

# Agency and Patronage in Eastern Translatology



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Edited by

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This volume is dedicated to

**His Highness Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi**  
**Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Ajman**  
United Arab Emirates



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ..... ix

Preface ..... xi  
Ahmed Ankit and Said Faiq

## **Japan**

Imports and Institutions: Official Patronage and (Non-)Publishing  
of Translations in Early Modern Japan..... 3  
Judy Wakabayashi

## **Korea**

Changing Paradigms, Shifting Loyalties: Translation of Children’s  
Literature in Colonial Korea (1900-1940) and North Korea  
(1940-1960) ..... 23  
Theresa Hyun

Court Interpreting Officials in Korea until 1392 ..... 35  
Kim, Nam Hui

## **China**

The Global and Local Power of a Translator: A Case Study ..... 55  
Xiaoyan Wang

## **Malaysia**

Vital Roles of a Commissioner in the Translation of an English  
Nonfiction Text into Malay ..... 89  
Norhazlina Husin, Rokiah Awang and Haslina Haroon

**India**

- “Names are for Other People’s Language”: Revisiting Language  
and Translation in India..... 111  
Rita Kothari
- Make It Telugu: Legitimizing Patron, Author and Text ..... 127  
Srinivas Reddy

**Iran**

- Agency in Literary Translation: The Case of Women Translators  
in Iran ..... 143  
Esmæil Haddadian-Moghaddam

**Turkey**

- Who is the Boss? Questioning *Power Relations* between the Translator  
and Editor in Turkish Literary Publications ..... 175  
Ayse Ayhan

**Arab World**

- Translation in the Arab Culture ..... 187  
Ahmed Ankit and Said Faiq
- Contributors ..... 199
- Index ..... 203

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Ahmed Ankit and Said Faiq  
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## PREFACE

That translation studies has witnessed a phenomenal shift since the 1980s is axiomatic. The focus in translation has shifted from (un)translatability to the cultural, political and economic ramifications of translation; away from concerns with translated texts (matter vs. manner), to treating translations as social, cultural and political acts taking place within and attached to global and local relations of power and dominance. It should be noted that this shift has, not surprisingly, been precipitated by work on orientalism, post-colonial and cultural studies, and by the questioning of the transparent and fluent strategies and practices of translating (representing) others (Faiq 2004). But the problem for translation is that it has been framed almost exclusively by and within Western discourses. One of the two editors (Said Faiq) recalls the surprised faces and perplexed looks when he added Arabic translation studies to a graduate course on translation studies at a UK university back in the 1990s. He also recalls the same reactions in 2002 when he added Arabic translation studies to a course on translation theory in a graduate program in Arabic/English translation and interpreting at a university in the Arab World—“this should go under history, area studies, heritage, oriental studies ...” were some of the comments. It may not be far from the truth to say that this situation prevails globally.

With a few exceptions here and there, the discourse of translation has been largely Western-oriented—in the wider sense of the term—covering Western European and North American discourses on translation. “Western” here does not necessarily refer to particular geographies, but rather to intellectual tendencies, paradigms and conceptions. There have been challenges, albeit not very vocal, to the so-called positivist take on what translation is and what it entails (restricting translation to one fixed definition). These challenges have mostly been initiated by scholars working within non-Western circles with a view to exploring the rich and diverse nature of other discourses and practices (traditions) of translation, and have on the whole emanated from the East (Asian traditions of translation, for example). There have also been voices within the Western discourse calling for the treatment of translation as an open concept to accommodate the various traditions.

The aim of such calls is to go beyond the often conflictual situation of Western vs non-Western discourses on/of translation to a situation whereby translation is seen as encompassing characteristics of different cultures in their representation, regulation, production and consumption of translation products as cultural goods. To this end, voices from non-Western discourses on translation need to be heard, promoted and diffused.

It is within this context of complementarity rather than opposition that this volume is located, as one of very few publications on translation traditions in/from the East. The theme cutting through the chapters is agency and patronage in Eastern Translatology (translation studies/traditions). Each in its fashion, the ten chapters explore agency and patronage, with the problematics of power as inevitable, in the examination of the interface and relations between agency and agents and patronage and patrons, including political leaders, commissioners, authors, translators, editors, publishers, and audiences.

The chapters, contributed by some of the world's leading scholars on Asian Translation Traditions, examine the common theme from different theoretical frameworks (framing of translation), methodologies, and special national (cultural) perspectives. Thus, from Japan in the east of the East, to Korea, China, Malaysia, India, Iran, Turkey, and to the Arab world, the west of the East, the authors explore issues that range from official patronage, shifting loyalties, the power of the translator, the role of the commissioner, the translator as a dis-unifier of cultural groups of one seemingly united nation, to the legitimization of patrons, authors and texts, women and agency in translation, power relations between translators and editors, and the agency of translation in nation-building.

