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JAPAN'S OVERSEAS TRADE IN THE
CLOSING DAYS OF THE TOKU-
GAWA SHOGUNATE

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1. VARIOUS VIEWS ON FOREIGN TRADE IN
THE MID-TOKUGAWA PERIOD

After the country was closed to foreigners in the Kanyei era, an exception was made of Nagasaki, where foreign trade was permitted though with China and Holland alone. As this trade arrangement was unilateral, in that Japan simply bought with her money what Chinese and Dutch ships brought to her shores, the outflow of Japanese gold and silver soon became so considerable that it was found impossible to allow this state of affairs to continue unchecked. Thus, trade witnessed an yearly decline. In such circumstances, it was no wonder that many people should have urged a further restrictions or total prohibition of trade. For example, Arai-Hakuseki 新井白石, a noted scholar-statesman of the day, denounced foreign trade in the following terms: "During the past 100 years, since foreign trade

was inaugurated under the Tokugawa regime, there has been a heavy outflow of Japanese money. Japan has already lost a fourth of her gold and three-fourth of her silver, so far as can be judged from the figures available. The actual loss of Japanese gold and silver must, however, be heavier than this, as the figures published do not cover all disbursements that have left the country. It is obvious that if this rate of outflow is maintained, Japanese currency will be exhausted within the next 100 years." He goes on to say: "It is poor policy to buy useless foreign goods with valuable Japanese money. In olden times, Japan got on very well without foreign goods. As a matter of fact, she is not dependent on foreign countries for anything except medical supplies. Even if foreign ships ceased to visit these shores, Japan would find no great difficulty in satisfying her own needs." Furthermore, regarding medical supplies, the importation of which was, in his opinion, the only benefit derivable from foreign trade, Hakuseki maintained that it was not absolutely necessary for Japan to resort to foreign countries for their supply. He pointed out that: "In olden times, many of the medicinal materials now being imported were produced in Japan. When it is recalled that cotton and tobacco which were formerly unknown in Japan are now cultivated throughout the country, there is no reason why other things which have never before been grown in this country should not be produced here, if seeds were imported and sown in suitable soil." In this way, he argued that it was not necessarily impossible for Japan to be self-sufficient. If it should seem difficult to abolish foreign trade all at once, he suggested, that appropriate measures of restriction should be adopted. His suggestion was that the volume of annual trade should be fixed after due consideration of the amount of money in circulation at home, and that the number and tonnage of foreign ships visiting this country should be restricted. The elaborate trade regulations which were enacted in the fifth year of Shotoku (1715) were conceived in such a spirit. Stressing

the value of precious metals, Hakuseki remarked: "Comparing them to the integral parts of the human body, cereals may be likened to hair, for they grow ceaselessly, while metals, like bones, are never replaced. Even cereal crops cannot be expected to be always abundant, furthermore the output varies with the nature of the soil. As for the metals, they are produced in only a few places and the annual production is variable."

The opinion of Nakai-Chikuzan 中井竹山, another noted scholar, offers an interesting contrast with the above-mentioned view of Hakuseki. Chikuzan said: "Gold and silver are, after all, of no practical value, and therefore a scarcity of these metals causes us no serious inconvenience. On the contrary, copper and iron are of great use to the people. Iron is, needless to say, most important, and copper is the next most useful metal. It is, therefore, very regrettable that large quantities of copper are now annually given away to foreign countries." He contended that the country suffered little from a heavy outflow of gold and silver, because these metals, unlike iron and copper, are of no practical use. People could not subsist on gold or silver, when they were hungry, nor could they wear them to keep them warm in cold weather. Houses could not be built of them; neither could arms, agricultural implements, or tools for commercial and industrial use, be made of them. On the other hand, he deeply deplored the heavy outflow of copper on the ground that this metal was of immense practical value, and suggested that a barter system should be adopted in order to check the extensive outflow. He pointed out that in addition to various marine products, already being exported to foreign countries, paper, *sumi* (ink-stick), fans, umbrellas, lacquer-ware, relief lacquer-ware, porcelain, dolls, fancy goods, bamboo-work, silk, silk cloth, books and other articles which foreign traders might desire to have should be offered in exchange for foreign goods. Chikuzan's suggestions, it must be admitted, had much to commend them, as measures which would remedy the one-sidedness of trade

in the period under consideration.

