawa demanded that everybody should uphold a front of obedience and saw to it that disorder did not spread beyond the limits of one's domain or household and become visible for the world to see.<sup>482</sup> As Roberts also notes, *omote* could be used to drive issues on the edge:

Deviance in *Omote* could be a form of political behavior, but it was disruptive, uncivil politics and always called for punishment. Such deviance was often used strategically by people poorly placed in the hierarchies of power, typically commoners engaging in public disorder as a tactic to cause their superiors to "lose face." Illegal petitioning, protests, and riots could be effective tools in collective bargaining because they exposed a ruler's inability to maintain the peace. Such disruption often achieved demands, but always at a heavy cost. The rituals of resolution of such conflicts involved punishing some representative of the inferior party for the crime of insubordination so that reinstatement of the hierarchy could be affirmed.<sup>483</sup>

To show that these workings were not restricted to Japan's domain politics, this chapter analyses some cases of *omote*, *uchi* and *naishō* facets in Nagasaki's foreign trade with the Dutch through the lens of early modern merchant culture. Cátia Antunes and Francisco Bethencourt define merchant culture as a way of thinking and acting in regard to mercantile practices, shaped by formal and informal rules dictated by provenance, religious beliefs, ethnic affiliations, gender, language and institutional contexts. As such, they acknowledge a diversity in merchant culture(s), grounded in specific social, economic and civilizational divides, yet also argue for a set of widely shared common features that allowed merchants to connect and interact with each other on a global scale, transcending geographical, social and cultural spaces,

---

482 Ibid., pp. 5-8.

483 Ibid., p. 8.



thus forming what these authors describe as a *common* merchant culture.<sup>484</sup> In early modern Nagasaki, basic mercantile concepts such as profit, loss, debt, production, supply and demand, costs and contracts were certainly familiar to all parties involved in foreign trade. However, differences clearly manifested themselves in, for example, trade negotiations, when each party approached these common mercantile concepts through its own cultural paradigm and tried, to varying degrees of success, to understand the paradigm of the other. In doing so, the parties also added to a shared paradigm culturally specific to Nagasaki, and molded by three centuries of interaction between foreigners and the domestic population.

The objective of this chapter is to show that within ‘institutionalized’ networks in Nagasaki (meaning: formal systems of institutions, such as bureaucracy, legal codes, courts *et cetera*) there was room to challenge the agendas of the Japanese central government. On several occasions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the shogunate had indeed imposed and amended strict regulations on numerous proceedings in Nagasaki. In order, however, to maintain a workable situation, these orders were not always observed to the letter, or additional regulations were introduced on local initiative. To what degree then were the Dutch in Nagasaki aware of these *omote* and *uchi* spheres? Did they know how to operate within them and use them in their business strategies? To answer these questions, we will first look at the general conditions of foreign trade in Nagasaki before moving on to trade negotiations between the Japanese and the Dutch during the 1740s and 1750s. Generally speaking, the eighteenth century was a period of steady economic decline for the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki, and this gave rise to considerable tensions. Indeed, the twig of the Japanese-Dutch trade relations was bent so far during this period that it almost broke. As such, this period has received much scholarly attention, primarily concerned with mutual outlooks on trade policies by Edo and Batavia, and the final result of negotiations.<sup>485</sup> On this occasion, however, we will focus on the means rather than the ends when looking at these negotiations in more detail.

---

484 Bethencourt and Antunes, “Merchant Cultures: An Introduction”, pp. 1-2, 15-16.

485 See, for example, Suzuki, *Kinsei Nichiran bōeki-shi no kenkyū*, pp. 388-406; Suzuki, “Nichiran Bōeki no kiki”, pp. 47 (163)-69 (185); Shimada, *Japanese Copper*, pp. 154, 161-163.

## 6.2 State of Affairs: The Dutch-Japan Trade Early Eighteenth Century

### *The Financial Difficulties of the Eighteenth Century*

The shogunate ‘officially’ cared little for trade and profits, as in the ideology of Tokugawa society merchants formed the lowest class of people, being perceived as parasitic, producing nothing. What the shogunate did care about was durable static social stability. Under the early *bakufu*, Tokugawa society and wealth generation were built on farming, and rice in particular. The realm was divided into feudal domains whose worth was measured through their rice yields. Taxes were levied in rice and subsequently distributed to samurai officials and retainers as stipends. The peace and stability brought about by the *Pax Tokugawa* caused a sudden rise in the cultivation of arable fields and a development of regional processing industries.<sup>486</sup> The absence of frequent large scale military operations with accompanying loss of life, an increase in the food supply, and more readily available products brought on by specialization, caused an explosive population rise and an increase in living standard during most of the seventeenth century. These people found their way to one of many cities that were expanding everywhere, causing a rapid urbanization, and monetization of Japanese society. For example, the large body of samurai whose main occupation had been fighting, were no longer allowed to also farm land, but were now obliged to move to castle towns where they were employed (besides soldiers) as advisors, teachers, or administrative personnel. As such, their rice stipends had become useless, and they needed to exchange it first for gold, and then gold for copper to buy their daily necessities, which came to include (fine) cloths, furniture, restaurant- and theatre visits et cetera. This created more supply and demand for non-agricultural goods and services in the cities.<sup>487</sup>

---

486 High literacy among every level of the population and a circulation of knowledge regarding new farming techniques gave room for farmers to specialize in crops better suited for their regions. Using the double-cropping technique, farmers sometimes had the option of using (part of) the land for cash crops, such as indigo, paper, mulberry, and safflower, in addition to rice. This specialization in turn stimulated the development of regional processing industries, such as cotton yarn, cotton textiles, indigo balls, and paper. See: Miyamoto, “Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy”, pp. 46-47.

487 Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, p. 12,

The combination of more arable land, better farming technologies, and population increases during the first half of the seventeenth century had brought about a steady rise in rice prices that plateaued around the 1660s. Economic historian Miyamoto Matao has argued that this trend cannot be seen as solely a matter of a population growth-driven-demand increase followed by a technology-driven-supply increase through land reclamation and rice cultivation. He argues that in order for potential demand to take form, there had to be monetary purchasing power, because an insufficient currency supply would actually result in lower rice prices. At its conception, the Tokugawa *bakufu* had an abundance of metallic wealth, but by the 1650s production of Japan's gold- and silver mines could not keep up with demands. After all reserves (even those Ieyasu had designated to be used in case of a military emergency only) were minted, the Tokugawa government foresaw serious financial troubles. Since gold and silver were not only used for domestic currency, but also as commodity in the foreign trade, a century of extensive outflow now began to cause a serious strain on the available domestic currency supply and *bakufu* income, resulting among other things in the evolution of a widely used credit system and a slow-down of the economy by the 1680s.<sup>488</sup>

One way of remedying these difficulties was thought to be the expansion of the money supply, and the *bakufu* started minting coins of less metallic purity in 1695. The first debasement was meant to generate income for the *bakufu*, and with success, after exchanging the old coins for the debased coins the shogunate made a profit of 100,000 *kanme* in silver without inflating prices. Miyamoto argues that following the initial successes of this policy the *bakufu* issued another series of debasements early eighteenth century. However, this time prices started to soar, because supply could not keep up with the expanded amount of currency in circulation.<sup>489</sup> Especially detrimental to individual samurai (who were dependent on a fixed rice income) and peasants (who were dependent on the sale of mostly this crop) was the fact that rice prices inflated slower than those of other goods.<sup>490</sup> As Tessa Morris-Suzuki has rightly argued:

---

488 Miyamoto, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy", pp. 57-60; Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, p 98.

489 Miyamoto, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy", pp. 60-61.

490 For an example of what this meant in practice, we can turn to Arai Hakuseki, one of the leading thinkers in the ensuing economic debate and advisor to two shoguns. Hakuseki kept a diary on the exchange rates of converting his stipend into cash. From this diary we can see that

Inevitably, the expansion of agricultural and handicraft production, the growth of regional specialization, rise of the cities, monetarization of the economy, and fluctuation in prices gave rise to conflict between the Tokugawa ideology of social stability and the realities of the economic world.<sup>491</sup>

For, the oscillations in supply and demand caused prices of goods and services to fluctuate, and this development stood at the basis of a changing distribution of wealth from the landowning elite to the “lowly merchants” in the cities and of an erosion of the Tokugawa hereditary social order. According to Morris-Suzuki, this erosion of the Tokugawa hereditary social order was almost always of central concern to Tokugawa thinkers within the economical debates, whose viewpoints often reflected their own position within this order.<sup>492</sup>

There were many prominent thinkers, such as Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619-1691) and Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728) who placed the blame of society’s (economic) problems on the urban lifestyle of samurai and towns people (*chōnin* 町人) and advocated a return of the samurai to the land. However, it was Arai Hakuseki who saw his visions (albeit partly and in some cases only temporarily) implemented by the *bakufu*. Not long after the last debasements, voices within the *bakufu*, spearheaded by Hakuseki, began to opt for a currency restoration. Where other thinkers had always referred to the old Confucian dogma of agriculture as the source of all wealth, Hakuseki placed this source with precious metals, which he called the ‘bones of the country’, once lost they could never be regained. He had calculated that at the current outflow rate, all of Japan’s precious metals would be completely gone after only 107 years. Moreover, Hakuseki was one of the very few who blamed the inflation on the quantity of currency in circulation instead of (just) the quality. Hakuseki believed that when the value of goods and services is high, the value of currency is low and the value of currency is dependent on its quantity, thus a contraction of the currency supply by bringing the coins back to the original

---

before the debasement, in 1693, he could sell his rice for 22 *ryō* of gold per 100 *hyō* 俵 of rice, but by 1705, after the debasement, this amount had increased to 41 *ryō*. Within twelve years his money devalued by half! As a result, Hakuseki had to borrow money to pay even his rent. By 1705, Hakuseki’s debts equaled to about a third of his regular income. See: Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, pp. 103-104.

491 Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, p. 9.