Patronage, agency and power have become the subjects of important debates in translation studies, as affecting both macro and micro dimensions of translation and translating (socio-cultural and textual practices in/of a culture/nation). Patronage may include "a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers, and, last but not least, the media, both newspapers and magazines and larger television corporations" (Lefevere 1992: 15). Patrons affect decisions about what texts are chosen, translated and published. They also directly and indirectly affect the views of individual agents, including policy and decision-makers, translators, critics, media outlets and workers, and influential figures (for example philanthropists), as well as issues of stereotyping, ethnocentricity, racism, and prejudice. As such, patronage and agency within a web of power relations continue to be fascinating

topics in translation studies, under whatever guise in which they may be explored (such as the sociology, politics and/or ideology of translation).

Currently, there are calls for “new turns” in translation studies to perhaps jolt the field/discipline, and the chapters in this book will contribute greatly to such calls, since they offer a gateway to the rich and diverse traditions of translation emanating from the East. The book also goes a long way to contributing to a truly burgeoning discipline of cross-cultural and global translation, while providing insights into the complex network of power relations between patrons and agents (patronage and agency) that hugely affect the state and status of translation.

This volume will be of great interest to students (graduate and undergraduate) and researchers in *all* areas of translation studies. It will also provide a unique input for those studying and researching history, geopolitics, intercultural studies, globalization, and related areas—the surprised faces and perplexed looks.

Ahmed Ankit and Said Faiq  
Ajman and Sharjah (United Arab Emirates)  
July 2014

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**JAPAN**



# IMPORTS AND INSTITUTIONS: OFFICIAL PATRONAGE AND (NON-)PUBLISHING OF TRANSLATIONS IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

JUDY WAKABAYASHI

## 1. Introduction

Official patronage of translations of European works on the part of central and regional government authorities played a significant role in Edo-period Japan (1603–1867), since private patronage during this time was limited in scale and influence.<sup>1</sup> The most important patronage of European knowledge goods emanated from government authorities, and it is this nexus between power and knowledge transfer that is the focus here. This official patronage is analyzed through two aspects. The first is the imported European works, some of which were subsequently translated—i.e., the focus is on books as physical objects and what they tell us about Japanese readers’ interests under those particular social circumstances. The second aspect examined here is the official institutions that sponsored translations and trained translators. I argue that official patronage functioned to promote the production of translations while simultaneously restricting their dissemination to a narrowly-prescribed circle of readers because of the potentially destabilizing effect of these translated works on society and the power hierarchy. In terms of the “archaeology of translation” (St-Pierre 1993: 63), the focus here is on the ‘what’ and ‘who’ of translation history in Edo Japan. The specific timeframe is the century

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<sup>1</sup> Publishing houses played virtually no role in backing translations from European languages (unlike the situation with translations of Chinese vernacular novels, which had far greater marketing potential). Nor did religious authorities play any role in sponsoring translations of European works. Some wealthy merchants, although at the bottom rank of the four main tiers of Edo-period society, did provide financial support for scholars of ‘Dutch Learning’ (i.e., knowledge about the West).

from 1754, a few years after the reading of Dutch books had become allowed, to 1854, when Japan's national seclusion came to an end.

Methodologically, this paper is situated at the intersection of translation history, book history and institutional history. The first part analyzes the demand for and supply of European books<sup>2</sup> from two angles—i.e., the book orders submitted by various Japanese officials who were authorized to make such requests, and the books that were actually imported. These did not always coincide, and of course not all imported books subsequently underwent translation. Moretti (2005) has argued that counting books helps reintegrate the 'lost' archive of non-canonical works. Concentrating solely on well-known translations overlooks the broader picture of the far more numerous non-canonical translations that, while individually of less importance, were significant in their collective impact on society. (An emphasis on translations also ignores the influence of imported works that were read in the original, without being translated, but that is beyond the scope of the present study.) This section also examines the role of the state and regional officials involved in ordering these works and commissioning translations of some of them. The second part of the paper explores the role of official institutions that were engaged in translating these works and training translators, focusing on two different timeframes in the nineteenth century.