In the Meiwa (1764—1771) and Anyei (1772—1780) eras, Ezo, a region where Japanese and Russian territories were contiguous began to claim the attention of Japanese scholars, many of whom urged the necessity of developing the resources of the district. The *Aka Ezo Fusetsu Ko* 赤蝦夷風説考, a book written by Kudo-Heisuke 工藤平助, may well be regarded as the first publication advocating the opening of the country to foreign intercourse. Influenced by the views set forth in it, the Tokugawa Shogunate carried out a survey of Ezo and Karafuto in the fifth and sixth years of Temmei (1785 and 1786). In the *Seiiki Monogatari* 西域物語, and the *Keisei Hisaku* 經世秘策, which were written by Honta-Toshiaki 本多利明 in the Kansei era (1789—1800), the author expounded his progressive views in support of the opening of the country to foreign trade and intercourse. In addition to stressing the need of increasing national wealth through the development of foreign trade, he urged not only the exploitation of the resources of Ezo but the subjugation of the neighbouring lands. In Toshiaki's opinion, no country could live in economic isolation. Pointing out that all European countries grew richer and stronger by obtaining from other countries what they did not possess at home, he declared that it was a great mistake for Japan to pursue an exclusionist policy and to remain isolated from the outside world. "As Japan is a sea-girt country," he said, "it should be the first care of the Ruler to develop shipping and trade. Through sending her ships to all countries, Japan should import such goods as are useful at home, as well as gold, silver and copper, to replenish her resources. The country will grow weaker and weaker, if it remains contented with the policy of supplying its needs exclusively with its own products. The weaker the country, the heavier will become the burden on the farmers, with the natural result that the farming population will become increasingly impoverished." From this point of view, he emphasised the need of foreign trade, and denounced the idea of self-suf-

ficiency. The prevalent view in those days was that in foreign trade one party gained while the other party lost, but Toshiaki did not support this contention. He said: "Some people rightly contend that the only way to enrich a country is to get as much gold, silver and copper as possible from other countries, but this will not be feasible unless home products are exported in exchange for foreign gold, silver and copper. There should be no discrimination in treatment as between home and foreign products, and trade should be carried on an equal footing. Such being the case, one party will derive as much profit from trade as the other." Arguing in this way, he stressed the point that trade is beneficial to both parties, upholding the rule that the parties to trade should stand on an equal footing. He also described trade as a war carried on by peaceful means, pointing out that: "Foreign trade is a war in that each party seeks to extract wealth from the other." Proceeding, he said: "Up to 140 or 150 years ago, Japan often sent her ships abroad to trade with foreign countries. If, following this precedent, government vessels are now built and sent abroad to import the goods which are useful to Japan, the country will not have to depend on Chinese and Dutch ships visiting Nagasaki for the supply of such goods." If his suggestion were to be acted upon and trade carried on actively, the development of the Japanese shipping industry was an absolute necessity. Such development of the shipping business was only possible in those days if the Government undertook to build the ships and to operate the carrying trade. It was for this reason that Toshiaki advanced the theory of State operation of maritime enterprise. It argues high statesmanship on his part that he took so strong a stand for the opening of the country and the development of trade at a time when exclusionism was the rule.

2. VIEWS ON OVERSEAS TRADE IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE

When Commodore Perry visited this country in June of the sixth year of Kaei (1853), and presented the Note from his Government addressed to the Shogunate, which demanded the conclusion of a treaty of amity and commerce, it at once became a matter of urgent necessity for the Shogunate to decide whether to keep the country closed or to open it. Various views were then expressed in many quarters both for and against foreign trade. On July 1st of the same year, the Shogunate forwarded a Japanese translation of the American Note, communicated to them by Commodore Perry, to all Hans and sought an unreserved expression of their views on the advisability or otherwise of inaugurating trade relations with foreign countries. Many Hans submitted views opposed to the inauguration of foreign trade, but some, including the Fukuoka Han, urged the Shogunate to encourage foreign trade, on the ground that it would surely bring prosperity to the country. The Hikone Han went so far as to advise the Shogunate to go one step further and to send Japanese ships abroad for purposes of trade. In its memorial dated August 29th of the sixth year of Kaei, the Hikone Han suggested that Japanese merchantmen should be sent to Jacatra (Batavia) to trade with Dutch firms there, saying that it was only natural that all countries should seek to supply their wants through trade.*

In March of the first year of Ansei (1854), a treaty of amity and commerce was concluded between Japan and America, and this was soon followed by the conclusion of similar treaties with Britain, Russia and Holland. Under these treaties, trade was carried on in a small way taking chiefly the form of supplying the immediate needs of foreign shipping. Japan now experienced a new kind of trade different from that which had been carried on through

* cf. E. Honjo, *The Views of Various Hans on the Opening of the Country*, Kyoto University Economic Review, No. 1. Vol. XI. 1936.