492 Ibid.

metallic purity of the early Tokugawa period, should deflate prices. Moreover, Hakuseki convinced the *bakufu* to act as a benevolent ruler and not burden the people with this operation, but instead bear the costs itself.<sup>493</sup>

However, the currency restoration of 1714 proved to be an equally painful undertaking. The *bakufu* did not have the capacity to replace these coins all at once, nor the capacity to effectively regulate exchange rates between the two, which in turn gave rise to massive speculation by gold and silver merchants. Moreover, Ogyū Sorai argued that prices were ten to twenty times higher than forty or fifty years earlier because Hakuseki had not taken urban spending patterns into account. Production-, transport-, and transaction costs as well as local tariffs were added to the final price based on supply and demand, and since ordinary townspeople had the money to buy luxury items that in earlier times were only available to the elite, they were driving up demand and thus price. Reducing the money supply would not remedy this when credit remained widely and readily available.<sup>494</sup> That west Japan experienced repeated crop failure between 1714 and 1716 probably did not help matters either.

Still, it was not high prices that gave rise to concern. The currency restoration of 1714 eventually resulted in an economic stagnation and recession with falling rice prices that endangered the stability of the system. According to Miyamoto, the costs of the recoinage had greatly impacted the *bakufu* budget, calling for increased tax levies, a reduction of government spending, and samurai- as well as farmer spending in general. In combination with the contraction of the currency supply this resulted in a strong drop in demand for urban goods and services. Thus, demand for rice was dropping due to a decline in cash income of townspeople, but at the same time supply for rice increased as the daimyo and lower samurai could only exchange their rice for cash. The *bakufu* attempted to combat the situation with restrictive and stimulus policies such as a limit on tax rice, or the encouragement of using rice for sake brewing, and the use of a rice futures market to stabilize prices. However, as of yet these did not have the desired effect. Therefore, in the 1730s the *bakufu* once more issued a currency debasement. This raised prices and cash wages to a desirable level. With the exception of the

---

493 Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, pp. 18-20; Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, pp. 101, 111.

494 Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, pp. 20-21.

period surrounding the three major famines<sup>495</sup>, prices remained relatively stable for the remainder of the eighteenth century.<sup>496</sup>

### *The Dutch Response to Japanese Restrictions and Declining Profits*

For many decades, the trading post in Japan formed the spill around which the whole intra-Asian trade network of the VOC was founded. With silks, textiles, and animal skins from China, India, and Coromandel, the Company secured Japanese silver and gold, with which they again purchased the aforementioned commodities for sale in Japan. With the profits from these activities merchandise for the European markets was procured. However, as part of the Tokugawa economic policy to stabilize the domestic economy, late seventeenth century the *bakufu* aimed at limiting the foreign outflow of ever scarcer Japanese bullion, and offered copper as an alternative. However, it did not take long before domestic and foreign demand began to outweigh supply and eventually the *bakufu* decided to limit copper exports as well. More concretely, this means that in 1685, the shogunate had imposed a ceiling of 300.000 *taels* (260.000 *taels* for the VOC, and 40.000 *taels* in the private trade (*wakini* 脇荷) with individual Dutchmen) on the total annual trade volumes permitted to the Dutch in Nagasaki, as well as a quota on the export volumes of copper. In 1715, this practice was consolidated in a new decree. For the Dutch, the decree stipulated an annual ceiling of 300.000 *taels*, a copper quota of 15.000 *piculs* and a maximum of two ships that were allowed to call at Japan. These limits were reduced even further in subsequent years, dropping to a quota of 10.000 *piculs* and a ceiling of 300.000 *taels* in 1720 and to a quota of 10.000 *piculs* and a ceiling of 240.000 *taels* in 1733. In 1734, the Company had signed a contract with the *kaisho* that stipulated that it would deliver 1.000.000 pounds of powdered sugar and 400.000 pounds of sappan wood in exchange for 10.000 *piculs* of copper and the right to trade up to 240.000 *taels* in products. In order to keep trade attractive for the Company, the local authorities in Nagasaki agreed to an *agio* of 6.000 *taels* in 1738.<sup>497</sup>

495 These famines were the *Kyōhō no daikikin* 享保の大飢饉 (1732-1733), the *Tenmei no daikikin* 天明の大飢饉 (1782-1788), and the *Tempō no daikikin* 天保の大飢饉 (1833-1838).

496 Miyamoto, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy", pp. 62-65.

497 Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, pp. xxvii-xxviii; Shimada, *Japanese Copper*, p. 160; Ōta, *Sakoku jidai Nagasaki Bōeki-shi no kenkyū*, pp. 270-276, 532.

In the meantime, the VOC management in the Republic was very concerned about declining profits, and wondered whether the trading post in Japan could remain economically viable and otherwise would rather see it closed.<sup>498</sup> The debates surrounding this topic have occupied the minds of many contemporary Company employees as well as modern scholars. For instance, in the early 2000s, Kees Camfferman and Terence Cook have argued that the accounting books of the trading post presented three issues surrounding transfer pricing, currency conversion, and overhead allocation that caused these account books to represent a grim state of affairs not entirely concurrent with the actual economic situation. As for the first issue, Japanese copper was noted at cost in the Deshima account books and whether or not a profit was made became clear only after the copper was sold in India. As for the second issue, the Dutch at *Dejima* failed to properly adjust the currency conversion rate for Japanese currency debasements. To complicate matters, the Company used a 'heavy' European and a 'light' Asian guilder in its accounting books until in 1742 the 'light' guilder was abolished. However, conversion rates between the 'heavy' guilder and the Asian currencies were also not adjusted. To compensate for these inaccuracies accounting tricks were used such as assigning certain mark ups to the profit accounts of the Asian trading posts. As for the third issue, local costs were generally fairly detailed, however, it remained difficult to make a full-cost assessment, because the criteria by which cost percentages for shipping, interests and risk at sea were allotted to various Asian trading posts were not always clear. After adjusting the figures for these factors, Camfferman and Cook came to the conclusion that although profits were declining, it was not nearly as serious as the account books would suggest, and they deemed the decision to keep the trading post in Japan open as economically justified.<sup>499</sup>

Even without the modern figure adjustment, individuals in Batavia's High Government also realized that the profits of the trading post in Japan in and of itself were of secondary importance, because, for the time being, Japanese copper was still indispensable for the smooth operations of the

498 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 477 "Register van uittreksels uit Patriase Missiven van de Heren XVII aan Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden, voornamelijk betreffende Japan, 1734-1749, opgemaakt te Deshima", No page numbers.

499 Camfferman and Cook, "The Profits of the Dutch East India Company's Japan Trade", pp. 49, 53-55, 67, 69-74.

Company's intra-Asian trading network. Therefore, the focus of the mandate for the chiefs of the *Dejima* trading post was the acquisition of increasing quantities of copper, if possible, for a favorable price. A task that would prove most difficult. When, in 1741, the Company failed to deliver on the contract of 1734 due to a disruption of the local sugar industry by Chinese riots in Batavia the previous year, the shogunate sought to further reduce the Company's copper quota. The decision in 1744 to reduce this by half to 5,000 *piculs* caused the already heated tensions between the Dutch and the Japanese at Nagasaki to rise even further. Although the dismissal in 1745 of *Senior Councilor* Matsudaira Norisato 松平乗邑 (1686-1746), who was responsible for the Nagasaki trade, enabled a return to the old quota of 10,000 *piculs* of copper, the Dutch remained dissatisfied and kept pushing for more. In 1752-1753, therefore, a new contract was agreed upon with the Japanese in which the Company managed to secure 11,000 *piculs* of copper annually, with a total trade volume of 250,000 *taels*, and an agio of 6,000 *taels* in perpetuity. This new contract soothed the tempers of the 1740s and formed the basis of trade for the next couple of decades.<sup>500</sup> This outcome of events was the result of heavy negotiating and, importantly, a certain crucial level of understanding of the workings of *omote*, *uchi* and *naishō*.

In Nagasaki, central and local Japanese officials had the daunting task of having to maintain a balance between shogunal, local and personal profit. Just as they had done with the feudal lords, the shogunate had ordered the Nagasaki *bugyō* to alternate annually between Edo and Nagasaki as a means of keeping them in check. For the same reason, it had also decreed that the chief of the Dutch trading post had to be replaced every year. He could then return after an absence of at least one year. This could be repeated a maximum of three times, after which he could no longer come back to Japan. These measures were intended to prevent him from cultivating relationships with local daimyo and so prevent the emergence of local powerhouses utilizing foreign capital and weapons. In addition, the chief of the trading post was required to travel to Edo once a year on what was referred to as the *court journey*, with an entourage of two to three Dutchmen and a large number of Japanese, to pay homage to the shogun for allowing the Dutch to trade in Japan. This journey gave the chief the opportunity to meet several high-placed officials when presenting gifts.

---

500 Shimada, *Japanese Copper*, pp. 161-163; Suzuki, *Kinsei Nichiran bōeki-shi*, pp. 364-382, 387-406.



When entering the realm of politics and semi-politics in Tokugawa Japan, undertakings were largely dependent for their success or failure on their grasp of *omote* and *uchi*. On multiple occasions the Japanese had tried to make the proceedings regarding these concepts clear to the Dutch (though not always very explicitly). For example, in the 1630s, when the Dutch trading post was still in Hirado, the Portuguese had complained to the central authorities that VOC-pirates were attacking their ships between Nagasaki and Macao. As a response, the shogunate declared that Dutch ships had to wait twenty days after the last Portuguese galleon had sailed. The Dutch protested to the Nagasaki *bugyō*, pointing out the dangers of the monsoon when departing so late in the year, but to no avail. The *bugyō* told them these were regulations from Edo and there was nothing he could do. The *daikan* in Nagasaki, Suetsugu Heizō Shigefusa, on the other hand spoke to the Nagasaki *bugyō* on behalf of the Dutch and managed to reduce the waiting time to fifteen days. However, at the same time the Dutch had also sent an official petition to Edo, asking for a five-day reduction on their waiting time. Heizō told them if only they had not involved the authorities in Edo their ships would already be leaving five days earlier, but now there was nothing he could do and they had to wait for the response from Edo.<sup>501</sup>

After the Dutch moved to *Dejima* in Nagasaki, they were told that, from then on, all communications had to go through the Nagasaki *bugyō* and the commissioners for foreigners in Edo.<sup>502</sup> In addition, the Nagasaki *bugyō* ‘warned’ the Dutch not to send any lengthy letters to Edo with requests for improvements in their trading conditions. Rather, as one of the mayors explained, one could accomplish more by informally requesting things orally.<sup>503</sup> More often than not, however, with tensions rising high during trade negotiations and the local trade organizations seeking to drive hard bargains, the chief of the trading post tended to plead cases directly to the Nagasaki

501 DGNEJ, 1: pp. 189-195, 263-264.

502 The commissioners for foreigners (*D. commissarissen der vreemdelingen*) consisted of two persons, who were responsible for overseeing affairs in Edo and Nagasaki (mostly during the *court journey*). Generally, one of the Nagasaki mayors presiding over the trade procedures of the year in question, was usually appointed as one of the commissioners for foreigners, and the other was selected from among the superintendents of works (*sakuji bugyō* 作事奉行), the inspectors of religion (*shūmon aratame-yaku* 宗門改役), or the grand inspectors (*Ōmetsuke*). See: Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, pp. 804-805.