The historical background to these book imports was that by 1639 Japan had become a 'closed' country because of fear of potential external threats, mainly from Europeans who were making their religious and commercial presence increasingly felt in Asia. It was precisely because of these fears, however, that it was important to keep a small 'window' open for the Japanese authorities to learn about Europe and its more advanced science and technology. This was why the central military government (shogunate) gave permission to the Dutch, whose interests were confined to the commercial, to maintain a small trading post on the island of Dejima in the harbour of Nagasaki. They were the only Europeans allowed in Japan for over two centuries, and their movements were highly restricted. Each trading season brought a small number of Dutch ships, which arrived at Dejima with cargoes that often included some European books. The first Japanese to lay hands on these were usually the official hereditary

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<sup>2</sup> European works were in fact outnumbered by imported Chinese works (works originally written in Chinese as well as Chinese translations of European works). Chinese works also contributed to Japan's incipient modernization and the formation of a modern lexicon, and there was, for instance, official sponsorship of translations of Chinese scientific works. The focus here, however, is on European works.

translators known as *tsūji*. Employed by the government to act as translators-cum-interpreters as well as customs officials, and even as spies on the Dutch, the bilingual *tsūji* had privileged access to imported works, and for about a century, this gave them a virtual monopoly on European knowledge. Although the core of their day-to-day work was trade-related translation and interpreting duties, some of the more scholarly-minded *tsūji*, over time and on their own initiative, also took on the translation of European scientific works (*not* literature or works from the humanities). The linguistic expertise and scientific knowledge acquired in the course of their work meant they accrued influence well beyond their lowly official position. From the mid-eighteenth century, and in order to access this valuable knowledge, some scholars from the capital Edo (present-day Tokyo) studied Dutch under the *tsūji* and took up translation. The shogunate and provincial domain authorities increasingly commissioned and/or sponsored scientific-technical translations by both groups of translators, so as to use advanced European knowledge to protect and, within limits, modernize Japan or their own provinces.

Official patronage of translations in Edo Japan constituted an attempt by the secular authorities to centralize and monopolize information from abroad as part of foreign and domestic policy. Thus the translation process became highly politicized, with translations used as an effective vehicle of *circumscribed* change. There was a utilitarian focus on knowledge goods, rather than cultural works, much less on instigating widespread social change. Unlike in the subsequent Meiji period (1868–1912), therefore, these translations did not lead to a “thorough-going intellectual re-orientation” (Jansen 1957: 592). Nevertheless, they laid the grounds for a gradual yet influential shift in thinking and in the practice of science and technology in Japan.

## **2. Book orders and book imports**

### **2.1. Pull-driven demand as reflected in Japanese book orders**

The fact that Dejima was the sole channel for orders and imports of European books allows us to track the pull- and push-driven demand for foreign works. Here, ‘pull-driven’ demand refers to book orders submitted to the Dutch on Dejima by various Japanese entities, while ‘push-driven’ refers to works imported by the Dutch themselves as gifts for Japanese officials or in anticipation of what might interest (and be purchased by) the Japanese. The primary source (in both the sense of the main source and that of a source originating in that historical period) of information about

pull-driven demand on the part of the Japanese is the order forms submitted to the Dutch up until 1857. These orders by the Japanese are a better indicator of actual demand than official gifts from the Dutch or imports by the Dutch based on assumptions about Japanese interests. As Chaiklin (2003: 69) points out, these orders “illustrate the quest for knowledge in a restricted society.” The order forms (*Eisch Boeken*)—41 of which are extant<sup>3</sup> although more existed—reveal the interests of specific Japanese parties in a range of European items, including books. The orders probably began around 1765 or earlier (Ōmori 1988: 233), even if at that stage they were not yet properly formalized. Existing studies of these order forms include those by MacLean (1974), Ōmori (1988), Chaiklin (2003) and Nagazumi (2008). The orders show that some requests were submitted repeatedly by the Japanese without being met. The reason remains unclear, as these works do not seem to have been particularly sensitive in nature. Censorship of foreign works—the reverse side of patronage—was certainly in place during this period, particularly with regard to works that mentioned the banned religion of Christianity, but no thematic pattern is discernible in these unfulfilled repeat requests. Nor is there any indication of censorship on the part of the Dutch. It is possible that the requested works were simply not available in the home country at that time or that the Dutch did not regard the importation of these particular works as commercially viable, although it is just as likely that the reasons for not fulfilling these orders were largely haphazard. Overall, however, it seems that most orders were indeed met, even though it often took a few years for the items to arrive.