Nagasaki with China and Holland and was able to gain some idea of the meaning of international amity and commerce. In a notification issued to all Hans on August 4th of the third year of Ansei, the *roju* (Ministry of the Shogunate), while admitting the propriety of the course urged in some quarters of sending Japanese ships to foreign countries to engage in profitable trade with a view to making the country stronger and richer, suggested that, as it would take five to seven years to complete the necessary preparations, the basic methods of trade should be studied carefully in the meantime, especially as the domestic supply of copper was diminishing annually due to heavy outflow. From this notification it can be gathered that the Shogunate was aware of the necessity of dispatching Japanese ships abroad for purposes of trade.

In a memorial submitted to the Shogunate under date of August 15th of the same year, the Uraga and Hakodate *bugyo* (administrators), who were in Edo (Tokyo), after pointing out the evils attending trade carried on at Nagasaki with China and Holland, emphasised the necessity of copying the methods of trade practised by foreign countries. Citing the case of England, which was rich and strong, despite the fact of its location in latitudes further north than the southern part of Ezo, they attributed its wealth and strength to its shipping and commercial activity, declaring that if Japan should develop her trade in the right way, much profit would certainly accrue. So long, however, as Japan confined her trade to transactions with foreign ships visiting this country, they asserted, it would be unwise to anticipate much profit. They were therefore in favour of dispatching Japanese ships to foreign countries for purposes of trade. A memorial submitted by *ometsuke* and *metsuke* officials in charge of coastal defence, in March of the fourth year of Ansei (1857), also stressed the urgent need of placing national finance on a secure basis through an active development of foreign trade. They suggested, *inter alia*, that Japanese merchantmen should be sent to all foreign

countries for trading purposes.

The foreign countries which desired trade with Japan were naturally not contented with an arrangement, which merely enabled their ships to obtain in Japan such supplies as they lacked. In October of the fourth year of Ansei, Harris, the American Consul-General, visited Edo and besought the Shogunate to agree to the conclusion of a commercial treaty, to the stationing of an American Minister in Japan and to the opening of direct trade between Japanese and American merchants. The Shogunate circulated the American overtures in many quarters with a view to securing advice. Many of the recommendations submitted in response favoured the dispatch of Japanese merchantmen abroad for the purpose of engaging in active trade. For instance, the Fukui Han, in a memorial submitted under date of November 26th of the same year, declared that as no country could be strong without being rich, Japan should make positive efforts to promote trade "by making full use of her topographical advantages, so that she might become the richest country in the world." It even advocated the annexation of certain small countries with a view to pushing trade more vigorously. In another memorial dated February 18th of the fifth year of Ansei, the same Han insisted that Japan should inaugurate shipping services and dispatch traders to China and Western countries. The Tokushima Han also urged the necessity of sending out Japanese ships to carry on an energetic programme of foreign trade, declaring that the situation then prevailing was decreed by Heaven. The Kagoshima Han similarly emphasised the need to open up trade relations with other countries and to dispatch Japanese vessels to all foreign ports with a view to establishing Japan's commercial rights everywhere in the world. Hotta-Masayoshi 堀田正睦, a *roju*, expressed similar views in his memorial.

In March of the first year of Man'en (1860), the *ômetsume* and *metsuke* officials in charge of foreign affairs memorialised the Shogunate suggesting the advisability of

establishing a Bureau called the *sambutsukata* 産物方 (Products Office). Their idea was to cause this Bureau to investigate the actual quantities of the various commodities produced in the country. "If Japanese ships are then sent to China; as we have previously recommended," they contended, "they will be able to take orders from Chinese merchants with confidence." The views submitted by the *kanjo bugyo* and *kanjo gimmiyaku* officials were to the effect that, as foreign trade had already been inaugurated, it was not sufficient for Japan to trade merely with the foreign merchantmen who visited the country. "It would be to Japan's interest to send investigators to Hongkong and other foreign ports to study the actual state of foreign trade abroad," they maintained. They further mentioned that, unlike Western goods, Chinese products include many useful articles such as gauze, damask, crêpe, yarns and drugs, and that if these were imported, the shortage in the Japanese domestic products could be made good. This was particularly necessary, they said, as it was reported that few Chinese ships had recently been visiting Nagasaki. It would prove beneficial to China also, as Japanese ships would carry to that country such goods as were in demand there. From this point of view, these memorialists advised the Shogunate to arrange for the dispatch of Japanese merchantmen to China. The *gaikoku bugyo* (administrators in charge of foreign affairs) also supported the dispatch of Japanese vessels to China as "timely and appropriate," and so did *machibugyo* officials. Judging from the recommendations made by the *kanjo bugyo* and *gaikoku bugyo* officials, it is clear that advisability of sending Japanese ships to China for trading purposes had been under discussion in official quarters for some years. It was, of course, chiefly from the point of view of promoting trade that the step was urged, but the idea of increasing national armaments, or of expanding the Navy, had some relation to the problem of developing trade, a fact which merits some attention. Sakuma-Shozan 佐久間象山 also referred to the benefits accru-

ing from active trade, in the course of a memorial which he submitted to the Shogunate in the 2nd year of Bunkyu (1862).

