

What's in a word?: the crucial role played by interpreters and translators in the opening of Japan to Western influence, Part One, 1805-1855

William McOmie

The act of oral interpretation and written translation between different languages is often conceived of as a passive transmission of meaningful 'equivalents' from one language to another. Yet in reality it is an active process of selection by the interpreter or translator of the words in one language that are judged to most accurately convey the meaning expressed in another language. However, semantic accuracy may not always be the criterion, nor should it be. Something like 'poetic license' is granted to 'interpret' meaning creatively or selectively. In short, there is always the potential for an interpreter or translator to become a writer, diplomat, adviser or influential mover of history. In this article we will explore these themes in the context of the wider opening of Japanese ports to commercial and diplomatic intercourse in the closing years of the Japanese shogunate. In particular, we will investigate the role that the Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch (オランダ通詞) played in facilitating the gradual but radical shift in consensus among the Japanese ruling elite from the traditional "closed country" policy (sakoku) 鎖国 to a wider opening to foreign influence (kaikoku) 開国.

As Goodman (1986) has noted the Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch were the special group of Japanese who during the long residence of the Dutch traders on Deshima in Nagasaki had the most intimate and frequent contact with them, and were responsible for dealing with their everyday needs. However, for the first few decades of their confinement on Deshima, the main lingua franca to communicate with the Dutch traders was Portuguese. It was not until the beginning of the 18th century that Portuguese was fully replaced by Dutch, but the Nagasaki interpreters could only learn it orally, being forbidden to read or write it. When in 1745 the prohibition on reading Dutch books was rescinded, and writing in Dutch was also permitted, the Nagasaki interpreters could begin to improve their command of it. Their knowledge of Dutch was an essential point of departure for the later development of so-called Dutch studies 蘭学 (rangaku), which would eventually help create the national consensus toward opening the country to Western influence.

Ironically, it was the founder of Dutch studies in Nagasaki Shizuki Tadao, 志筑忠雄 who in 1801 invented the term "sakoku" 鎖国 in his influential translation of Englebert Kaempfer's famous essay published in a Dutch (mis) translation. It would provide the historical and ideological justification to rebuff repeated Russian, American, British and French attempts to open Japanese ports to commerce for the next half century. As Toby (1994) has documented the term came to be applied retroactively even by professional historians to describe the 17th century limited exclusion edicts that were not intended to completely close the country and, in fact, did not. Nevertheless, it became the standard term to characterize the strict limitation and regulation of foreign relations in the Edo period.⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, the Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch could communicate directly with the Dutch traders on

Deshima and other foreigners who spoke that language. As a result, their nominal role as interpreters and translators would often by necessity also include that of de facto diplomatic and cultural advisor.

Indeed, as Goodman states, the hereditary Japanese interpreters of Dutch, besides their obvious role as linguists, also served as commercial and intelligence agents, or spies.⁽²⁾ Although the primary espionage agents were the 'inspectors' 目付け (metsuke), the interpreters were in a position to report on foreigners visiting or residing in Japan. Beginning in the late 18th century as the number of other foreigners, primarily Europeans and Americans, who visited that port gradually increased, the interpreters of Dutch were given the responsibility to communicate and manage the often difficult relations with them.

The striking contrast in the dominant cultural values of individual freedom and dignity of post-Enlightenment Europe versus the emphasis on restrictions on individual freedom in a strict social hierarchy in Neo-Confucian Tokugawa Japan is illustrated in the following conversation between the Russian envoy Nikolai Rezanov (Николай Резанов) and the interpreter of Dutch Motoki Shozaemon (本木庄左衛門) that took place in 1805, during Rezanov's long stay in Nagasaki:

Rezanov: Why don't you act more humanely toward foreigners? Why do you confine them?

Motoki: What confinement? It's only a ritual.

Rezanov: What do you mean—ritual? It's involuntary and very cruel.

Motoki: Involuntary to sit only for a while, while we are deprived of freedom for a whole century and don't get bored. So what does it cost you to show a little patience?⁽³⁾

For Motoki, patience was above all what Westerners lacked and the Japanese possessed in abundance. He advised Rezanov that only by demonstrating patience did he have a chance to succeed in his mission. And patience came from self-abnegation. Motoki frankly confessed that "The government does not allow us to have individual feelings." What Motoki probably had in mind was individual opinions about government policies and public affairs, rather than personal feelings about one's private life.