The orders mention seven ranks of officials who were permitted to submit orders, from the shogun down to the *tsūji*. Broadly classified, those eligible fell into two categories: (1) officials in the central government; and (2) officials involved in the administration of Nagasaki or in relations with the Dutch (Ōmori 1988: 240). Orders by the latter regional group outnumbered those by the former group at the centre of government. The books ordered included dictionaries in various European languages, encyclopedias, astronomical calendars, and specialized works in a range of fields. As an example of the content of these orders, Table 1, which draws on Ōmori (1988: 237–8) and MacLean (1974: 27), shows the book orders that were submitted in 1809.

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<sup>3</sup> The order forms are kept in the General State Archives in The Hague.

**Table 1: Orders for European books submitted in 1809**

<b>Title of person submitting the order</b>	<b>Books ordered</b>
Shogun	Almanacs; Pieter Marin's <i>Woordenboek</i> , 6th ed. (three sets); English-Dutch dictionaries (three sets); an English grammar; <i>Trap der Jeugt</i> ; <i>Spelkunst</i> ; Russian-Dutch dictionaries (three sets); a book on writing the Dutch almanac; book by E. Kaempfer (possibly <i>De Beschrijving van Japan</i> ). <sup>4</sup>
A Nagasaki commissioner (Tsoetia Kie no Cammi Samma <sup>5</sup> )	Books on artillery and the preparation of gunpowder, bombs, shells and combustible substances.
A senior Nagasaki town official (Takashima Shirobei)	Book on various kinds of birds.
Another senior Nagasaki town official (head burgomaster, Gotto Sotaro Samma <sup>6</sup> )	Two books on astronomy (Pybo Steenstra's astronomical table).
<i>Tsūji</i>	Book on botany; two sets of Noël Chomel's encyclopedia ( <i>Huishoudelijk woordenboek</i> ; 9 vols); Jérôme Lalande's <i>Astronomie</i> (5 vols); Kaempfer's book; new world atlas; François Valentijn's <i>Beschrijving van de hele wereld</i> on geography; English-Dutch dictionary; Marin's dictionary and two sets of the 6th edition; Lorenz Heister's <i>Chirurgie</i> on surgery; book about Russia; Steenstra's <i>Beschrijving der Stuurlieden</i> on astronomy; François Halma's Dutch-French dictionary (two sets) and one set of the 4th or 5th edition of Egbert Buys' <i>Woordenboek</i> . Also writing materials, scientific instruments, and items for use in medical treatment.

<sup>4</sup> Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716) was a German doctor who visited Japan in 1690 and 1696, passing himself off as Dutch in order to gain entry. After his departure, he wrote a book about Japan titled *De Beschrijving van Japan*. Its appendix included a chapter in which, after listing several of the disadvantages of national isolation, Kaempfer concluded that isolation was not necessarily a problem, since Japan was self-sufficient. This outsider's views on Japan's seclusion were clearly of potential interest to the shogun.

<sup>5</sup> This is the Dutch spelling of the name of Tsuchiya Ki-i no Kami.

<sup>6</sup> Gotō Sōtarō.

What is most striking about this is that out of the ranks eligible to submit orders, it was the lowly *tsūji* who were the most keen to acquire these sources of European knowledge. Not only did they order more works than the higher-ranking officials, but these books were also more wide-ranging in content, indicating the intellectual curiosity of the *tsūji*.

The orders submitted by or on behalf of the shogun (who was the most powerful figure in Edo Japan, not the emperor) constituted interest from the very top. They were, however, largely limited to almanacs (which were included in every order and hence not shown below) and linguistic rather than scientific works, as indicated in Table 2. The different shoguns also evinced interest in how Japan was perceived by Europeans, as indicated by the four items in bold type below.

**Table 2: European works ordered by various shoguns**

Year	Works ordered by the shogun
1757	Dutch translation of Heister's book on surgery
1791	Valentijn's <i>Oud en Nieuw</i> (8 vols); Buijs' <i>Woordenboek</i> (10 vols)
1794	Valentijn's <i>Reysebeschrijving</i> ; Jacob Buys' <i>Werken</i> (works)
1801	<b>Kaempfer's <i>De Beschrijving van Japan</i></b>
1814	English-Dutch and Dutch-English dictionaries (2 vols.); a book on the sextant; <b><i>Kaempfer on Japan</i></b> (1 vol.)
1817	Lalande's <i>Astronomie</i> , 8 vols.
1818	Russian and German grammar and dictionary
1825	Four dictionaries (German, Dutch, French, Portuguese)
1826	Three dictionaries (German, Portuguese, Spanish)
1830	Set of German-Dutch dictionaries
1833	Chinese and French dictionary, with supplement; Italian and French dictionary, 2 vols. (into Dutch); Portuguese and French dictionary, 2 vols. (into Dutch); Spanish and French dictionary, 2 vols. (into Dutch); German and Dutch dictionary, 2 vols.; Russian and German dictionary (into Dutch)
1834	<b>Hendrik Doeff's memoir <i>Herinneringen uit Japan</i>; Overmeer Fisscher's <i>Bijdragen tot de kennis van Japan</i></b>
1844	Merkus. <i>Vestingbouwkunde</i> ; <i>Exercitierreglement der Veldartillerie</i> ; <i>Aanhangsel op idem</i> ; <i>Uitrustingsstaat</i> ; De Bruyn. <i>Voorlezingen voor de artillerie over buskurid, gieterij etc.</i> ; Scharnhorst. <i>Mil. Zakboek</i> ; Incomplete work by Philipp Franz von Siebold ( <i>Koloniën</i> , no. 717, no. 9)