3. A PLAN TO DISPATCH SHOGUNATE OFFICIALS ABROAD

Prior to the presentation by Harris, the American Consul-General, to the Shogunate of the important proposal for the conclusion of a treaty of amity and commerce, to which reference has already been made, various opinions had already been expressed by the shogunate officials on the general question of inaugurating foreign trade and the methods to be adopted. On August 18th of the fourth year of Ansei, the Shogunate sought the views of the members of the *hyojosho* and other high officials with regard to its plan to dispatch officials to Hongkong to study methods of trade. The members of the *hyojosho*, while endorsing the idea of sending Japanese ships to foreign ports for purposes of trade, stated that "the dispatch of a Japanese ship on a mere cruise to Hongkong disguised as a Dutch vessel," as indicated in the Shogunate's proposal, would be useless. They maintained that if any good result was to be obtained, the Shogunate officials to be dispatched must remain at Hongkong for some time in order to make a careful study of trading methods. The *ometsuke* and *metsuke* officials supported the plan to send officials to Hongkong, hailing the dispatch of Japanese ships abroad for purposes of trade as an undertaking calculated to strengthen and enrich the country. The *kanjo bugyo* and *kanjo gimmiyaku* officials in charge of coastal defence, on the other hand, disapproved of the plan, on the ground that the proposed investigation concerning trade would be attended with great difficulties and that consequently the project would be fruitless. Hayashi-Daigaku-no-Kami 林大學頭 supported the project as timely. Tsutsui-Masanori 筒井正憲, the *yari bugyo*, suggested that a prior understanding should be reached with the

foreign authorities concerned regarding the landing Japanese officials in a foreign port. Due to this division of opinion, the plan finally failed to materialise. In any case, the fact that such a plan was seriously discussed shows that the question of inaugurating foreign trade was no longer a controversial issue and that the real problem was one of the methods to be adopted. This testifies also to the fact that there was a steady development of the desire to copy foreign trading practice and to send Japanese ships abroad to carry on active trade, instead of clinging to the passive methods of the past.

4. THE AMUR TRADING EXPEDITION OF THE KAMEDA MARU

In January of the fifth year of Ansei, a Japan-American commercial treaty of 14 articles and trade regulations consisting of seven articles were drawn up by agreement and these were signed by the Governments of the two countries in June. Similar treaties were signed with Holland, Russia and Britain in July and with France in September of the same year. As trade with foreign countries became more general certain unfavourable effects began to be noted in many directions. Above all there resulted a shortage domestic supplies, and the prices of commodities rose in consequence. This situation caused the Hakodate *bugyo* to devise a plan, whereby Japan was to send her ships abroad for trading purposes instead of confining herself to trading with such foreign ships as visited her shores. The cost of maintaining these trading ships, it was proposed, should be defrayed out of the profits accruing from the trade itself. He hoped that by this means Japan would be able not only to acquire knowledge regarding conditions abroad but to train her captains and seamen. This plan was laid before the Shogunate in the sixth year of Ansei in a memorial, above the joint signatures of Hori-Oribe-no-Sho 堀織部正 and three other officials.

After describing the distress caused to the people, high and low, by the sharp rise in commodity prices attendant on the inauguration of foreign trade, the memorial proceeded: "But since all countries are carrying on trade as the best means of enriching themselves, Japan should do likewise, for she will certainly profit by trade, provided she carries it on by the right methods. If, however, Japan, due to her previous exclusionist policy, remains ignorant of appropriate trading methods, simply doing what she is told by others, confining herself exclusively to trading with such foreign ships as may visit the country, the results will prove very inimical to her interests. It is, therefore, preferable for her to dispatch her ships abroad to import such foreign goods as are needed by this country." They further remarked: "We understand that Americans and other citizens of the countries with which Japan has already concluded commercial treaties have their commercial headquarters in Shanghai and Hongkong. Although Japan has not yet signed a commercial treaty with China, no objection is likely to be raised by that country to the dispatch of Japanese trading ships to these ports, as Chinese merchantmen have hitherto been visiting Nagasaki." Referring to Russia, they remarked: "Russia has established her sway over Manchuria, a region which is contiguous to Ezo, and it is said that many Russians have already settled in the district along the Amur and a commercial mart has been opened at a place called Nikolaevsk." Stressing the need to investigate conditions in these districts, they urged: "As, fortunately, a commercial treaty has already been concluded with Russia, a Japanese ship should be sent, nominally for trading purposes, as far as the Amur and Kamchatka to import the products of these districts, giving in exchange such Japanese goods as are not obtainable there. Such a transaction will prove beneficial to this country." They expressed the desire to send out a ship in the summer of the same year, if possible, and asked permission to carry out this plan.