Moreover, the Nagasaki Dutch interpreters by virtue of their privileged knowledge of a foreign language, were in a position to exercise control over what was translated into Japanese and how it was translated thereby influencing the decisions made by their superiors and the outcomes of interrogations and negotiations. These examples as well as many others highlight the indispensable role of the multilingual interpreters and translators and the influence that they might exert on the outcome of negotiations as well as the real risks that their activity entailed on the frontlines of Western and Japanese intercourse in the bakumatsu period.

In this first article, I will focus on the activities of some of the most prominent Nagasaki interpreters in that period, and, especially on the career of the talented Nagasaki interpreter of Dutch and English, and shogunate official Moriyama Einosuke (Takichiro) 森山栄之助 (多吉郎) (1820–71). With his unique command of and fluency in both Dutch and English, together with his native Japanese, Moriyama became an indispensable channel of intercultural and diplomatic communication and treaty negotiations between the Japanese and Americans, British, Dutch and Russians in the crucial years from 1845 to 1858 that resulted in the opening of Japan to commercial and diplomatic relations with the West in 1859. He continued to play an important role as interpreter and official up until the end of the shogunate in 1868, accompanying the first British minister to Japan Rutherford Alcock to London and serving as interpreter and translator during the first Japanese diplomatic mission to Europe in 1862. (This first article will narrate his life and career through 1855.)

The central role played by Moriyama in the negotiations and relations between Japan and foreign countries

is attested in both Japanese and Western accounts; he figures prominently in Ranald MacDonald's autobiographical Narrative, Commodore Perry's official Narrative, as well as in Goncharov's Frigate Pallada and other major foreign accounts. From them can be gained an appreciation of how Moriyama combined the talents of a linguist, and interests of a scholar with the tactical skills of a diplomat. We can also learn about the details of his physical appearance and personality, and how they were reflected in his personal life and professional career.

The Origins of English Study in Japan

In the tragic wake of the hostile actions and deceptive conduct of the young captain of the English frigate *Phaeton* in October 1808, as a practical measure, the formal study of English, French and Russian was instituted. Motoki Shozaemon was ordered by the shogunate to study English with the Dutch factor (opperhoofd) Hendrik Doeff, and his successor Jan Cock Blomhoff. Motoki was the first Nagasaki interpreter of Dutch to study English and compiled the first Japanese-English dictionary.

The growing importance of English, relative to Dutch, was again demonstrated in 1814 and 1815 by two attempts by Stamford Raffles during the British control of the Dutch colony of Batavia to take over the Dutch trade in Nagasaki by sending English ships disguised as Dutch. Both attempts were foiled by Doeff, who had threatened to expose the ships and crew as English, with the memory of the ritual suicide of the magistrate and some others resulting from the *Phaeton* captain's hostile actions still fresh in the memory of the local Japanese officials.

Moriyama Einosuke: heir to a prominent family of Dutch interpreters in Nagasaki

Moriyama has recently received greater attention from Japanese historians based in Nagasaki. In particular, the recent biography by Egoshi Hiroto 江越弘人 (2006) provides more details about his family background and personal life, as well as suppositions about his professional career than heretofore. Moriyama Einosuke, born in 1820, was the eldest son of Moriyama Genichiro, a senior interpreter of Dutch in Nagasaki. Although his father was not involved in the Siebold affair in 1829 he changed his name to Genichiro as a result. Among some twenty families comprising over a hundred hereditary interpreters of Dutch in Nagasaki, the Moriyama family was a well-established but relatively new one.

The young Einosuke demonstrated both talent for and interest in foreign languages. As an apprentice interpreter, he studied Dutch very diligently and achieved an excellent command of the spoken and written language. Recognizing the growing importance of English, Einosuke also studied English vocabulary and grammar from the few available Dutch-English and Dutch-Japanese dictionaries, as well as presumably the English-Japanese dictionary compiled by Motoki. He also must have sought out any of the Dutch merchants on Dejima who spoke English.

In 1844 the Dutch warship *Palembang* brought an official letter to Nagasaki from the Dutch king Willem II addressed to the Japanese shogun (Ieyoshi), which urged the shogun to open some Japanese ports to commercial and diplomatic intercourse with the leading Western nations, in particular the UK, and France, before he was compelled to do so as the Qing emperor was after China's defeat in the recent Opium war with the UK. Moriyama Genichiro, along with others, was entrusted with its translation into Japanese.