The shoguns were not the only important officials who ordered European books. From 1820, the names of certain provincial lords (*daimyō*), along with those of other high-ranking officials, also appear on

the book orders as purchasers of European works. However, of the 60 or more *daimyō* in Edo Japan at any given time, the extant orders include orders from only five *daimyō* during the period under examination, and only two *daimyō* submitted more than one order (Chaiklin 2003: 62). Because these feudal lords represented potential ‘competition’ to the shogunate, they needed special permission, at least for certain purchases. But, as discussed below, some *daimyō* were active in patronizing the translation of European knowledge works. The ranks of the other high officials who ordered European books included *rōjū* (members of the council of ministers), *wakatoshiyori* (junior councilors), *daikan* (governors), commissioners and *machitoshiyori* (city elders).

By far the most numerous orders, however, came from a group outside the main official circles—i.e., Het Collegie (College of Interpreters). This was the *tsūji* guild, which ordered dictionaries, medical and military works, and other Dutch works. Their day-to-day contact with the Dutch, especially the surgeons stationed on Dejima, made the *tsūji* keenly aware of the ways in which European learning was superior to Japanese knowledge at that time. They ordered certain key works repeatedly (e.g., Dutch/French dictionaries by Halma and Marin), so it is possible or likely that over time all or most of the *tsūji* came to have access to their ‘own’ dictionary, rather than having to share around these valuable but initially scarce resources.

## 2.2. Actual book imports

My task was made easier by the fact that earlier researchers (notably MacLean 1974) have already done the groundwork in compiling and translating into English the lists of items imported by the Japanese in this period (which included not just books but a wide range of scientific instruments, household goods, and animals, to mention just a few categories). Hence all that was necessary here was to identify and extract book-related items and compile a spreadsheet to be used as the basis of the analysis.

As noted earlier, not all book orders were filled by the Dutch. The orders for 1825 are one example of the compliance rate. In that year a total of 618 items (not just books) were ordered by the shogun (24 items), 19 other individuals, and the *tsūji* guild (74 items) (Ōmori 1988: 245). Of these 618 items, only 44.3 percent were actually imported in the next trading season. (The round trip took two years, so they might have arrived later.) However, Chaiklin (2003: 51) has disputed Ōmori’s findings on the compliance rate, arguing that the “documents support the assumption that

the orders were filled to the best of the Company's (VOC) ability, just not always with the alacrity the Japanese desired", and that "Ultimately, the statistics will be arbitrary".<sup>7</sup>

Since not all works ordered by the Japanese were supplied, it is important to make a distinction between the book orders and actual imports. Ordered books did not always arrive the following year or at all, so although orders are an excellent indicator of Japanese demand for European works, it is also important to focus more narrowly on actual arrivals—i.e., those that had the potential to exercise an impact in Japan. Here, the Dejima records of imports are an important source of information. They show that in some years, no ships arrived from Europe or the ships carried no books. This would have made those books that did arrive even more valued. The first book imports listed by MacLean (1974) were in 1754,<sup>8</sup> but a handful of books had already been imported and translated prior to that. The records show that in the entire Edo period, about 6,000 volumes of Dutch books were imported (Ōmori 1991: 207), including multiple volumes of the same work on numerous occasions. Imports of these multiple copies were often spread out over time, but they also often arrived on the same ship (e.g., 12 copies of Marin's *Méthode familière, pour ceux qui commencent à s'exercer dans la langue française* arrived on the *De Dortenaar* in 1834), indicating the demand and the possibility of passing these works on to other interested readers in some form or other. Moreover, some works were multi-volume sets (e.g., a 37-volume set of Linnaeus' *Kruidkunde* for the *tsūji* guild in 1824), indicating the thirst for knowledge, as well as the magnitude of the task of reading and translating these works or even part of them. Hence the number of discrete works imported was considerably less than 6,000. Of particular note is the preponderance of bilingual dictionaries in which Dutch was the target language—particularly French-Dutch dictionaries, but also from other languages such as Latin. The imported works also included many *woordenboek* (glossaries). The many imports of grammars were mostly grammars of Dutch, but a Latin grammar was imported in 1814. The imports even included spelling books, indicating the basic level of *tsūji* needs even a century after the first encounter with the Dutch language (a level that makes their achievements in producing scientific translations even more noteworthy). Certain authors were repeatedly imported.