The *kanjo bugyo* and *kanjo gimmiyaku* officials of the Shogunate considered Hakodate *bugyo*'s plan. They expressed the view that although the plan had much to commend it, it was better to defer the proposed dispatch of a Japanese ship to the Amur and Kamchatka until "a more appropriate time." The plan to send Japanese ships to Hongkong, however, met with their approval, for they said: "With regard to the dispatch of ships to China for trading purposes, the *ômetsuke* and *metsuke* officials in charge of foreign affairs submitted the other day their agreed opinion in support of this course. Hongkong is now a British possession, but it was Chinese territory before, and though it is an island, it is located close to the mainland of China. Unlike Manchuria and Kamchatka, international trade is carried on actively there, and it will be profitable for Japan to dispatch her ships to that port." In the recommendations made by the *gaikoku bugyo* officials after taking counsel among themselves, it was urged that: "It is advisable for the Shogunate to dispatch its own vessels or foreign ships chartered for the purpose to Russian territory near Ezo, to begin with laden with Japanese goods likely to find a market there, and then afterwards to arrange for the dispatch of ships to Shanghai and Hongkong. Such a course will not only help to expand domestic production but will sometimes bring enormous profits to this country." They also suggested that in dispatching a Japanese ship to Hongkong, the Shogunate should previously secure the consent of the British Minister in this country, as Hongkong was British territory. After studying these recommendations, the *roju* adopted the course recommended by the Hakodate *bugyo*, and sent a Japanese ship to the Amur, with the double object of carrying on trade and of inspecting conditions in Manchuria and looking into the border situation. The Hakodate *bugyo*'s plan was finally accepted by the Shogunate, as is clear from his letter dated February 9th acknowledging receipt of the Shogunate's notice of sanction.

Thus, the Hakodate *bugyo* sent out the Kameda Maru 亀田丸 in April of the same year. The ship set sail from Hakodate on April 28th with Midzuno-Shôdayu 水野正太夫, Takeda-Ayasaburo 武田斐三郎 and other officials, their attendants, a crew of twenty, one merchant and a Russian interpreter, a resident of Hakodate, on board, and arrived at De Castrie on May 7th. She made the port of Nikolaevsk on June 1st, and leaving there on July 16th, returned to Hakodate on August 9th. The Kameda Maru was built by a shipright named Tsudzuki-Toyoji 横豊治 to the order of the Hakodate *bugyo*. Construction was started in March of the fifth year of Ansei and the ship was completed in October of the following year. She was a 46-ton wooden ship of the schooner type, with two masts. She carried a cargo of silk fabric, rice, soy, potatoes and a quantity of sundry goods, which she sold at Nikolaevsk. After studying geographical conditions and customs and manners as well as the prospects of trade, the voyagers returned to Hakodate on August 9th. It is recorded in an old document that she was "the first foreign-style ship built in Japan to go abroad for purposes of trade."

5. THE SENZAI MARU'S TRADE WITH SHANGHAI

In February of the first year of Bunkyu (1861), the Shogunate sought the views of the officials in charge of foreign affairs on various points in connection with its scheme to send officials to Hongkong with the double object of carrying on trade and studying foreign trading methods. The *ômetsuke* and *metsuke* officials accordingly held conferences and submitted their conclusions to the Shogunate in March. Their conclusions were that it was hardly worth while to send officials to Hongkong for the purposes indicated in the Shogunate's plan. While admitting that Hongkong was a prosperous place which was visited by many foreign ships, they said that it was only a small island and that the ships which visited it did so simply for

the purpose of replenishing their depleted supplies. On the other hand, they described Shanghai as a port where trade was carried on actively, and recommended the dispatch of officials to that port, instead of to Hongkong. They at the same time suggested the advisability of chartering a Dutch ship and employing a Dutch crew for the purpose. Their reason was that as no Japanese merchantman had ever been sent to Shanghai, it was better to make believe that the ship dispatched by the Shogunate was a Dutch vessel. After reaching an understanding with the Dutch Consul at Kanagawa through the local *bugyo*, they suggested that officials should be sent on the chartered ship to study matters relative to trade, navigation, etc. The recommendations submitted by the *bugyo* officials in charge of foreign affairs in April also discountenanced the dispatch of officials to Hongkong. They pointed out that Hongkong had no products of its own and that the goods handled there were all brought from other countries—practically the same kinds of goods as were being brought to the Japanese ports by foreign vessels. As, moreover, Japanese currency did not correspond with foreign currencies, they argued, that the failure of the undertaking to produce, profits might adversely affect the interest of Japanese merchants in the trade. They recommended, therefore, that a commercial treaty should first be concluded with China and that after due study of the customs and manners of China by Japanese Envoy, Japanese merchantmen should be dispatched to that country.