The Whaler *Manhattan* Returns Japanese Drifters to Uraga

In 1843, in recognition of his excellence as an interpreter, the shogunate stationed the 23-year-old Moriyama, with his even younger fellow interpreter, Hori Tatsunosuke, 堀達之助 in Uraga at the entrance to Edo bay to go aboard any foreign ships that appeared there.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, Moriyama was called upon to interpret when the American whaling ship *Manhattan*, bringing a group of Japanese seamen rescued from the wreckage of their boat, was towed into Uraga harbor on April 18, 1845. The captain of the ship, Mercator Cooper, described how Japanese of all ranks swarmed aboard, and how the 25-year old Moriyama was able to communicate effectively despite a very limited English vocabulary.

“The ship was immediately visited by a great number of people of all ranks, from the governor of [Edo] and the high officers attached to the person of the emperor, [shogun] arrayed in golden and gorgeous tunics, to the lowest menials, clothed in rags. All were filled with an insatiable curiosity to see the strangers and inspect the thousand novelties present to their view.”

“The captain [Cooper] was very soon informed by a native interpreter [Moriyama] who had been taught Dutch and who could speak a few words of English but who could talk still more intelligibly by signs, that neither he nor his crew would be allowed to go out of the ship, and that if they should attempt it, they would be put to death. This fact was communicated by the very significant symbol of drawing a naked sword across the throat.”⁽⁵⁾

From this quotation we may conclude that Moriyama still had only a very limited knowledge of English, but that he compensated for that lack of vocabulary through a very effective use of gestures, signs and other non-verbal means. It is doubtful that Captain Cooper interpreted the throat-cutting gesture literally, although it was probably meant to be so, in order to discourage the Americans from attempting to go ashore, in violation of Japanese laws. Cooper nonetheless clearly stated his intention to abide by all Japanese laws and so neither he nor any of his crew ventured to go ashore during their brief visit.

Hirao Nobuko 平尾信子 (1994) mentioned Moriyama's crucial role as interpreter and translator during the visit of this American ship. The shogunate issued a document which explained its strict seclusion laws and emphasized that the decision to accept the Japanese castaways in Uraga was not to be taken as a precedent. It instructed him to take any future castaways to Nagasaki for repatriation on a Dutch ship departing from there. Moriyama was charged with translating this document into Dutch, but as Cooper did not understand that language, he had to somehow convey the gist of it in English, perhaps again by non-verbal means.⁽⁶⁾

The Visit of an American Naval Squadron to Uraga

In the following year the visit of two American warships under the command of Commodore James Biddle was marred by difficulties in communication between the two sides. When the ships anchored off Uraga on July 20, the young and inexperienced interpreter Hori Tatsunosuke was assigned to interpret, Moriyama having returned to Nagasaki. On the American side there was only one sailor on each ship who was said to speak a little Dutch. They had also not brought any Japanese castaways living in China. For his part, Hori knew only a few words of English and could not easily understand English documents. After being told that the answer to his inquiries about the possibility of trade were emphatically negative, Commo-

dore James Biddle unwisely attempted to board a Japanese guard boat in the absence of an interpreter or any officials to receive him, and was pushed back into his own boat by a Japanese guard. Biddle officially attributed this “unpleasant incident” to “bad translation” which seems very likely to have played a role. However, Biddle’s own very questionable conduct was also likely to be at fault.⁽⁷⁾

The Seamen from the American whalers *Lawrence* and *Lagoda* in Nagasaki

Back in Nagasaki, Moriyama was one of the interpreters assigned to interrogate and deal with the two groups of American seamen from the American whaling ships *Lawrence* and *Lagoda* who were brought to Nagasaki for repatriation by the Dutch in 1847 and 1848. On August 19, 1847 the seven seamen from the American whaler *Lawrence* arrived in Nagasaki on a Japanese junk. According to Japanese records, on the following day, they were taken ashore, where they were interrogated by the Nagasaki magistrate (bugyo) 奉行 through the medium of a group of Japanese interpreters of Dutch, including Moriyama Einosuke. One of the seamen, Murphy Wells, understood a little Dutch, while the interpreters were said to have only a slight knowledge of English.