503 DGNEJ, 6: p. 67; DGNEJ, 9: p. 52.

*bugyō*. This, as the interpreters were well aware, did the chief's cause more harm than good, given that the *bugyō* were of the samurai caste and were not supposed to become directly involved in trade. Petitioning in this way was in itself, therefore, a breach of *omote* and, as a result, disputes commonly ended up being settled in favor of the interpreters and the city mayors. In later years, the Dutch chiefs warned their successors about these actions, especially in the seventeenth century. During the eighteenth century, however, the office of the Nagasaki governor changed and, by then, Nagasaki governors usually had experience as finance officials within the shogunate. This allowed them to become more involved in Tokugawa foreign financial policy, while their official day-to-day tasks in the Nagasaki trade also became increasingly related to finance.<sup>504</sup> When the Dutch felt their voices were not being heard in Nagasaki, they also tried to circumvent the local authorities by petitioning the *Senior Council* directly during the *court journey* to Edo.

In Tokugawa urban society, all (Dutch) requests ideally had to go through the chain of command: interpreters (*tsūji*), district heads (*otona*), mayors (*machidoshiyori*), commissioners for foreigners, Nagasaki governors (*Nagasaki bugyō*) and the *Senior Council* (*rōjū*). Firstly, and depending on the seriousness of the case, an attempt had to be made to resolve the problem informally at each respective level. This was usually done orally and, as such, no Japanese records are likely to have been drafted. However, the *Deshima Diaries* (*dagregisters*) kept by the chief of the Dutch trading post are a great source for finding evidence of such conversations. Skipping a link in the chain could be seen as illegal petitioning.<sup>505</sup> Even though the futility of making illegal petitions should have become painfully clear over the years, the Dutch nevertheless – to the irritation of the Japanese – remained quick to petition in Edo if things did not go their way in Nagasaki. In the 1720s and 1730s, for example, the Company servants in Nagasaki tried to negotiate a higher trade ceiling by constantly petitioning in Edo, and accompanying their petitions with lavish gifts for the *Senior Councilors* and the shogun. Repeatedly, the interpreters told the Dutch that the high officials in Edo did not concern themselves with issues of trade, and that these kinds of petitions would only aggravate them and the Nagasaki *bugyō*. Nevertheless, the Dutch kept pursuing this course and, in doing so,

504 Suzuki, *Nagasaki Bugyō*, pp. 10-17, 62-63, 68-71.

505 Uchida, "Protest and the Tactics of Direct Remonstrance", pp. 87, 91-92.

seriously enraged their Nagasaki hosts, who in turn tried to obstruct them on every occasion.<sup>506</sup>

### 6.3 A New Hope for the Dutch-Japanese Trade, 1741-1745

#### *A Change of Tactics*

By the time the 1740s came around, the Dutch had decided to change their strategy. In 1741, Jacob van der Waeijen (1668?-1761), chief of the Dutch trading post, told the interpreters that he had received orders from Batavia to return there with all the cargo unless he was able to arrange higher prices for the Company's goods and a larger quantity of copper. In addition, he refused to unload the ships unless the interpreters provided him with a signed statement guaranteeing they would meet his demands. The interpreters protested that it was not customary to negotiate prices before the ships were unloaded, upon which Van der Waeijen showed them a similar statement that they themselves had handed to chief Gerardus Bernardus Visscher (1701-1772) on September 6, 1738. Eventually, after much to-ing and fro-ing, the interpreters gave in and complied.<sup>507</sup>

Weeks later, when trade was about to commence, the interpreters complained that the Dutch had imported only half the contracted amount of sugar and sappan wood. Hence, the goods would fetch lower prices, and the agio would be reduced to 4.000 *taels*. Van der Waeijen immediately stopped all trading activities and told the interpreters that if they did not honor their statement, he would load everything back onto the ships and leave for Batavia. The interpreters replied that if he did not agree to the stipulated terms, he would not get any agio. Van der Waeijen simply urged the interpreters to ask permission from the proper authorities to reload the ships so he could depart. Over the next two days, the interpreters claimed that they had engaged in negotiations with the city mayor responsible for trade that year, but were unable to change the Japanese bid. During renewed negotiations with the interpreters, Van der Waeijen then asked for last year's import prices and an

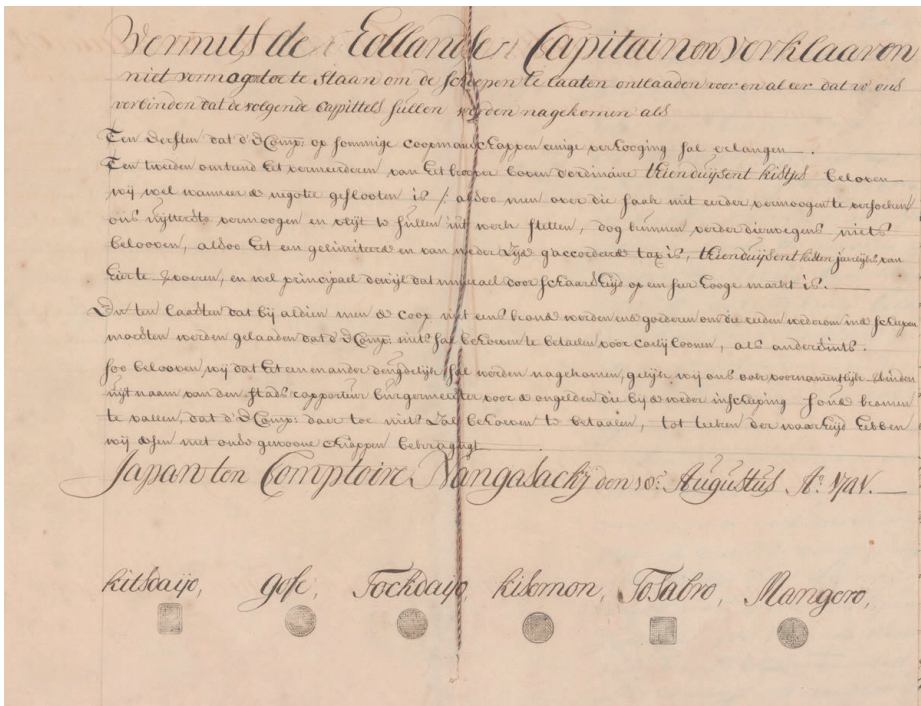
506 Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

507 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 151 "Dagregister 1740-1741", pp. 156-158, 161-168.

agio increase to 12.000 *taels*, which he later lowered to 9.000 *taels*. Seeing, however, as the Dutch had failed to honor their import contract, the city mayor did not budge. Van der Waeijen then demanded at least the original agio of 6.000 *taels* on the grounds that even though this agio had started in 1738 as an exception, they had received it every year since then and it had thus become custom and practice.<sup>508</sup>

This remark, in combination with Van der Waeijen's preparations regarding the written statement of 1738, shows that he, or at least someone else at the trading post, knew how *naishō* came into being. Even the smallest change in behavior or protocol could ultimately become custom in the annual, monthly or daily routine. On October 3, the Japanese interpreters then asked the chief whether he would accept the remaining 2.000 *taels* for the agio from a different source. Van der Waeijen refused, given that accepting the remainder from a different source would be the same as accepting the new standard

Illustration 2. Signed Statement by the Japanese Interpreters, 1741



Source: NA, NFJ, inv. 8 Resolutiën en sententiën, no page numbers.

and getting the remainder by means of an exception. When the interpreters returned the next day, they declared that the city mayor had agreed to an increase in price, that they (the interpreters) would pay the difference out of their own pockets and that the agio would consist of 6.000 *taels*. This, they told Van der Waeijen, was the last time the Dutch would receive an agio (in reality, however, the practice continued). Eventually, Van der Waeijen agreed, calculating that now he would at least make a profit for the Company.<sup>509</sup>

In the years to come, similar tactics were used by successive chiefs of the Dutch trading post. Even when the Dutch could not fulfil their part of the contract signed in 1734, they nevertheless insisted, upon arrival of the ships, on a written statement from the interpreters in which the latter consented to Dutch demands for the original agio, higher import prices and 10.000 chests of copper before unloading the ships. In this way, they created a *naishō* of their own<sup>510</sup> and managed to hold on to the old trading conditions for at least one more year. Then, on January 17, 1743, Nagasaki officials announced to the chief (Van der Waeijen again) that word had arrived from *Senior Councilor* Matsudaira Norisato that, in light of the copper shortage, the quotas for the Company would be reduced by half for seven to eight years from 1744. Van der Waeijen responded that due to disappointing profits, the High Government in Batavia was considering closing the trading post in Japan and that these new conditions would undoubtedly be a decisive factor for his superiors.<sup>511</sup>

This argument unsettled the interpreters, who requested the chief to write his statement in triplicate, one for the councilors in Edo and two for the Nagasaki *bugyō*. According to Van der Waeijen, the interpreter Kafuku Manjirō 加福万次郎, alias Kizō 喜藏, explained to him beforehand that if he refused to write these requests, they dared not raise this subject in Edo without the explicit approval of the Nagasaki *bugyō*, thus, making clear once again that any request to the court *had* to go through the proper chain of command. The statement that Van der Waeijen handed in the next day requested that these new regulations should be revoked.<sup>512</sup> On February 4, the interpreters and the *metsuke* Noma Kiyobei 野間寛

509 Ibid., pp. 203-205.

510 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 152 “Dagregister 1741-1742”, pp. 134, 160-165.