Later, the Shogunate issued to the Nagasaki *bugyo* instructions, which, in part, stated that: "The Shogunate proposes to send a ship to Shanghai and Hongkong, with officials on board, to carry on trade by way of an experiment, while simultaneously making a study the state of foreign trade in these ports. Its scheme is to charter a Dutch ship, together with its crew, at Nagasaki, and to send it with a cargo of the marine products which you have in store. You are, therefore, asked to investigate

matters relative to the charterage of a Dutch ship and the general method carrying on trade in China, and to report the results."

In compliance with these instructions, the Nagasaki *bugyo*, Okabe-Suruga-no-Kami 岡部駿河守, made the necessary inquiries at a Dutch firm at Dejima, as a result, he learned that charterage for a sailing ship, of about 300 tons burden inclusive of wages for the crew, and other charges, would be about \$1,600 per month, and that pilotage at Shanghai would cost something like \$100. Trade by merchants of non-treaty countries was allowed at Shanghai, provided the regular port dues were paid. In case a Dutch ship was chartered, the Dutch Consul at Shanghai might be asked by letter to see that all went well. Hongkong being British territory, no port dues were charged there, but if a ship was to be chartered for a voyage to that port, which is farther off than Shanghai, charterage would naturally be higher. As regards suitable articles for the Shanghai market, it was difficult to say for certain what kinds of goods would find a good market there, as various kinds of Japanese goods had lately been finding their way into Shanghai, though it could confidently be said that the shipment of coal would entail no loss. As weather conditions were unfavourable for a voyage at that time of the year, it would be advisable to defer the dispatch of a ship until winter. Such was the information which he obtained, and in communicating it to the Shogunate, the *bugyo* submitted his own opinion. He gave it as his opinion that as this was an innovation for Japan, a Dutch ship should be chartered, and some officials, an interpreter and merchants should be sent on board, with a small quantity of Japanese products, to inspect conditions and to investigate trade methods there. He however advised the Shogunate to defer the dispatch of a Japanese ship till a later date.

Instructions were then issued to the Nagasaki *bugyo* to arrange for the chartering of a ship and other matters. Accordingly, in March of the following year (second year

of Bunkyu), the *bugyo* inspected a Dutch ship (270 tons; charterage, \$1,300 per month) and a British ship (600 tons; charterage, \$3,000 per month), which were then at anchor in the port of Nagasaki; but the idea of chartering a foreign vessel was later given up, and it was decided to buy one instead. Thus, the British ship *Armistice* was finally purchased. This ship, which was built in 1855 (second year of Ansei) at Sunderland, England, was a three-masted wooden vessel, 126 feet overall, 28 feet in beam with a draught of 17 feet, and cargo capacity of 358 tons. It was owned by an Englishman named Henry Richardson, who, as the captain of the ship, had been engaged in the carrying business between Shanghai and Nagasaki for two years, making enormous profits in this business. When this ship entered the port of Nagasaki on March 12th, officials of the local *bugyo's* office inspected it and a contract was signed for the purchase of the ship, together with all its equipment, for \$34,000. As her departure from Nagasaki on another voyage had already been fixed for March 14th, it was arranged that she should be handed over to the purchasers at the end of this voyage. She returned to Nagasaki on April 11th, and three days later, the Nagasaki *bugyo*, Takahashi-Mimasaka-no-Kami 高橋美作守, accompanied by *metsuke* and other officials, inspected the ship, and changed her name to the *Senzai Maru* 千歳丸. On the payment of the purchase money on the 18th, the Rising Sun flag was run up to the top of her mast.*

Thus, the Shogunate initiated trade with Shanghai 230 years after the country had been closed to foreign intercourse, in the era of Kanyei. Altogether 51 Japanese went to Shanghai on board the *Senzai Maru*, namely, five Edo officials, three officials of the Shogunate's Nagasaki office, seven local officials of Nagasaki, three Nagasaki merchants,

* Mossman, *New Japan*, Lond. 1873, p. 144.

Paske-Smith, *Western Barbarians in Japan and Formosa in Tokugawa Days*, Kobe, 1930. p. 222-223.

23 attendants and ten seamen. The party also included a Dutch merchant, who was temporarily employed for this trade mission. The captain and the British crew of the *Armistice*, as the *Senzai Maru* was formerly called, operated the ship. The *Senzai Maru* sailed from Nagasaki on April 29th and arrived at Shanghai on the morning of May 6th, covering a distance of 572 miles in eight days. On her homeward voyage, she left Shanghai on July 5th and returned to Nagasaki eleven days later. The time taken up by this Shanghai trade, from the ship's departure from Nagasaki to her return to the port, was 75 days.