When they were again summoned to the magistrate’s office, they were surprised to see a European dressed in his own style sitting among the Japanese officials. This was Joseph H. Levyssohn, the Dutch factor (*opperhoofd*) who had been requested to assist at the second interview by the magistrate owing to his knowledge of English. Levyssohn questioned them regarding their country, family, religion and the circumstances of their shipwreck and their answers were translated back into Japanese and carefully noted down. This would have been another opportunity for Moriyama and the other Japanese interpreters to improve their understanding of spoken English and Moriyama, for his part, would certainly have taken advantage of it. As a result of this interview, the magistrate and the other officials seem to have become convinced that the men were Americans, as they claimed to be, for Levyssohn told them that he was somewhat hopeful that they would all soon be liberated. Nevertheless, they had to endure two more months of confinement, during which two of them died, before they finally left Nagasaki on a Dutch ship on October 27. Moriyama and the other interpreters of Dutch presumably had frequent contact with them until their reception on Deshima by Levyssohn just prior to their departure.⁽⁸⁾

The second group of sailors from the whaler *Lagoda* arrived on a Japanese junk in Nagasaki less than a year later on September 2, 1848. On the next day (September 3) Moriyama went aboard with some other officials to inquire about their health and their country of origin. The Japanese officials wanted to take them ashore, but the men instead asked to be given boats so that they could go out to sea. However, when told that this was impossible, they agreed to be taken ashore, where they were interviewed by the Nagasaki magistrate Ido Sadohiro (Tsushima-no-kami), with the aid of the indispensable interpreters. The seamen told him that they had been cast upon the shores of Japan as the result of shipwreck, which was not true, and probably not believed. In fact, they were deserters who had chosen to take their chances on the famously inhospitable shores of Japan rather than further endure the very harsh treatment meted out to them by the ship’s captain.

They were interrogated again two days later and gave the same answer as before. The leader of the group Robert McCoy would later note that “the interpretations were very incorrect.” Whether he actually understood enough Japanese, as he claimed, to be able to make that judgment is open to question. If by “incorrect” he means that they were inaccurate, or censored, this might have been deliberate, and to their advan-

tage.

On the following day they were interviewed by the Dutch factor Levyssohn, who asked them again why they had come to Japan and whether it was not for the purpose of spying. They again stated that they had only come on account of whaling in the seas off Japan. They were questioned again on the next day (September 6) without the Dutch factor being present. The Japanese interpreter, probably Moriyama, reportedly told them that he doubted their story and believed that they were “mere spies” and “nothing else.” They were nonetheless promised that the shogunate in Edo would be informed and that they would have to wait for their decision as to whether they could be repatriated on the next Dutch ship. The required permission did not arrive in time and so the Dutch ship sailed without them. However, it carried a letter written by Levyssohn to the Dutch consul in Canton, requesting him to inform the American consular agent there of the plight of the American seamen in Nagasaki.⁽⁹⁾

Moriyama spent considerable time with the Lagoda seamen from September 1848 until April 1849, and became intimate with some of them. Moriyama must also have picked up a considerable amount of vocabulary from them, but perhaps not the best kind of English. For their part, McCoy appears to have acquired some command of colloquial Japanese, and so was sometimes called upon to interpret. In fact, he boasted that he was able to understand nearly everything said to him in Japanese and to have better command of it than Moriyama did of English. There is reason to doubt the veracity of such a boast considering Moriyama's obvious linguistic talent, and concurrent study of English, as detailed below. McCoy does not seem to have considered the possibility that Moriyama may have been deliberately concealing the degree to which he both understood and spoke English, for purposes of intelligence gathering.

The Dutch factor Levyssohn was again called upon to assist in the interrogation of the American sailors. Moriyama was also present and he may have learned a lot of English vocabulary merely from listening to Levyssohn as he spoke with the sailors. He may have also taken some formal English lessons from Levyssohn, who, as we will see, praised his fluent command of Dutch.

The American Adventurer Ranald MacDonald's Sojourn in Nagasaki

Moriyama's further exposure to and valuable training in proper native-speaker English came in the person of the American adventurer Ranald MacDonald (1824–1894), who was brought to Nagasaki on board of a Japanese junk on October 15, 1848. Unlike the sailors, MacDonald was educated and highly intelligent, as well as being well-behaved. He brought with him a small collection of books and was often seen reading them. For these reasons, he earned the respect of his Japanese hosts.

That Moriyama's command of English at this time was still far from perfect is evidenced by his failure to understand the word ‘difficulty’ when MacDonald used it in reply to a question put to him during his initial interrogation in Nagasaki. However, rather than attempting to mask his ignorance, he handed MacDonald a Dutch and English dictionary and asked him to show him the word. Thus, he was actively enlarging his English vocabulary as he was engaged in interpreting from it.⁽¹⁰⁾

During his first interview with the Nagasaki magistrate, Ido Sadohiro, on October 17, MacDonald was asked whether he believed in a god in heaven, and what his nature was. He answered that he believed in one God, who was constantly and everywhere present. Moriyama, as if feeling unsatisfied with the answer, asked him to elaborate. That was when MacDonald began to recite the Apostle's creed in the Episcopalian prayer book. When he said “And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, born of the Virgin Mary,” Moriyama quickly

stopped him, whispering to him urgently, “That will do! That will do!” Then, refraining from any mention of the “Virgin Mary” or “Christ” as far as MacDonald could tell, Moriyama proceeded to deliberately misinterpret his answer to the magistrate. “In that,” MacDonald later asserted, “he was my friend indeed!”⁽¹¹⁾

What Moriyama actually told the magistrate in Japanese was something like: “He said that there was no god or Buddha. He cultivated his heart and will and worshipped heaven in order to get clear understanding and enjoy happiness. He has nothing else to say.”