511 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 153, “Dagregister 1742-1743”, pp. 31-33.

512 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 153, “Dagregister 1742-1743”, pp. 33-34, 36; NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 10, “Resolutie, translaeten, requesten, antwoorden, van anno 1743-1747”, No page numbers, see letter: ‘Aan de Hoog Edele Groot Mogende Heeren Rijksraaden van den Alderdoorlugtste en

兵衛 (1693?-1769) informed him that governor Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景彪 (1683?-1755) had received another letter from Matsudaira Norisato, stating the following:

First, Your Honor knows by the latest received orders that the court has reduced the copper transportation by the Dutch for some time. Second, this year the Company's trade shall be conducted in the same manner as last year, but next year they can only trade half of this year's limit. Third, in light of this, the Company should only send one ship and if these changes bring about too many losses for the Company, it is up to their discretion whether to leave these lands entirely or not. Fourth, in the coming year the Company is not permitted to present any matters concerning trade at court.<sup>513</sup>

Van der Waeijen and his second-in-command, Jacob Balde (dates unknown), noticed that points three and four looked like immediate replies to their statement of January 18. The fact that the interpreters were not the least bit upset by this letter also made them suspect that this statement did not come from Edo, but had instead been fabricated locally by Kageatsu in order to put an end to the constant Dutch demands.<sup>514</sup> The *Tsūkō ichiran* includes a communiqué, dated *Kanpō* 2, the 11<sup>th</sup> month 寛保二年十一月 (late November 1742), from the finance superintendent (*kanjō bugyō* 勘定奉行) to the Nagasaki *bugyō*, which indeed states that the Dutch quotas would be halved by 1743 or 1744 for seven to eight years, but there is no mention of limiting Dutch trade to one ship, to their leaving Japan or to their avoiding petitioning the court.<sup>515</sup> Given also that it took at least twenty days for post to travel between Nagasaki and Edo, the assessment of Van der Waeijen and Balde would seem correct.

During the *court journey* of 1743, Van der Waeijen tried – unsuccessfully – to gain some information on these new regulations and the response to his statement of January 18. He blamed this failure on the incompetence of the

---

Grootmagtigsten Keijser van het Vermaarde Keijserrijk Japan [signed by chief Jacob van der Waeijen, January 18, 1743 and sealed with the Company's seal].

513 NL-HaNA, NEJ, inv. 10, “Resolutie, translaeten, requesten, antwoorden, van anno 1743-1747”, No page numbers, see letter: ‘Extract translaat uijt een brief van den heer beschrijver van Nagasakij den rijxraad Matsdaijro Sacon Siogin Samma aan den heer Nagasackisen gouverneur Tatsoeckij Mattasiro Awa no cammi samma [signed February 4, 1743]’. (English translation by J.J.A. Knoest).

514 NL-HaNA, NEJ, inv. 153, “Dagregister 1742-1743”, pp. 49-51.

515 *TKIR*, 4: p. 307.

interpreters. They were constantly contradicting themselves, owing, according to their own explanation, to ‘language mistakes’.<sup>516</sup> Was this really due to incompetence? Throughout two hundred years of *Deshima Diaries* we find many entries about the allegedly abysmal language skills of several Japanese interpreters, and yet somehow, they always managed to function. A few other observations can be made here. Firstly, the Japanese constantly tried to make clear to the Dutch that they were not supposed to send petitions directly to the *Senior Councilors* in Edo. Secondly, if the Nagasaki *bugyō* or the interpreters were indeed responsible for partial alterations to these new regulations, it is inconceivable that the interpreters would have intentionally risked letting anything come out into the open at court. Thirdly, the court journey was part of an *omote* situation, in which the Dutch were supposed to show their obedience and submission to the shogun. Requests pertaining to trade issues did not belong in that space and had to be addressed locally with the proper authorities. Therefore, the more likely explanation would be that the interpreters labored vigorously to keep *uchi* situations from crossing over into the *omote* sphere in order to protect the Nagasaki trade.

Come the trading season, the Dutch had not even imported sufficient volumes of sugar and sappan wood to fill their quota of 240.000 *taels*, and the Japanese consequently intended to withhold the *agio*. Van der Waeijen made the excuse that it took time to repair the sugar mills lost in the Chinese Revolt of 1740 and the Japanese would have to be patient because they would soon receive more than enough sugar. He made his usual strong demands, adding that the remainder of the previous year’s copper quota had to be delivered alongside the current year’s quota. The interpreters did not care much for his explanations and told him that, in light of the situation, the *bugyō* and city mayor considered that they did not need to provide the Dutch with the usual ballast of 2.000 copper chests and that 1.500 would suffice. Van der Waeijen referred to their written statement and once again repeated his sugar mill story, but all to no avail. He then claimed he could not in good conscience let the ships leave because having insufficient ballast chests would increase their risk at sea. Van der Waeijen wrote that if he gave in now, it would be near impossible to deviate from this quota in future, once again demonstrating that he knew how *naishō* arose. During the subsequent weeks, the Japanese

516 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 153, “Dagregister 1742-1743”, pp. 69-77.

refused to budge, but after Van der Waeijen halted unloading for a few days, the interpreters reported that the city mayor had decided to give in to Van der Waeijen's demand for 2.000 chests of ballast.<sup>517</sup>

After the unloading, the Japanese immediately receded from their written statement, once again offering prices below those of the previous year, arguing that the merchandise was of poor quality. Van der Waeijen acted surprised since they had already verified the quality and had agreed to match their prices. The interpreters then claimed the authorities were willing to raise some prices to the previous year's level. This, however, was not acceptable to Van der Waeijen, who halted procedures and threatened to sail back to Batavia. In order to resolve the deadlock, the interpreters advised him to put his requests in writing. Van der Waeijen replied that this was pointless since the Nagasaki authorities usually refused to accept them anyway (as had already happened on several occasions during that trading season) and so simply asked for permission to reload the ships and depart. The startled interpreters returned a few days later with the message that the authorities had raised some prices and allowed an *agio* of 6.000 *taels*. Van der Waeijen decided to close the deal. Before departing, however, he received news that the new trading regulations had not been revoked. Trying to salvage what he could, he asked for the costs of the Company's stay in Japan (including gifts) to be reduced by half as well. The interpreters promised they would look into it.<sup>518</sup>

In 1744, Van der Waeijen's successor, David Brouwer (1706-1748), had the daunting task of having to continue negotiations to improve the Company's trade in this new situation. When the ships arrived in August, the interpreters read the Dutch a shogunal proclamation in which their annual trade limit was set at 120.000 *taels* and the export quota of copper at 5.000 chests, but in which the presents for the high officials in Edo and the authorities in Nagasaki had likewise been halved. The Company was free to arrive with one or two ships. If the Dutch did not obey these orders, they would all have to leave Japan. A written reply was required, and on August 19 the Dutch council denounced the shogunal orders. Brouwer demanded an increase in import prices and 12.000 chests of copper on a *pro rata* basis or they would leave without trading.<sup>519</sup> On

517 Ibid., pp. 162-169, 175-185, 187-197.

518 Ibid., pp. 210-212, 215-223, 226-229, 239-241.

519 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 154 "Dagregister 1743-1744", pp. 139-142, 144; NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 10,



August 25, junior interpreter Nishi Zensaburō 西善三郎 (?-1768) came to talk to Brouwer in private and asked him, on behalf of the city mayor, whether the Dutch would be content with 6.000 chests of copper. Otherwise, they would have to leave Japan and return the trading passes granted by shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to the Dutch in 1609. Brouwer answered that 6.000 chests were not enough and that the Dutch would leave Japan if the shogun so ordered, but that he was not authorized to hand over the passes. This time, it looked like the Dutch really would be leaving since the interpreters informed them that the *bugyō* could not alter shogunal orders and had written about the Dutch decision to court. But while the Dutch were preparing for a final departure, the interpreters came to inform Brouwer in the second week of September that everyone in Nagasaki would like the Dutch to stay and continue trading in Japan. Governor Matsunami Masafusa 松波正房 (1683?-1746) would supply them, on private account, with 1.000 chests of copper, over and above their quota of 5.000 chests, and the following year they would also receive an unspecified amount of extra copper. In light of the shogunal orders, this was all the interpreters could do. They also promised to raise import prices and to forgo their commissions from the copper merchants that year (thus reducing the copper prices). Brouwer and the council decided to accept these conditions.<sup>520</sup> Interestingly, the Japanese always told the Dutch that shogunal orders were absolute and had to be obeyed. By granting the Dutch an extra 1.000 *piculs* of copper the *bugyō* was either, therefore, illegally breaking an *omote* rule or had more leeway in providing additional copper by means of *naishō* than had hitherto been assumed.

### *Deteriorating Conditions*

In the meantime, Van der Waeijen returned in 1744-1745 for a third term as chief of the trading post. As soon as the new Nagasaki *bugyō*, Tatsuki Kageatsu, was installed, Van der Waeijen sent a request for an additional 15.000 *piculs* worth of copper. Discussions about this request continued throughout the rest

---

“Resolutie, translaeten, requesten, antwoorden, van anno 1743-1747”, No page numbers, see letter: ‘Aan den E: agtbare Heer Matsunami Bisen no Cammi Samma gouverneur van Nagasackij [signed August 19, 1744 by David Brouwer, Jacob van der Waeijen, Sijbrand Hoomis, Jacob Balde, and Jan van den Briel]’.