Although Chinese trade with Japan had been carried on at Nagasaki, Japan had never before sent a ship to a Chinese port to trade with that country. Since there was no commercial treaty between the two countries, the conduct of this trade was virtually entrusted to the Dutch Consul at Shanghai. The Chinese authorities raised no objection on the ground that it was conducted under Dutch management. All goods were treated as Dutch commodities. The unloaded cargo was put into the warehouse of the Dutch Consulate, for which rent was paid. All commercial transactions were left in the hands of members of the Dutch Consular staff, to whom 2.5 per cent. of the values of the goods sold or purchased was paid as commission. Certain rates of commission were also paid to Chinese middlemen.

The *Senzai Maru's* cargo consisted of coal, ginseng, dried sea-slug, dried sea-ear, dried sea-weed, tangle, lacquer-ware, isinglass, camphor, textiles, etc., but it appears that these commodities did not find a good market at Shanghai. According to certain historical records, whereas tangle brought in a profit of about 10 per cent. and isinglass a profit of 3.4 per cent., the camphor was disposed of at a loss of 14.7 per cent. Some commodities had to be disposed of at a heavy loss on the eve of the ship's departure for home. Altogether, it appears that no profit accrued from this trade.

According to a book written by Paske-Smith, the total

quantity of the goods carried by the ship to Shanghai was 600 tons. From Shanghai, the Senzai Maru brought home various kinds of goods including printed cotton, rugs, mercury, sugar, etc.

Besides providing \$3,000 for the operation of this trade at the outset, the Shogunate remitted \$27,000 to the Dutch Consulate at Shanghai, so that the total outlay amounted to \$30,000. As the goods brought home were all purchases made by the merchants, the \$30,000 referred to evidently covered the cost of the voyage and hotel and other expenses.

6. A PLAN TO SEND THE KENJUN MARU TO HONGKONG AND BATAVIA

The Hakodate *bugyo*, who sent a trading ship to Nikolaevsk in April of the first year of Bunkyu, conceived another plan to dispatch the Kenjun Maru, a ship belonging to his office, to Hongkong and Batavia, but this scheme did not materialise.

The Kenjun Maru 健順丸 was originally an American ship named the Altair, which was built at Fairhaven, America, in the third year of Ansei (1856). She was bought when she made the port of Hakodate in August of the first year of Bunkyu (1861). At first, the Hakodate *bugyo* memorialised the Shogunate urging it to build a warship, but his memorial was not adopted. In the spring of the first year of Bunkyu, he memorialised the Shogunate again asking for permission to build a warship for the purpose of strengthening his defences against a Northern foe, and this time his request was granted. Consequently, the *bugyo* collected building materials and all preparations were completed for starting shipbuilding work. At that time, the Kameda Maru came across the Altair at Nikolaevsk, and as this American ship was found to answer the *bugyo's* requirements in point of size and mechanical appliances, negotiations were opened with its owners for its purchase. In such circumstances,

the plan to build a new warship was abandoned, and the Altair was purchased at the price of \$22,000 from the American owner, when she entered the port of Hakodate. She was a three-masted wooden sailing ship of 378 tons, 119 feet in length, with a 29.1 foot beam and 12.2 foot draught. She was renamed the Kenjun Maru.

In March of the second year of Bunkyu, the *bugyo* in charge of foreign affairs wrote to the British Minister informing him of the plan to dispatch the Kenjun Maru to Hongkong to trade and soliciting the good offices of the British Consul at Hongkong on her behalf. The letter, which was dated March 28th, said in part: "As they are going to a strange port to trade and as, moreover, they have little knowledge of the methods of trade, we shall be greatly obliged, if you will kindly see to it that the Consul of your country at Hongkong gives them the necessary help and advice. Officers in the Hakodate *bugyo*'s service are being sent with the party to maintain order on board the ship. As the ship is to sail shortly, you will please communicate our request to the British Consul at that port." The British Minister wanted to have a written request from the *roju* about the matter, and so the *roju* wrote to him under date of May 4th. The *bugyo* in charge of foreign affairs addressed a similar letter of request to the Dutch Consul-General under date of March 28th, bespeaking the good offices of the Dutch Consul at Batavia. On September 22nd, the British Consul addressed an inquiry to the Hakodate *bugyo* as to the date of the departure of the Kenjun Maru, to which the latter replied that although the date of the ship's departure had not been definitely fixed yet, she would probably set sail within a week or ten days.