This was then recorded by the scribes for the official record that would be sent to Edo. One scholar concluded that “From the Japanese record it appears that he saved our author from embarrassment by failing to render literal translations of his statements regarding his Christian faith.”

However, in my view it must have been rather more than mere “embarrassment” that he was saved from. As the magistrate and senior council 老中 (roju) in Edo would have learned that MacDonald was a devout Christian, who may have come to propagate his faith, in violation of the anti-Christian edicts, he would have probably been subjected to a much stricter confinement, during which he would almost certainly not have been allowed to teach English to the Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch. Being aware of such a rare opportunity to be taught by a native speaker of English, besides friendship, this may have been an additional motive for Moriyama to censor out MacDonald’s explicitly Christian profession of faith in order that he might qualify for the most lenient treatment. Then, after some conversation among the Japanese officials, Moriyama told MacDonald that a house would be prepared for him and that “If I was good, I should live better and better—so my friend Murayama [sic] put it, probably in his own kindly way.”⁽¹²⁾

MacDonald was also subjected to repeated interviews to ascertain whether he had come to spy on Japan or not, but after an interview with Levyssohn, he received more cordial and respectful treatment from the Japanese officials. This opened the way for the senior interpreter of Dutch and inspector 目付け (metsuke) Motoki Shozemon (元木昌左衛門) to petition the magistrate for permission for a group of interpreters to study English with MacDonald. Conscious of the growing need for interpreters of Dutch to have some command of English, Ido gladly granted the request.⁽¹³⁾

MacDonald reported that his role as teacher earned him still greater respect and even better treatment: “During my imprisonment I had a number of scholars [students] among the Japanese interpreters, which probably procured me more kindness than I would have otherwise met with. Moreama [sic] speaks better English than any of the Japanese I heard attempt it. Two or three of the other interpreters speak a little English.” In other words, from the beginning Moriyama stood out from his peers on account of his linguistic talents.⁽¹⁴⁾ Indeed, among his fourteen Japanese students, the best and most brilliant was Moriyama.

MacDonald clearly recognized the unique intelligence and talents of the youthful Moriyama. They were fairly close in age, MacDonald, 24, and Moriyama, 28. Moriyama served as his interpreter and became his daily companion during the several months of his residence in Nagasaki. In his autobiography, MacDonald devoted a special section to his memories of him.

“Of this young man a few special words are called for. He was, by far, the most intelligent person I met in Japan. As for his English ability, he noted: “He spoke English pretty fluently, and even grammatically. His pronunciation was peculiar, but it was surprisingly in command of combinations of letters and syllables foreign to the Japanese tongue.”

“He was my daily companion... during my sojourn in Japan. When with me he always had books in Dutch, and a Dutch and English dictionary. The Dutch factor at Nagasaki [Joseph Levyssohn] told me that [Moriyama] spoke Dutch better than himself. The books were on different subjects, but principally on the com-

merce and customs of European nations." Moriyama admitted that he had never traveled outside Japan, but probably in anticipation of being able to travel abroad some day, he told MacDonald that "...he had a large library; and also, that he was studying Latin and French."⁽¹⁵⁾

MacDonald describes Moriyama further in affectionate detail: "...the dearest to me in every regard and most esteemed, and ever loved--was the brilliant Moriyama Einosuke, of medium height among his people, say five feet six inches; of delicate and finely cut features; with signs of great intelligence; eyes intensely black, brilliant and penetrating, yet with an expression mild and loving--truly magnetic; of very light complexion--much more than the average Japanese. His countenance, when in repose, had the air of mild dignity... When speaking before officials it was always with a smile, as if to give me encouragement and confidence. He showed a great desire to learn English, and displayed much aptitude in doing so. He was fluent in Dutch, for he was one of the official interpreters of that language; and I take it for granted that he was well grounded in the history and traditions of his country; of which, however, he never spoke to me; nor did I ever ask him. His general appearance was that of a studious and earnest scholar, and a refined gentleman. He was my favorite." MacDonald never forgot Moriyama, nor, as we shall see, did Moriyama forget him.