520 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 154 “Dagregister 1743-1744”, pp. 145-153, 155-164, 166-170, 172-176.

of the year, with the Japanese stating they could not comply because the yields of the copper mines were declining, and Van der Waeijen responding that the Company's profits in Japan were also declining and it would be senseless to continue such a trade. During the *court journey*, the *bugyō*, the commissioners for foreigners, and their secretaries simply got up and left whenever Van der Waeijen was at court for a ceremony and tried to rekindle the copper matter. When the trading season came around, Van der Waeijen told the interpreters that Batavia had decided to send three ships and would be requesting 15.000 chests of copper, or an equivalent on a *pro rata* basis, for the goods they imported, and that otherwise the Company would stop trading with Japan.<sup>521</sup>

On September 7, 1745, senior interpreter Kizō told the Dutch council that after the first ship had arrived, governor Kageatsu had sent a letter to Edo asking the court for instructions and that, two days ago, they had received a response. Kizō took out a document written in Japanese and stating, according to Kizō, that if three ships arrived, they would be allowed to unload, but the Company would not receive more than 9.000 chests of copper. The remainder of the merchandise would be paid for in cash. Van der Waeijen told Kizō that he thought this document was of their own fabrication and had not originated at court because, in the previous two years, the court and governor Tatsuki Kageatsu had both promised that if the Dutch imported 260.000 *taels* worth of goods, they would receive 10.000 chests of copper. As this year's value amounted to 310.000 *taels*, he expected to receive copper on a *pro rata* basis and that, in the absence of better profits, the Company would close the trading post altogether. Van der Waeijen threatened, moreover, that the Company would dispatch ships directly to Edo to complain. Kizō remonstrated that governor Kageatsu would have kept his promise were it not for the court, and that it was impossible to change shogunal orders. Van der Waeijen replied that this was a very convenient excuse to use whenever the *bugyō* went back on their word.<sup>522</sup>

---

521 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 155 "Dagregister 1744-1745", pp. 64-68, 93-110, 112, 119-120, 204-206, 216, 220-222.

522 HaNA, NFJ, inv. 154 "Dagregister 1743-1744", pp. 204-205; NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 155 "Dagregister 1744-1745", pp. 224-226.

Table 4. Japanese-Dutch Trade Negotiation Parties 1741-1758

Book Year	Nagasaki Governors (Nagasaki Bugyō 長崎奉行)		Chiefs of the Dutch Trading Post	
	Departure for Edo	Arrival in Nagasaki	Old	New
1740-1741	Hagiwara Yoshimasa 萩原美雅 (1669-1745)	Kubota Tadaō 窪田忠任 (1674?-1753)	Thomas van Rhee (1696-1745)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*
1741-1742	Kubota Tadaō 窪田忠任 (1674?-1753)	Hagiwara Yoshimasa 萩原美雅 (1669-1745)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*	Thomas van Rhee (1696-1745)
1742-1743	Hagiwara Yoshimasa 萩原美雅 (1669-1745)	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	Thomas van Rhee (1696-1745)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*
1743-1744	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	Matsunami Masafusa 松波正房 (1683?-1746)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*	David Brouwer (1706-1748)
1744-1745	Matsunami Masafusa 松波正房 (1683?-1746)	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	David Brouwer (1706-1748)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*
1745-1746	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	Matsunami Masafusa 松波正房 (1683?-1746)	Jacob van der Weaijen (1668?-1761)*	Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749)
1746-1747	Matsunami Masafusa 松波正房 (1683?-1746)	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749)	Jacob Balde (dates unknown)
1747-1748	Tatsuki Kageatsu 田付景麿 (1683?-1755)	Abe Kazunobu 安部一信 (1691?-1767)	Jacob Balde (dates unknown)	Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749)
1748-1749	Abe Kazunobu 安部一信 (1691?-1767)	Matsura Nobumasa 松浦信正 (1696-1769)	Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749)	Jacob Balde (dates unknown)
1749-1750	Matsura Nobumasa 松浦信正 (1696-1769)	Abe Kazunobu 安部一信 (1691?-1767)	Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)
1750-1751	Abe Kazunobu 安部一信 (1691?-1767)	Matsura Nobumasa 松浦信正 (1696-1769)	Jacob Balde (dates unknown)	Abraham van Suchtelen (1710-1760)
1751-1752	Matsura Nobumasa 松浦信正 (1696-1769)	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)
1752-1753	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Ōhashi Chikayoshi 大橋親義 (1706-1762)	Abraham van Suchtelen (1710-1760)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)
1753-1754	Ōhashi Chikayoshi 大橋親義 (1706-1762)	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)	David Boelen (1720-1775)
1754-1755	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Tsubouchi Sadafusa 坪内定方 (1711?-1761)	David Boelen (1720-1775)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)
1755-1756	Tsubouchi Sadafusa 坪内定方 (1711?-1761)	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?)	David Boelen (1720-1775)
1756-1757	Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759)	Tsubouchi Sadafusa 坪内定方 (1711?-1761)	David Boelen (1720-1775)	Herbert Vermeulen (1738-1783)
1757-1758	Tsubouchi Sadafusa 坪内定方 (1711?-1761)	Masaki Yasutsumu 正木康恒 (1710?-1787)	Herbert Vermeulen (1738-1783)	David Boelen (1720-1775)
1758-1759	Masaki Yasutsumu 正木康恒 (1710?-1787)	Tsubouchi Sadafusa 坪内定方 (1711?-1761)	Herbert Vermeulen (1738-1783)	Johannes Reijnouts (1728-1789)

Notes: On the Japanese side, a year followed by a question mark indicates that this year was not found in the sources, but is calculated based on related information. \* There remains a rather small doubt whether the Jacob van der Weaijen found in the Amsterdam City Archives is the same person under investigation. Seeing as there was only one Jacob van der Weaijen born in Amsterdam, and if we consider that Van der Weaijen went to Asia in the function of junior merchant (*D. onderkoopman*) combined with the note he was the oldest Extra-Ordinarius Councillor in Batavia, chances are high it concerns the same person.

Sources: NIKNDR, pp. 196-220; Van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, pp. 163-168, 223-224; Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, pp. 839-868. Het Utrechts Archief, archief 711, inv. nr. 21, "Utrecht Waalse Dopen 1671-1811", fol. 85; SAA, archief 5001, inv. nr. 66, "DTB Dopen 1663-1677", p. 127; SAA, archief 5001, inv. nr. 79 "DTB Dopen 1697-1711", fol. 231v nr. 18; SAA, archief 5001, inv. nr. 109 "DTB Dopen 1704-1719", fol. 121 nr. 21; Archief Delft, archief 14, inv. nr. 13 "Dooptboeken Oude Kerk, 1704-1734", fol. 32v.

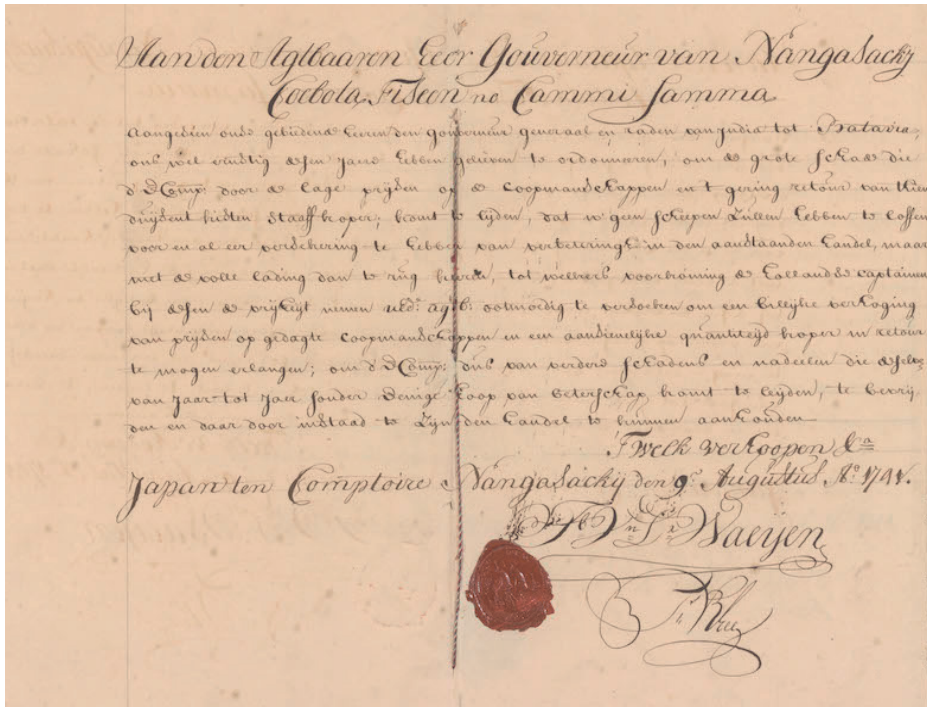
Table 5. Intermediaries in the Dutch-Japan Trade, 1741-1758

Book Year	Senior Reporting Interpreter ( <i>Nenban Ōtsūji</i> 年番大通詞)	Junior Reporting Interpreter ( <i>Nenban Kotsūji</i> 年番小通詞)
1740-1741	Nakayama Kizaemon 中山喜左衛門 (1697?-1747)	Shige Shichirōzaemon 茂七郎左衛門 (?-1748)
1741-1742	Kafuku Manjirō 加福万次郎 (dates unknown)*	Suenaga Tokuzaeon 末永徳左衛門 (1678-1749)
		Yoshio Sadajirō 吉雄定次郎 (1724-1800)***
1742-1743	Imamura Gen'emon 今村源右衛門 (1719-1773)	Nishi Kichidayū 西吉太夫 (1701-1768)
1743-1744	Suenaga Tokuzaeon 末永徳左衛門 (1678-1749)	Narabayashi Jūemon 榎林重右衛門 (1720-1777)
1744-1745	Namura Shinpachi 名村進八 (1720?-1788)**	Shige Shichirōzaemon 茂七郎左衛門 (?-1748)
1745-1746	Kafuku Kizō 加福喜藏 (dates unknown)*	Yoshio Sadajirō 吉雄定次郎 (1724-1800)***
1746-1747	Imamura Gen'emon 今村源右衛門 (1719-1773)	Nishi Kichidayū 西吉太夫 (1701-1768)
1747-1748	Shige Shichirōzaemon 茂七郎左衛門 (?-1748)	Narabayashi Jūemon 榎林重右衛門 (1720-1777)
	Yoshio Kōzaemon 吉雄幸左衛門 (1724-1800)***	
1748-1749	Namura Katsueon 名村勝右衛門 (1720?-1788)**	Nishi Zensaburō 西善三郎 (?-1768)
1749-1750	Imamura Gen'emon 今村源右衛門 (1719-1773)	Moriyama Kinzaemon 森山金左衛門 (1721-1767)
1750-1751	Yoshio Sadajirō 吉雄定次郎 (1724-1800)***	Namura Sandayū 名村三太夫 (1714?-1762)
1751-1752	Narabayashi Jūemon 榎林重右衛門 (1720-1777)	Nishi Zensaburō 西善三郎 (?-1768)
1752-1753	Nishi Zensaburō 西善三郎 (?-1768)	Moriyama Kinzaemon 森山金左衛門 (1721-1767)
1753-1754	Namura Katsueon 名村勝右衛門 (1720?-1788)**	Namura Sandayū 名村三太夫 (1714?-1762)
1754-1755	Imamura Gen'emon 今村源右衛門 (1719-1773)	Narabayashi Jūemon 榎林重右衛門 (1720-1777)
1755-1756	Yoshio Kōzaemon 吉雄幸左衛門 (1724-1800)***	Moriyama Kinzaemon 森山金左衛門 (1721-1767)
1756-1757	Nishi Zensaburō 西善三郎 (?-1768)	Namura Sandayū 名村三太夫 (1714?-1762)
1757-1758	Namura Katsueon 名村勝右衛門 (1720?-1788)**	Narabayashi Jūemon 榎林重右衛門 (1720-1777)
1758-1759	Imamura Gen'emon 今村源右衛門 (1719-1773)	Moriyama Kinzaemon 森山金左衛門 (1721-1767)