On October 6th of the second year of Bunkyu, the Kenjun Maru left the Hokkaido for Edo. The ship's company consisted of the captain and a few score people, and her cargo comprised tangle, dried sea-slug, dried sea-ear, sliced tangle, raw silk, etc. In November, however, the Kenjun

Maru was ordered to suspend her projected voyage and remain at anchor at Shinagawa. Nothing definite is known as to the cause of this decision. One theory has it that it was due to divided counsels, while another theory suggests the gravity of the situation then prevailing at home and abroad as the true cause.

7. THE KENJUN MARU'S SHANGHAI TRADE

Although the plan to dispatch the Kenjun Maru to Hongkong was definitely abandoned, the Shogunate informally notified those concerned, in October of the third year of Bunkyu, that the ship might be sent to Nagasaki and then to Shanghai, if the wind was favourable. So, the ship left Shinagawa on November 11th and arrived at Hyogo on December 17th, where the requisite purchases of goods were made from merchants in Osaka and elsewhere. On February 9th of the following year (first year of Genji), she sailed from Hyogo. As she could not put in at Nagasaki on account of high winds and seas, she took her course westward to Shanghai, where she arrived on the 21st of the same month. The leading Japanese officials were then presented to the local Taotai by the British Consul. Trade was carried on through the good offices of the Dutch Consul, and after a month and a half's stay in that port she left for home on April 9th, arriving at Nagasaki on the 15th. After calling at Hyogo, the ship returned to Shinagawa on July 10th.

The party consisted of Yamaguchi-Sudzujiro 山口鑓次郎 and other officials of the Hakodate *bugyo's* office, two Hakodate merchants, and the ship's crew, a ship's company of over fifty all told. It is said that they took marine products from Hokkaido to Shanghai and brought back sugar, raw cotton, mercury, etc.

During their stay at Shanghai, they took the advice of the Dutch Consul in the matter of reports to the local Customs, in employing longshoremen, in hiring lighters, and

in warehousing their goods. They also learned from him particulars about Customs duties and warehouse rents. As in the case of the Senzai Maru a 2.5 per cent. commission (increased to four or five per cent. in some cases) was paid. They left all arrangements in these matters in the hands of the Dutch Consul.

A big profit was evidently realized by the sale of dried sea-slug, dried sea-ear and sliced tangle, as there was a shortage of these commodities at Shanghai. Shell-ligaments and dried cuttle-fish, which are regarded as indispensable foodstuffs by the Chinese, also fetched good prices, because they were scarce there, due to the fact that most foreign ships which brought back these provisions from the Hokkaido passed on to Canton, without calling at Shanghai. In this trade, it is said, a profit of some 1,300 *ryo* was realized. This is in singular contrast with the poor results of the Senzai Maru's trade.

8. CONCLUSION

The Tokugawa period is historically known as the age of exclusionism, but the exclusionist policy of the Shogunate underwent a marked change in its closing decades. It was finally supplanted by the policy of opening the country, though foreign trade was at first confined to transactions with foreign ships visiting these shores. Later, however, the need of developing overseas trade was urged by many people, with the result that the Shogunate at one time contemplated the dispatch of officials abroad to study trade problems. Finally, the dispatch of Japanese ships to foreign ports was definitely undertaken.

The Kameda Maru was the first Japanese ship to go abroad for the purpose of cultivating overseas trade. This ship, which was built in Japan, went to the Amur region under the command of a Japanese captain and manned by a crew of Japanese seamen. The Senzai Maru and the Kenjun Maru, which traded at Shanghai were both originally

foreign ships. While the *Senzai Maru* was operated by a foreign crew, the *Kenjun Maru's* crew was Japanese. The project once mooted to dispatch a Japanese ship to Hong-kong and Batavia, however, never materialised.

It is not clear exactly what gains or losses resulted from the trade in the above-mentioned three instances, but the fact that this form of overseas trade was undertaken by Japanese ships is in itself of considerable significance. Not only does it indicate that Japan had passed from the era of trade at home ports into that of overseas trade, but it served the purpose of acquainting her with conditions abroad as well. That an overseas voyage was undertaken by a Japanese crew on a ship built in Japan is also a matter worthy of special mention in the annals of Japanese communications. Furthermore, a precedent was now established for the purchase of foreign ships, which was later followed frequently by the Shogunate and the various Hans.*

In short, while admitting that the overseas trade undertaken by the Shogunate was the natural outcome of the new situation then developing, the courage shown in undertaking it deserves appreciation. Due notice must also be taken of the fact that it produced many other beneficial results, both directly and indirectly.

* Paske-Smith, *Western Barbarians in Japan and Formosa in Tokugawa Days*, Kobe, 1930, P. 223.