As for MacDonald's method of teaching English to his Japanese interpreter students, it might be considered primitive and unsophisticated by modern EFL standards. However, it was highly intuitive and probably the most satisfactory method that could have been devised for a group of such able students in such restricted conditions. MacDonald explains how he conducted the lessons and describes the linguistic handicaps his students had to struggle with.

"Their habit was to read English to me: one at a time. My duty was to correct their pronunciation and to explain as best I could in Japanese meaning, structure, etc. It was difficult to make them catch some of our sounds, especially the consonants, and some of the combinations in particular were impracticable to them....They cannot pronounce the letter 'l.' They pronounce it 'r.' So that they rendered my name Ranardo Macdonardo, with a strong burr of the r. As to the vowels, there was no difficulty: They have all the full...sound, and are all pronounced, even the final e. They are all well up in grammar, especially Moreama [sic], that is to say they learned it readily. They were all very quick and receptive. It was a pleasure to teach them."⁽¹⁶⁾ Of course, besides their innate linguistic ability, their knowledge of Dutch and its similar grammar must also have aided their learning English grammar. For his part, despite the great reluctance of his Japanese interlocutors to teach him their language, MacDonald was able to acquire a considerable command of Japanese in the course of conversing with them on a daily basis over several months. This would have likely made him a more effective teacher.

During his entire confinement, Moriyama, in company with other interpreters, was said to visit him almost every day and not only for English lessons. While refraining from informing him about Japan, they inquired about several subjects, in particular about whaling and the number of ships engaged in it. MacDonald gently intimated that Japanese ports would be much better situated to supply the ships than the Sandwich (Hawaiian) islands or Canton. He asked them whether they would consent to opening such trade with the Americans, and other Western nations. Moriyama was quoted as giving an emphatically negative answer. He stated that Japanese law forbade any foreign ships (except Dutch and Chinese) to enter Japanese harbors or even to approach the coast. Each time MacDonald brought up the subject, his answer was always the same. Thus, Moriyama, besides interpreting when the need arose, was repeatedly informing him about his country's so-called seclusion laws and the shogunate's policy to strictly enforce them.

The Unexpected Arrival of the American sloop-of-war Preble in Nagasaki

In early April 1849, having learned of their presence in Nagasaki, Commodore Geisinger, the commander of the American East Asian squadron stationed on the China coast, ordered Commander James Glynn of the American sloop-of-war *Preble* to proceed without delay to that port to demand the liberation of the fifteen stranded seamen from the *Lagoda*. Its arrival at that port was announced by cannon signals and must have alarmed the magistrate Ido. Mindful of the suicide of the Nagasaki magistrate after the Phaeton's hostile incursion, Ido dispatched an urgent request for instructions to Edo, and called up thousands of troops from the surrounding fiefs to bolster the Nagasaki defenses. However, it would take a few days for them to arrive. In the meantime, he sent the police officer 与力 (yoriki) Shirai Tatsunoshin 白井達の進, accompanied by Moriyama to ascertain the true purpose of the *Preble*'s coming. Fortunately, Moriyama had been studying American English with MacDonald for the past several months, and now came the opportunity and the necessity to put his training to the test. In view of that training, Ido appointed him "American language specialist interpreter" who could communicate with Glynn directly in his own language. By his own admission, Glynn arrived full of indignation and this feeling imparted a pronounced brusqueness to his intercourse with the local Japanese officials which he said he did not later regret. Thus, Moriyama had to understand and withstand his very direct, no-nonsense communication style. Hearing that Glynn had come to take away the American seamen, Moriyama informed him that two of them had died and that MacDonald was also confined there. Glynn was surprised to learn about the presence of the latter and requested his release. Moriyama must also have told him that the next Dutch ship was not expected for several months and explained the difficulty of releasing the men to him directly without first obtaining permission from Edo. Being informed of this state of affairs, Glynn reportedly calmed down, but still demanded the early release of the men. Shirai requested that he prepare a document stating his purpose for coming and his demand for release of the American seamen. Levyssohn translated the English document into Dutch, which Moriyama then translated into Japanese. After a few days of impatiently waiting to obtain the release of the incarcerated American sailors, Glynn's final conversation with Moriyama and Shirai was markedly blunt and demanding in tone:

Glynn: It is useless to talk to me in this manner. I want no prevarication. I want a straight up and down answer. I have waited five days...and now I want something more than 'I think.' You give a direct reply to my question and I will do the thinking. I will stay three days...but you must promise me now that you will deliver the men. Do you promise?