Notes: Every year, two prominent members of the interpreters' guild were appointed *nenban tsūji* 年番通詞. They were in charge of the official communications between the Dutch trading post and the Nagasaki governors, as well as overseeing trading procedures.

\*: This is the same person; \*\*: This is the same person; \*\*\*: This is the same person.

Sources: Katagiri, *Ōranda tsūji no kenkyū*, pp. 91-93, 136-138; Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, pp. 839-868.

Illustration 3. Statement by Jacob van der Waeijen to the Nagasaki *Bugyō*, 1741

NA, NFJ, inv. 8 Resolutiën en sententiën, no page numbers.

What followed was another impasse. On October 7, 1745, interpreter Kizō told Van der Waeijen on behalf of the *bugyō* and Nagasaki *daikan* Takagi Sakuemon 高木作右衛門<sup>523</sup> (1699?-1760) that if the Dutch were not trading, there was no need to give presents at court. Van der Waeijen told him that, nevertheless, they would unload the presents, for if they did not trade it was because of the promises broken by the Nagasaki governor and not because the shogun forbade them to trade.<sup>524</sup> Then, on October 13, 1745, senior interpreter Nakayama Kizaemon 中山喜左衛門 (1697?-1747) told Van der Waeijen in private that he had news from Edo. Although the Dutch could not take away more than 9,000 chests of copper that year, if Van der Waeijen's successor, Jan Louis de Win (1702-1749), filed a request for 11,000 chests of copper, the *bugyō* would support it at court, and if Van der Waeijen decided to unload the ships, Kizaemon

523 This was Takagi Sakuemon (I) also known as Tadayo 忠與, Genjūrō 源十郎 and Sakudayū 作太夫. Blussé et al., *The Deshima Diaries Marginalia 1740-1800*, 863.

524 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 155 "Dagregister 1744-1745", pp. 247-248.

would personally give him a sum of 500 *koban*. Van der Waeijen writes in the diary that he did not believe Kizaemon came on behalf of the *bugyō*, but rather that he and his colleagues were scheming to bribe him of their own accord. Yet, he writes, he did not let on and politely refused the bribe, planning to store this information for use at the right moment. Van der Waeijen displayed his insight once again by wondering why Kageatsu was being so difficult. Given that, the previous year, the former *bugyō* Masafusa had granted them copper over and above the quota from Edo, he assumed the Nagasaki *bugyō* had the authority to resolve such matters at their own discretion.<sup>525</sup>

The following day, all the interpreters came to the island, claiming to have received a letter from Edo stating that if the Dutch refused to obey orders, the court would not accept presents next year and all Dutchmen would have to leave Japan. The interpreters asked the Dutch whether they were willing to trade. Van der Waeijen told them that he and his superiors were rather suspicious about these orders and wanted a translation, signed and stamped by the *bugyō*, before giving a definitive answer. The *Deshima dagregisters* mention that as soon as the Dutch turned their backs, the interpreters burst out laughing. It was clear to Van der Waeijen that these orders did not come from Edo, but that Kageatsu had written them himself. The Dutch had stated on September 28, that they would give presents at court even if they did not trade and then, on October 13, these alleged shogunal orders arrived. This means the post would have taken only 14 or 15 days to arrive, and that was assuming that the reply had been written on the same day, which Van der Waeijen doubted. The interpreters had previously told the Dutch on many occasions that it took at least 20 days for post to go between Nagasaki and Edo. Van der Waeijen consequently told the Japanese to unload the presents for the shogun and that the Dutch would leave without trading. His successor and the usual staff would stay behind. The next day, the interpreters claimed that the *bugyō* refused to provide a signed translation of the 'statement from Edo'. Van der Waeijen took this as confirmation of his suspicions and so stuck to his demands. Over the next few days, the interpreters frantically tried to get the Dutch to comply and start trading. According to Van der Waeijen, they were getting increasingly nervous and needed drinks to pull themselves together. Van der Waeijen tells us that he heard from the Japanese servants on the island

---

525 Ibid., pp. 255-258.

that if the Dutch left without trading, governor Kageatsu and the interpreters would have to commit ritual suicide to save themselves and their families from disgrace.<sup>526</sup>

In the meantime, the people of Nagasaki and the neighboring daimyo must have noticed something was wrong. By then, the trading season should have been almost over, but it had not yet even started. According to rumors Van der Waeijen heard, the lord of Hizen was highly displeased upon hearing the complaints from the Nagasaki inhabitants about how Kageatsu was treating the Dutch. Van der Waeijen also wrote that the lord of Hizen had secretly communicated to him that he had ordered the *bugyō* not to let the Dutch leave, and had left for Edo to ask why the Dutch did not receive their promised 10,000 chests of copper. When the new *bugyō* Matsunami Masafusa arrived in Nagasaki, people trusted the matter would finally be resolved. However, the deadlock continued. Sometime later, interpreter Kizō asked for a piece of paper on which to write Van der Waeijen's statement from October 13, together with the names of those who would stay on *Dejima*. Van der Waeijen refused and inferred from Kizō's request that since the interpreters were no longer insisting on every Dutchman being removed (as stated in the alleged shogunal order), they would soon give in on the other issues as well. During the next few days, the interpreters stuck to 9,000 *piculs* of copper, but Kageatsu granted permission for De Win and other Company servants to remain on *Dejima*. To Van der Waeijen, this confirmed that, under the guise of shogunal orders, which he had mentioned as never being contradicted, the *bugyō* had for years done as they pleased to the detriment of the Company in Japan. Therefore, he thought it advisable for the Dutch not to give in.<sup>527</sup> Eventually, the Japanese moved and promised 1,000 *piculs* of copper over and above the quota of 9,000 *piculs*; the Dutch would get a higher price for their goods and, if the deal did not materialize, they would be exempt from the costs of unloading and reloading the ships.<sup>528</sup>

Again, the Dutch showed a remarkable knowledge of Japanese customs. Firstly, by recognizing the wrongful use of shogunal authority and, secondly, by realizing that holding out could draw *uchi* matters into the *omote* sphere,

---

526 Ibid., pp. 260-272.

527 Ibid., pp. 284-285, 287-289.

528 Ibid., pp. 303-309.

which was potentially life-threatening for the Japanese involved. Indeed, Van der Waeijen was convinced he had won a major battle and that, in future, the *bugyō* would refrain from using (fake or altered) shogunal orders to get their way.<sup>529</sup> Nothing, however, could have been further from the truth, as the Japanese were about to go on the offensive.

## 6.4 The Japanese Empire Strikes Back, ca. 1747-1752

### *On the Edge*

Whereas in the early 1740s the Dutch had resorted to demanding signed statements from the Japanese, before unloading the ships, that they would honor Dutch demands, the Japanese later started to use the same tactics themselves. In 1747, governor Tatsuki Kageatsu refused the Dutch ships permission to enter Nagasaki's roadstead unless they gave assurances that they would adhere to that year's trading conditions, would not ask for a copper increase and would refrain from petitioning at court. On July 29, 1747, all the interpreters came to the island on behalf of Kageatsu and told the Dutch they had new orders from Edo; these stated that as soon as the ships arrived at the *Papenberg*, the chief of the trading post had to inform the *bugyō* whether the Dutch were willing to trade for 11,000 chests of copper. If the *bugyō* did not receive an answer, the ships had to remain at anchor. Chief Jacob Balde replied that he could not submit to this practice. The papers from Batavia had to be transferred to him by his successor himself and then to be read at a meeting of the council before he could possibly give a reply. Besides, having the ships anchored off the *Papenberg* at that time of year, in the gale season, was irresponsible and dangerous. The next day, the interpreters returned to the island, saying that upon arrival of the ships the *bugyō* wanted to be informed immediately of the orders the Dutch had received from Batavia. The ships could then be towed onto the roadstead and the chief could send a note. Balde countered that he first had to receive the papers. Interpreter Kizō answered that Balde could read the papers on the roadstead. Balde objected, stating that, firstly, the Company's papers could not be read in a short amount of time

---

529 Ibid., p. 310.



and, secondly, that the trading post was on *Dejima*, not on board the ships (tradition dictated that the council meeting had to take place at the trading post). He then confronted Kizō with the latter's own argument that Edo and the shogun did not meddle in issues of trade, leaving that role to the *bugyō*. Furthermore, he thought it remarkable that shogunal orders could change in a day. The day before, ships were not allowed to sail beyond the *Papenberg* and now suddenly they were being allowed onto the roadstead. According to Balde, the interpreters left in embarrassment.<sup>530</sup> Here, Balde made perfect use of his knowledge concerning the weight given to tradition and customs in early modern Japanese society. Even though the Company also had rules, regulations and traditions, none of them had to be employed so rigorously as those of Japan. In addition, he exposed or threatened to expose the crossover from *uchi* into *omote* by pointing out the discrepancy in shogunal orders.