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<sup>7</sup> VOC stands for Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, the Dutch East India Company, which was in charge of trade with Japan.

<sup>8</sup> MacLean (1974: 56) suggests that it was not until after 1745 that the reading of Dutch texts was permitted.

It is essential to note that ‘imported’ did not necessarily mean ‘translated’. I have no complete statistics as to the proportion of imported books that were eventually translated into Japanese. An 1852 catalogue of translated Western works lists 174 printed books in 756 volumes and 288 manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> Focusing on medical works, Cullen (2003: 15) claims that “A total of 189 works, either medical or containing medical knowledge, were translated from Dutch into some 473 books or manuscripts (the latter sometimes recopied).” He does not specify any timeframe, but seems to be referring to the period from the late eighteenth century into the early nineteenth century. Caution is needed, however, when dealing with such statistics because of their incomplete and often subjective nature. Despite the lack of precise statistics as to the proportion of translated works, it seems reasonable to assume that some imported works were read in their original language without immediately (or ever) being translated into Japanese. This presents a methodological problem. On the one hand, focusing solely on translations overlooks the broader interest in and impact of imported works. On the other hand, focusing on the big picture—i.e., the impact of imported European works on Japanese society—makes the study unmanageable, and we lose sight of the specific role of translation as a vehicle for introducing knowledge from outside Japan. Although no ready solution to this problem presents itself, it is important at least to keep this distinction in mind when drawing conclusions about the role of European works in Edo Japan.

One route by which the imported works reached a broader readership than the officials who were authorized to submit orders was through the private trade (*kambang*) that flourished alongside these official imports. This private trade involved items ordered by people other than the shogun, and it was greater in quantity and diversity than the official trade. Despite its unofficial status, from 1685 the Japanese authorities permitted and encouraged this side trade, which was a profitable source of income for the *tsūji*, and books constituted an important part of this. However, after 1820 when foreign trade was subjected to stricter regulations, a quota was imposed on private trade. As noted earlier, the Dutch themselves acted as agents of push-driven imports and also as a ‘filter’ for the types of books selected to be sent to Japan. After the imposition of the quota in 1820, the Dutch organized their own Personal Trade Association for a short period

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<sup>9</sup> *Seiyō gakuka yakujutsu mokuroku* [Bibliography of translations of Western writings] was compiled by the ‘Master of the Grainear Pavilion’ (Hotei shujin). It was completed in 1852 and published in 1854 (Miyashita 1975: 9). The catalogue records the names of 117 translators. The focus was on medical works, but it also includes works on other sciences, such as astronomy and geography.

between 1826 and 1830, motivated mainly by the potential to greatly supplement the incomes earned from the Dutch East India Company. In 1827, for instance, over 40 books were imported via this route (Nagazumi 2008: 16).

### 3. Institutional support for translations

#### 3.1. The first wave

During the nineteenth century, a growing awareness of Western nations as a potential threat to national security and of the knowledge gap that placed Japan at a technological disadvantage led to certain institutions lending their support to the production of translations of European works. To avoid potential colonization, it was vital for Japan to catch up with European knowledge, so these institutions had a vested interest in patronizing translations of scientific and technical works in order to contribute to the production of Japanese modernity. Yet although these institutions supported the translation of such works, they also regulated the inflow of foreign knowledge and restricted its dissemination to a narrow circle, at least initially, so as to retain control over this valuable information.

Growing concerns about the possible European encroachment led, in 1803, to the establishment of the Waran shoseki wage goyō [Office Dedicated to Translating Western Books]<sup>10</sup> within the Astronomical Observatory (Tenmondai) in Edo, and the first works translated there were on geography. Since scholars in Edo were not yet capable of translating European works, some veteran *tsūji* were sent from Nagasaki. This marked the establishment of the first full-time official translator positions in the capital. It also marked the start of government patronage of translations, since previously-published translations were private efforts, even when commissioned by shōgun or *daimyō*. This move integrated the *tsūji* into “the traditional framework of scholarly studies operating under State patronage” (Horiuchi 2003: 169), and new information networks were formed (Jannetta 2007: 68). This translation office helped legitimize the translation of ‘barbarian’ works and extended Dutch Learning beyond the narrow circle of *tsūji* and the scholars in Edo.