Moriyama: Yes, in three days you shall get possession of the men.

Glynn: Very good. I rely on your word—upon the solemn promise of a Japanese chief.

Then, in true American fashion, Glynn insisted that Moriyama shake hands with him to show his sincerity and that he would keep his word as a "Japanese chief." From this we may reasonably infer that Glynn did not view him as a mere interpreter, who only conveyed what his superior officer Shirai said, but as a responsible official in his own right who is invested with the authority to make decisions on his own.⁽¹⁷⁾ Although he of course could not decide such an important matter by himself, Moriyama must have been confident that he could convince the magistrates (the other magistrate had recently arrived from Edo) to

liberate the men within the promised three days.

He must also have known that the Dutch factor had been advising them from the beginning to release the men to him on Deshima, in order to obviate the need for special permission from the senior council in Edo. In the end, the magistrates took the responsibility on themselves to release the men to the care of the Dutch factor. Levyssohn treated them to a Western-style meal in his house and delivered them to the *Preble* the following day.⁽¹⁸⁾ The ship sailed out of the harbor on April 27, taking away the troublesome American seaman and Moriyama's friend and teacher Ranald MacDonald. They would never see each other again.

Owing in large part to the good offices and advice of Levyssohn along with Moriyama's skillful and tactful interpreting, the crisis was resolved quickly and the affair ended peacefully. From now on the shogunate would come to rely on Moriyama more and more when having to deal with Americans and other foreigners coming to Japan.⁽¹⁹⁾

Glynn would later pay tribute to Moriyama's functional command of English and diplomatic skills in his official government report as "one who spoke tolerably good English, but understood only as much as he wanted to."⁽²⁰⁾ This comment seems to contradict that of McCoy as to Moriyama's English ability, while confirming the latter's capacity for artful deception in the service of his country.

The following few years were very busy and fulfilling ones for Moriyama, both personally and professionally. He was again appointed to *nenban* 年番 duties as a junior interpreter while also interpreting for another small group of three American sailors who had been cast ashore on Sahalin (Karafuto), and brought to Nagasaki. This time they were repatriated on a Dutch ship in timely fashion, and so no American ship came to claim them. In addition, he was ordered to compile a Japanese-English dictionary together with senior interpreter Nishi Kichibei 西吉兵衛 with the assistance of several other junior and apprentice interpreters. The first part 'A' was completed a year later. Furthermore, when by chance a Dutch ship visited Nagasaki, whose captain was said to speak very good English. Moriyama successfully petitioned the magistrate to be allowed to initiate English conversation lessons with him.⁽²¹⁾

The Dutch Proposal to Negotiate a Treaty in the Summer of 1852

The Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch could also serve as diplomatic liaisons between the Dutch officials residing on Deshima and the Nagasaki magistrate, appointed by the shogunal government in Edo and responsible to it. On July 21, 1852, almost a year before Perry's initial visit, Donker Curtius, the new Dutch commissioner and superintendent of the Dutch factory on Deshima, had arrived in Nagasaki, bearing a letter to the Nagasaki magistrate from the governor general of Batavia. This letter conveyed the views of the Dutch King Willem III and Minister of the Colonies Albert van Twist. Curtius submitted the letter together with the annual foreign news report concerning the planned American naval expedition to Japan. He asked the two most trusted senior and junior interpreters of Dutch, Nishi Kichibei and Moriyama Einosuke to convey to the magistrate that he had come with some additional and very important information. In return, the magistrate wished to inquire why such a letter was sent again after the one from the former Dutch king had been accepted in violation of Japanese law in 1844. The shogunal senior council in Edo eventually agreed to accept the letter, along with the usual foreign news report, but only if no answer was expected. Curtius had been empowered by the Dutch government to enter into negotiations for a treaty with a duly commissioned high official, but the shogunate did not feel the same urgency, and to do so would have violated Japanese laws. Curtius felt that the shogunate thereby lost a chance to conclude a treaty with him be-

fore the Americans arrived. Moriyama and Nishi asserted that Japan had never concluded a treaty with a foreign power. Therefore, the chances that they would do so with the Netherlands, without some compelling reason to do so, were practically nil. Moreover, even if they had done so, it is very doubtful given his strong aversion to Nagasaki, that Perry could have been persuaded to accept it as a model for his own treaty making. So the Dutch were forced to adopt a 'wait and see' approach. Meanwhile, they continued to have unique privileges in Nagasaki trade and it was far from certain that any other countries could do better. So rather than pressing the issue, the Netherlands took care not to arouse the enmity of other powers, and continued its friendly relationship to Japan, while hoping to strengthen its foothold there.⁽²²⁾ The fact that Moriyama was centrally involved in such delicate diplomacy gave him a diplomatic insider's knowledge of the status of relations between the two countries and their respective policies.