At some point Balde was allowed to send a message to his successor, Jan Louis de Win, on board the ships. The two of them decided to threaten to return to Batavia if they were refused access to Nagasaki's roadstead. Although the Japanese eventually allowed them onto the roadstead, De Win was not allowed to disembark unless the Dutch promised to adhere to the Japanese demands. Neither side would give in, but De Win and the council were eventually allowed to come ashore, albeit without their luggage, which the Dutch took as an insult and refused.<sup>531</sup> Eventually, the Dutch were given permission for each person to disembark with a chest of clothes, bedding, and one slave. They were also permitted to bring a total of three cases of alcohol. Interpreter Kizō then told them on behalf of governor Kageatsu that trade had to be conducted in the same manner as the previous year. They would therefore get 11.000 chests of copper, the prices that had been set the year before, in exchange for 270.000 *taels* worth of merchandise. Kageatsu did not want to hear of any new proposals. If they did not accept these terms, De Win and all the other Dutchmen had to go back on board the ships. After intensive negotiations, the Dutch reluctantly accepted, but requested separate negotiations for the goods in excess of the 270.000 *taels*. After the Japanese granted this request, the trading season was able to begin without further incidents.<sup>532</sup>

530 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 157 "Dagregister 1746-1747", pp. 71-73.

531 Ibid., pp. 75-78.

532 Ibid., pp. 79-90.

*Climax*

Trade negotiations in the next few years were a bit more tempered than in the early 1740s. Nevertheless, the Dutch repeatedly tried to increase their copper quota, while the Nagasaki officials tried to slow them down. In 1751, however, chief Abraham van Suchtelen (1710-1760) drove matters to a head. Before the *court journey* started, Van Suchtelen was requesting more bar copper and higher prices for their imports, and also asked governor Matsura Nobumasa 松浦信正 (1696-1769) to write to the court on his behalf. Nobumasa replied that Batavia had already been notified that they could not get more copper or higher prices and that Van Suchtelen should not press any further in either Nagasaki or Edo. During the *court journey*, Van Suchtelen nevertheless repeatedly pressed for a meeting with the commissioners for foreigners to talk about trading conditions in Nagasaki. He felt, however, that they were stalling him as although he had been granted permission, after many promises from their secretaries, to meet the commissioners, these meetings were repeatedly cancelled at the last minute. In the meantime, Van Suchtelen complained about excessive smoke in his inn, which may or may not have been deliberately caused to inconvenience him. Finally, he was sent away with the comment that the commissioners did not concern themselves with trade issues, and that he should turn to the Nagasaki *bugyō*. Back in Nagasaki, Van Suchtelen continued pressing, but the interpreters told him that they did not dare to translate his requests in their present form. The interpreters and *metsuke* Hoshino Uemon 星野宇右衛門 repeatedly pleaded with him to add a statement that this would be the last time the Dutch asked for more copper or an increase in their import prices, or petitioned in Edo, and that they also would inform the Governor-General in Batavia about the *bugyō*'s wishes and have him send a reply by next year. The Dutch, however, refused.<sup>533</sup>

In the meantime, governor Nobumasa started deploying what the Dutch referred to as 'intimidation tactics.' Requests for shore leave and a change of clothes for the wounded on the Dutch ships were denied, while the chief's window with a view of the *bugyō*'s office was ordered to be closed, and the Dutch were forbidden to play music or enjoy themselves. Almost all the interpreters were placed under house arrest, while all the Japanese servants

533 NL-HaNA, NFI, inv. 161, "Dagregister 1750-1751", pp. 17-19, 27-29, 30-35, 105-115, 121.

(such as water carriers, food deliverers and cooks) were prohibited from entering the island. Furthermore, a large contingent of *bugyō* retainers started patrolling *Dejima* day and night. In addition, the water supply to the kitchen was cut off, and provisions started being delivered much later than usual. This situation lasted for several days, and when the interpreters came to the island again, interpreter Zensaburō secretly and unsuccessfully tried to persuade Van Suchtelen to state that the Dutch would no longer petition in Edo, but retain their right to petition the Nagasaki *bugyō*.<sup>534</sup>

Several days later, the Dutch were again asked to comply with the Japanese demands. If they refused, the new chief would have to leave upon arrival and the Dutch at *Dejima* would get five days to get their affairs in order and depart. Van Suchtelen called their bluff and started preparations to embark. The next day, the Japanese docked six vessels in the fashion commonly used to escort the chief to the ships. The Japanese officials asked once more if the Dutch were willing to obey the *bugyō*'s orders or else to leave. During a meeting of the council, the Dutch thought this was nothing but a common blackmail tactic. They asked the interpreters to convey that the orders of Nobumasa were unreasonable and that they would thus take their leave. According to the *Deshima Diaries*, the interpreters had not expected this answer and so were left startled. Then, on the evening of September 15, the interpreters and retainers of the *bugyō* came to tell the Dutch that as they had traded in Japan for over one hundred years, they would be allowed to trade on the previous year's conditions (this, in itself, had been a small victory as the Japanese had sought to reduce prices that year). The interpreters instructed the Dutch to bring extra gifts for four secretaries of the Nagasaki Clearinghouse and three shogunal inspectors, for it was they who had resolved the impasse. Reluctant at first, after renewed and intense price negotiations, the Dutch finally decided to comply. Although the Dutch clearly stated that these presents were for that year only and exceptional, the Japanese saw it as setting a precedent and the issue was later revisited during the 1750s.<sup>535</sup>

Meanwhile, the problems were not yet over for the Dutch, who were not allowed to compare and close the accounts for the year before Nobumasa departed for Edo. When they were finally able to do so, the commissioners of

---

534 Ibid., pp. 115-124.

535 Ibid., pp. 125-135, 139-142, 146, 148-160.

the *kaisho* turned out to have withheld the agio of 6.000 *taels*, while there was also another outstanding Japanese debt of 669 *taels*, as well as a debt owed by the interpreters in the amount of 865 *taels*. The Dutch refused to leave before these matters were settled. The days of discussions that followed caused Van Suchtelen to stay beyond the shogunal departure date for the ships, which represented a grave breach of *omote*. On November 19, 1751, the interpreters told the new chief, Hendrik van Homoed (1708-?), that if they could not reach agreement, the debt would be squared with the travel expenses of the *court journey*. On the *bugyō's* orders, Van Suchtelen also had to be on his ship that very night or he would be forcefully taken on board. In the end, the council decided it was best to comply rather than face the humiliation of violence. Van Suchtelen thus had to leave Nagasaki at night in a chaotic and disgraceful manner, which Van Homoed took as a sign that the Japanese intended to keep harassing them, at least until Batavia replied to the *bugyō's* letter of the previous year.<sup>536</sup>

## 6.5 Return of Cooperation, ca. 1752-1758

### *Détente*

What followed, instead, was a period of relative *détente*. During the summer of 1752, the new governor, Suganuma Sadahide 菅沼定秀 (1700?-1759), permitted the Dutch to leave *Dejima* and go on a pleasure cruise in the bay, as well as on field trips to see the surrounding villages and temples within his jurisdiction.<sup>537</sup> These field trips could be seen as a gesture aimed at normalizing relations, and as another example of *naishō*, seeing as the Dutch were, at least officially, forbidden by shogunal decree from leaving *Dejima*.<sup>538</sup> By the time the trading season came around, Van Homoed had decided to consolidate the status quo in a contract that included accountability for expenses, details of the manner of unloading *et cetera*. After repeated arguments and threats to leave Japan

536 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 161, "Dagregister 1750-1751", pp. 162-164; NL-HaNA, VOC, inv. 2781 "Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren", pp. 237-238; NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 162, "Dagregister 1751-1752", pp. 1-6, 8.

537 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 162, "Dagregister 1751-1752", pp. 112-113, 126-128.

538 TGKRRK, *Zenshū* 6: pp. 381-382, Edict no. 4061.

forever, Van Homoed had haggled down the required import volumes from 270.000 *taels* to 250.000 *taels* for 11.000 *piculs* of copper, locked in acceptable import prices and secured an agio of 6.000 *taels*.<sup>539</sup> Having this new contract, however, did not automatically translate into a smooth trading process since the commissioners of the *kaisho* tried again to lower import prices for most of the commodities, deeming them to be of insufficient quality. What followed were renewed lengthy and heated negotiations into the small hours for at least three days.<sup>540</sup>

On October 28, 1752, the Japanese made another attempt to soothe the heated tempers. According to the *Deshima Diaries*, the interpreters informed Van Homoed that governor Sadahide had given permission for private Company servants to export red sheet copper at 25 *taels* per Japanese *picul*, equivalent to the price of the private goods sold that year, with a discount of 15 per cent payable in cash. This was the price quoted to the Chinese every year; however, that year Sadahide had reduced the Chinese quota and given the remainder to the Dutch private trade in the form of an exceptional favor to settle their private expenses. Van Homoed replied that he could not accept this offer, arguing that there was still unsold merchandise in the Company's warehouses that was easily sufficient to pay for a quantity of sheet copper equal to the private trade. Therefore, he wanted to request the *bugyō* to deliver this sheet copper to the Company in return for the old prices of any goods he desired from the warehouses. The interpreters answered that they were certain that the *bugyō* would not give the Company anything above the quota set by Edo. However, the *bugyō* was free to sell the remaining copper to any private person he wanted.<sup>541</sup>

An interesting aspect here is the interpreters' argument that the Company could not receive any more copper than dictated by the quota set by Edo, but that selling more copper to private persons on private account would not constitute a problem. This would make the quota very inefficient in limiting copper exports, unless the shogunate, had already calculated that copper would be sold outside the *omote* regulations. While this action

---

539 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 162, "Dagregister 1751-1752", pp. 185-202. For the complete contract, see *CDNI*, 5: pp. 583-589.

540 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 162, "Dagregister 1751-1752", pp. 214-228.