In 1811, the Bansho Wage Goyō [Office for the Translation of Barbarian Books] was established within the Bureau of Astronomy (Tenmonkata) to translate Dutch works, because relying on the *tsūji* in

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<sup>10</sup> Fukuoka (2012: 44).

Nagasaki for translations was too slow in emergencies. This office had predominantly utilitarian goals, rather than an interest in translating works revealing European thought. The initial aim was specifically to translate a Dutch version of Chomel's 7-volume *Dictionnaire Oeconomique*. This undertaking continued until 1840 and constituted the largest translation project in Edo times. The Bureau of Astronomy enjoyed a near-monopoly on government-supported translation projects, and had a particular focus on military works. In 1841, the perceived need to boost coastal defences led a member of the Council of Elders to order the translation of Dutch books on military matters. There was still little concern for fostering the 'civilization and enlightenment' that later became a feature of the early Meiji period. Nevertheless, translations did help broaden the common intellect as ideas of and about European culture seeped in. For instance, in the 1840s, the same Elder ordered translations of the Dutch Constitution, Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure—documents containing difficult and unfamiliar legal concepts that must have presented considerable challenges to the translators. Unlike more directly practical works, these legal translations were intended for the private use of the Council of Elders, because they might spark "politically dangerous ideas", and nothing is known about what happened to them after presentation to the authorities (Verwaijen 1996: 66). It is reasonable to assume, however, that they helped shape the views of the influential Council of Elders.

Patronage of translations occurred both within and outside the centre of government, and these different kinds of patrons offered different advantages. The shogunate could enlist the services of specialists from around the nation, thereby facilitating larger-scale translations, but the smaller budgets of the provincial domains led to more concentrated and efficient translation efforts (Jansen 1957: 574). Until the rule of shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune<sup>11</sup> (1716–45), there had been little domain patronage of translations of European works except in the fields of medicine and gunnery. After Yoshimune relaxed his policies on the study of the West in 1720, studies of the Dutch language commenced on a more formal footing, and some *daimyō* became keen financial supporters of scholars of Dutch Learning. Again, they were pragmatically motivated by a desire for practical knowledge. They provided financial support for their scholars to study Dutch and Dutch Learning in Nagasaki, and some of these scholars went on to translate various works.

One notable *daimyō* patron of translations was Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758–1829), who began collecting Dutch works around 1792. Dutch

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<sup>11</sup> Japanese names are written with the family name first.

Learning was at its height during his lifetime, and he employed people to translate Dutch documents that would contribute to Japan's welfare. He wished to acquire this knowledge, but also to restrict its spread. He was behind the first domain-sponsored translation of a Dutch work, when *Dodoneusu sōmokufu* [The Western herbal of Dodonæus illustrated] was translated by Ishii Tsune'emon. Herbalist Yoshida Masayasu subsequently spent 38 years revising and completing this undertaking, and their combined half a century of work resulted in 35 volumes in 1842, representing one of the largest and most important Edo-period translation projects. Another notable patron of translations was *daimyō* Shimazu Nariakira (1809–58), who “commissioned translations of Dutch books on steamships, steam engines, telegraphy, gas-lighting and photography, inviting some of those who carried out the translations to join a kind of science institute in the grounds of his Kagoshima castle, where they supervised production of the equipment their books described” (Beasley 1995: 49). Shimazu employed nearly all of the leading Dutch scholars at one time or another (Goodman 2000: 158). Another domain that patronized translations was the small but progressive Ōno domain, whose Yōgakukan institution, established in 1856 for teaching Dutch and translating works on navigation and military matters, attracted students from around the nation.

The 1850s were a time of concurrent patronage of and restrictions on translations. The growing need for training in Western technology and military science to ensure national survival boosted official patronage of translations. The shogunate did not, however, want the public (particularly *daimyō*) to have direct contact with Western knowledge, especially knowledge about guns. Hence *daimyō* wishing to have books on defense translated had to obtain permission and then present a copy of the completed translation to the shogunate. Anyone selling or translating European books that had not been inspected in Nagasaki was punished.