541 *Ibid.*, pp. 241-250.

feels like a *naishō*, in which the *bugyō* had leeway to go beyond the quota set by the shogunate, we cannot be entirely certain about this. Then we have the Company, which had prohibited exports by private persons of goods traded by the Company. Van Homoed's initial refusal consequently comes as no surprise. However, this was likely a show put on for the management in Batavia or the Republic. Van Homoed continues in his diary that any refusal of this offer would have incurred the hatred of the *bugyō*, with devastating effects on the Company's position in Japan. Moreover, the Dutch took this as a precedent in the subsequent years, when they consistently asked for sheet or wire copper in the private trade, thus making Van Homoed's original objections a hollow gesture.

Making use of one's knowledge of *omote*, *uchi* and *naishō* was expedient not only for driving negotiations that were on the edge, but also for resolving them peacefully. A striking example can be found in 1758, when the additional *Senior* and *Junior Councilors* on the gift list would have seriously increased that year's expenditure. Chief Herbert Vermeulen (1738-1783) expressed his hope to the interpreters that he would be exempt from this burden until receiving instructions from Batavia and asked them to advise him on how to achieve this without offending these high officials. As the expenses were becoming too heavy to bear, he floated the idea of slightly increasing the copper quota. According to Vermeulen, the interpreters were sympathetic to his arguments, but feared he had no option but to present the extra gifts. If he did not, the Company's position in Japan would surely suffer. After the interpreters and the Dutch had discussed this issue at length but unsuccessfully, Vermeulen and the council decided that if the interpreters could not find a way to resolve matters, they would present the extra gifts this year, while explicitly stating that they were doing so without authorization and in future would follow orders from Batavia. When the interpreters returned the next day, they said they had discussed the issue with the city mayor, who seemed friendly disposed towards the Company. According to the interpreters, the city mayor had discussed the matter with the senior commissioner of the *kaisho* and told the interpreters to advise the Dutch to present the extra gifts. The city mayor would think of some way to reduce costs. After some deliberations, Vermeulen told the interpreters he would put his faith and trust in the city mayor and

comply with his advice, and asked them to convey his thanks.<sup>542</sup>

Later that year, on July 17, the interpreters told the Dutch that governor Masaki Yasutsune 正木康恒 (1710?-1787) had decided that the costs of repairing the interpreters' house on *Dejima* would in future be borne by the *kaisho* instead of the Dutch. Yasutsune had made this decision on the recommendation of the city mayor, who was very pleased the Dutch had listened to him and followed his advice. Vermeulen wondered why the Japanese would want to be responsible for the costs from then on. The interpreters had been requesting a new house from the Company for years, and the house had been repaired two years earlier with the intention that it would last for three to four years, but now it had become so rundown that it had to be rebuilt, and that would cost quite a sum, according to their estimates. Vermeulen wondered whether there was a catch somewhere as the Dutch had stated that these particular presents were an exception and that they were therefore under no obligation to give them in perpetuity. Maybe the Japanese would bring up these costs when the Dutch complained about theft by Japanese day laborers loading and unloading the ships. Seeing how they had been forced to give additional presents in 1751 and 1752, he could not understand this sudden offer of generosity.<sup>543</sup> Maybe Vermeulen was experiencing the results of conforming to the rules of *omote*, *uchi* and *naishō*.

### *Rationality and Fairness*

Come the trading season, one of the ships destined for Japan turned out to have perished at sea. This caused an immense problem for the Company. Not only had many lives and huge amounts of cargo been lost, but now it did not have enough goods to pay for the expenses and 11,000 *piculs* worth of copper, and nor did it have the capacity to transport this copper. Vermeulen asked the interpreters whether it was possible to still receive the full amount and to leave a debenture stamped with the Company seal for the remainder. The Company would transport as much as the remaining ship could carry and then store the rest on *Dejima*. The next year, Batavia would send three ships to transport the remaining copper and settle the debt. In addition, he asked for the Company's

542 NL-HaNA, NFJ, inv. 168 "Dagregister 1757-1758", pp. 16-23.

543 Ibid., pp. 67-72.

expenses (such as gifts and living expenses) to be reduced by half. After much deliberation, the interpreters told Vermeulen that, on similar occasions (in 1724, 1731 and 1735), the costs and court gifts had remained unchanged. If, therefore, the Dutch insisted on paying only half the costs, the quota would surely have to be halved as well. The court gifts should definitely not be reduced because that would be an insult to the court. And without the court's goodwill, the Nagasaki trade could not exist. Vermeulen answered, however, that he had a plan for reducing the court gifts. He proposed to the interpreters that they should pretend that most of the gifts had been on the ship that perished. The interpreters told him this plan could not succeed as they had already sent copies of the invoice of the arrived *Leimuiden* to Edo. Vermeulen then suggested that the new chief, Johannes Reijnouts (1728-1789), was not authorized to present gifts. This, in fact, was true because his instalment papers had been on the perished *Stadwijk*. As Reijnouts also did not have his ceremonial attire, Vermeulen proposed that the court should be told that the Dutch were not unwilling, but were in the embarrassing situation of not being able to present gifts according to ceremony. The interpreters, however, advised strongly against this. The discussions continued late into the night. Vermeulen wrote that after the interpreters had left, Reijnouts and he had a rational discussion about it. They thought it best not to suggest that they were very distraught about the loss of one ship, and concluded that they should simply request what was fair. The costs would in any event be less because, now, there was only one ship to load and unload.<sup>544</sup>

On August 30, 1758, Vermeulen told the interpreters that he would not ask for a cost reduction, but wanted to receive the entire copper quota for that year. The remaining ship would carry as much copper as possible, with a debt note stamped with the Company seal being signed for the remainder. The next year, three ships would come to transport the remaining copper and next year's quota, as well as the merchandise to pay off the huge debt. According to Vermeulen, the interpreters were very surprised by this offer, but also expressed serious concerns about the three ships, seeing as the court had set the limit at two and the *bugyō* would first have to contact Edo for a decision. They therefore advised the Dutch to request 11,000 chests of copper (4,000 of which would remain on *Dejima*) and to present a signed debenture for the

---

544 Ibid., pp. 91-92, 94-107.



remainder. This the *bugyō* could accept on the city mayor's recommendation. The logical conclusion would be that three ships would be needed to carry the goods to settle the debt and take the remaining copper. Although they would have to request this at that time, they would be presenting the court with a *fait accompli*; in other words, another great example of the concept of *naishō*. And, on this occasion, Vermeulen and the council decided to listen to the interpreters. In the first week of September, the interpreters told Vermeulen that the city mayor was on their side because the chief had previously heeded his advice on the court gifts. In regard to the matter of the ships, the Dutch proposed that the Nagasaki officials should assign two ships as regular ships and assign one to the previous year, thus complying with shogunal orders. On September 10, the interpreters informed them that governor Yasutsune had granted their request of August 30. This was meant as an exceptional favor because the governor's secretaries had told him that Vermeulen's conduct during the *court journey* in the past couple of years had been exemplary and the city mayor also spoke fondly on his behalf.<sup>545</sup> By means of rational reasoning, by asking for advice instead of demanding and by following cloaked Japanese directives on how to deal with *omote*, *uchi* and *naishō* in a proper manner, Vermeulen had thus been able to accomplish more than ever before, and showed this in the diary by making a comparison with how much copper had been exported under similar circumstances in earlier times.<sup>546</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

Managing foreign trade in eighteenth-century Nagasaki was by no means easy. The central government in Edo placed more importance on intelligence gathering and a positive display of its own authority to the outside world than on trade. As the shogunate repeatedly tried to reduce exports, Nagasaki's officials and semi-officials were in the difficult position of having to maintain an equilibrium between shogunal, local and personal profits on the Japanese side, and at the same time keeping the foreign merchants sufficiently happy so as not to abandon the trade. They managed competition between Japanese and

---

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-116.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., pp. 116-119.

foreigners in the city in a typical Japanese way, with the ability to come out on top in the annual trade negotiations seeming to depend largely on the skills at comprehending and utilizing the formal (*omote*) and informal (*uchi*) spheres of Tokugawa Japan.

During the eighteenth century, the Dutch resorted to (illegal) petitioning in Edo to gain an edge. But not every chief of the Dutch trading post seems to have understood how to use this tool most effectively and so it often had an undesired effect. They fared better, however, in local negotiations with Japanese officials and semi-officials in a game that sometimes resembled bluff poker at the highest level, with the Dutch demanding more copper and better import prices, and the Japanese demanding obedience to Japanese protocol and acceptance of the quotas set by Edo. A Japanese tactic was to disguise orders and measures as shogunal decrees: a shogunal decree was a clear example of an *omote* rule, which could never be disrespected in public. By either totally fabricating a decree or carefully adding a private addendum to a real decree, Nagasaki officials tried to entice the Dutch to cooperate. The Dutch, for their part, often noticed when shogunal decrees were not real or had been padded. Sometimes they chose to reveal their knowledge to the interpreters, threatening to expose *uchi* crossing over into *omote*, to speed negotiations along. A tried and tested method of the Dutch was simply to interrupt trading procedures or threaten to depart without trading. Being inactive for too long risked hanging out the dirty laundry in public, or crossing over from private *uchi* situations into public *omote* displays, as almost happened in 1745. These practices were not without risk, especially for the Japanese, for whom a breach of *omote* could cost them their lives. In the late 1750s, however, we have also seen what the Dutch could accomplish if they used their knowledge not to disrupt *omote*, but instead to go harmoniously with the flow in *uchi* and *naishō* procedures. When the Dutch were willing to listen, the Japanese showed them how to use these concepts correctly and effectively. Although this varied from chief to chief, the Dutch chiefs ultimately seem to have had a reasonable – or at least workable – understanding of Tokugawa Japan's political society, with each of them using it to the best of his ability.

In managing affairs, the Japanese at Nagasaki had to work within parameters set by the shogunate, but where there were also opportunities to deviate from these rules. Sometimes, local authorities made up rules on

their own initiative, disregarded shogunal decrees in private, or gave more copper than the quota allowed. This could mean one of two things. Either the local authorities were acting illegally, outside shogunal boundaries, or they were indeed able to move beyond the strict boundaries imposed by the shogunate (*naishō*), with these actions being illegal only if they came into the open. While the dividing line is not always clear, both cases reveal something about shogunal hegemony in Nagasaki, and specifically the clear discrepancy existing between theory and practice.