### 3.2. The second wave

The second wave of institutional support of translations occurred in the late nineteenth century when Japan was pressured into ending its self-enforced national seclusion by the arrival of the American Commodore Matthew Perry in July 1853. The following month, Katsu Kaishū (1823–99), an expert on European military science, proposed the establishment of a school to teach the sciences (including military science) and to translate and publish Western works. Until then, what had been known as Dutch Learning and then Western Learning had been placed under strict control,

but now the government itself introduced Western Learning. This was partly motivated by a desire to remove the translation of military and political secrets from the hands of the Bureau of Astronomy, which was ordered to stop translating in 1856 (Jansen 1957: 578–9). The shogunate made the Office for the Translation of Barbarian Books independent in 1855 and moved it to Kudanzakashita, where the Bansho Shirabesho (Institute for the Study of Barbarian Books) opened in 1857. This became the main government-sponsored institution of Western Learning and centralized the translation of Western works, providing the shogunate with a practical monopoly by attracting most of the outstanding scholars of Dutch. Its focus was on *translating* books on foreign affairs, military matters and other urgent affairs, *collecting* existing translations, and *training* translators and interpreters. Most of the students were samurai from provincial domains, and all of them were funded by the shogunate. At first they studied only Dutch, but English, French, German and Russian were added from 1859 into the early 1860s. The main works translated were Dutch scientific works and news articles, and writings on practical matters and technical manuals were also translated.

At the Bansho Shirabesho, institutional activities and norms intersected with the translation work of individual instructor-translators. Instructors also sometimes helped out with translations for the Office of Foreign Affairs. The position of official translator in the foreign affairs office was established in 1859, and diplomatic documents were supposed to be translated by assistant foreign affairs commissioners. However, when there were important documents or just too many to handle, they were translated by Bansho Shirabesho instructors, who were obliged to show their translations to the junior elders, although it is debatable whether these officials had the linguistic competence necessary for genuine monitoring of the translations. Conversely, outside scholars were also used as translators by the Bansho Shirabesho when necessary.

Although power was at work more in the *products* (the selection of source languages and texts) than in the *process* (the translation approaches adopted), translation and teaching were intimately-related functions at the Bansho Shirabesho, and this helped shape translation norms. Article 6 of a revised memorandum dated June 1855 represents an early codification of ethical principles, stating that secrets learned in the course of translators' duties must not be divulged to others and that a pledge to that effect must be submitted.

Although the Bansho Shirabesho was initially created to produce translations and train translators, over time, it also came to *regulate* translation. An 1856 order stated that translations of Western works had to

be examined and approved by the Bansho Shirabesho. After commercial treaties with Western powers came into effect in 1859, this institution became responsible for supervising all imported books, so as to guard against politically- or religiously-subversive material.

In May 1862, the Bansho Shirabesho's name changed to Yōsho Shirabesho [Institute for the Study of Western Books]. In the following year, its fields of translation expanded to include the natural and social sciences, as well as works on industrial problems (machinery, smelting, etc.), and in response, the name changed again in August to Kaiseijo [Institute for Development]. It became a more comprehensive institute aimed at providing a wide-ranging education for samurai, not 'just' a language/translation institute, and it grew rapidly. In 1861, there had been only about 100 students (accepted from around 1,000 initial applicants) in the whole Bansho Shirabesho, but by October 1866 the number had grown to 150 students just for English, and this figure doubled to 300 by December. For French, the numbers rose from 60 in October to 100 in December. This growth was evidence not of an intrinsic interest in these languages, but of a desire to learn about Western matters (Tōkyō daigaku hyakunenshi henshū iinkai 1984: 41). Until then, the main focus of Western Learning had been on practical matters such as medicine, astronomy and gunnery, but instructors such as Nishi Amane, Tsuda Mamichi and Katō Hiroyuki were interested in the humanities and social sciences and expanded the institute's range of interests.

The shogunate's attempts to control foreign learning in the closing years of the Edo period were not altogether successful. The importation and dissemination of books by the domains was increasingly beyond the shogunate's ability to control, and foreign merchants also sold books. Nor could the Kaiseijo any longer handle the work of instruction and translation alone. Eventually the knowledge contained in translated works became broadly available, contributing to the end of feudalism and the beginning of Japan's modernization. In that sense, these translations played a subversive role, despite having been sponsored by the authorities.

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which brought the Edo period to a close, the Kaiseijo was taken over by the new government and became the Kaisei Gakkō [Kaisei School]. Its instructors continued to produce translations for the government. Since most people who were competent in foreign languages were based there, government ministries and bureaus would ask the Kaisei Gakkō for translations. It also translated the imported books on geography and physics that were needed as school textbooks. Many Kaiseijo instructors went on to become influential cultural leaders (e.g., Nishi, Katō, Tsuda, Kanda Kōhei, Mitsukuri Shūhei).