The Visit of the American Naval Squadron to Edo Bay in the Summer of 1853

On July 8, 1853 the Nagasaki interpreter Hori Tatsunosuke stationed in Uruga stepped forward at a tense moment of confrontation between the Japanese guard boats and Commodore Perry's flagship the *Susquehanna*, to famously declare in English: "I can speak Dutch." Hearing this declaration, the American interpreter of Dutch Anton Portman stepped forward, and the crucial and essential dialog between the two sides could begin. Moriyama, being on duty in Nagasaki, was urgently dispatched to Edo, along with Nishi, but by the time they arrived there, the American squadron had already departed. Although his command of Dutch and interpreting skills were not on the same level as Moriyama's, Hori, by working together with Portman, and also chief interpreter Samuel Wells Williams, who knew Chinese and spoke some Japanese, major misunderstandings that could have led to violent clashes were avoided. Perry went ashore at Kurihama accompanied by 300 armed men and delivered the President's letter to the Uruga magistrates. However, as no dialog or negotiations between Perry and the Japanese officials took place at that time, an interpreter of Moriyama's caliber was not needed. While Moriyama and Nishi were still in Edo, word came of the arrival of a Russian squadron in Nagasaki on August 21, 1853. The new Nagasaki magistrate Mizuno Tadanori (Chikugo-no-kami) ordered Nishi to return to Nagasaki *post haste*, while assigning Moriyama to his own entourage, which departed from Edo somewhat later.⁽²³⁾

The Visit of the Russian Naval Squadron to Nagasaki in the Summer of 1853

In the meantime the Russian squadron was received by a group of Nagasaki officials that included three Nagasaki interpreters of Dutch, who went aboard the frigate *Pallada*, flagship of the Russian admiral Evfimiy Putiatin. Besides Putiatin, who spoke English, their primary interlocutors were the Russian interpreter of Dutch Captain Konstantin Possiet, who also reportedly spoke some Japanese and Putiatin's secretary, the author Ivan Goncharov, who spoke French and at least some English. These officials, and both Moriyama and Nishi, after their delayed appearance on board of the Russian flagship, are among the Japanese officials so memorably depicted by Goncharov in his classic travelogue Фрегат Паллада (Frigate Pallada).

On September 21 the Russians went ashore and had an audience with the Nagasaki magistrate Osawa Shitetsu (Bungo-no-kami), to whom they entrusted the official missive from the Russian foreign minister Count Nesselrode addressed to the shogunal senior council. Putiatin had a brief exchange of words with Osawa regarding a possible visit of the Russian squadron to Edo bay in order to expedite matters. This

idea was positively discouraged. Nishi was the chief interpreter at this meeting, but Goncharov depicts him as one who seems to lack the confidence to answer their questions without first consulting with the other two junior interpreters.

Having met Nishi ten days before, on the 18 (30)⁽²⁴⁾ of September, 1853, Goncharov records meeting Moriyama in the company of several other Japanese shogunal officials for the first time on board the Russian frigate *Pallada*.

"I got acquainted with the new interpreter Einosuke. He speaks very little English, but understands almost everything. He learned it from the Dutch, some of whom know English. Einosuke also studies a bit of French. He said that he has a lot of books, mostly Dutch ones, but also some in French. Possiet says that he knows Dutch well."

Goncharov then reproduces a conversation between Moriyama and Possiet in Dutch regarding the Japanese invitation for the frigate to anchor closer to the inner harbor, which, if accurate, suggests that Levyssohn's remark about his fluency was no exaggeration.

"You are our guests", said Einosuke, "imagine that it began to rain in the garden, and the senior guest (meaning the frigate) is offered an umbrella, but he refuses."

"In order to yield to the younger guests (meaning the smaller ships of the squadron)," countered Possiet.⁽²⁵⁾

On September 25, (October 7) Goncharov reported another conversation between Possiet and Moriyama in regard to the traditional restrictive laws against foreigners in Japan. Possiet pointed out that such laws have only been in effect for about the last two hundred years and suggested that it was time to change them in accord with changing circumstances. Goncharov thought that Moriyama's response was adroit and well-founded:

"You must understand why our laws are such as they are; there is no doubt that they should be changed. But European ships have only begun in the last ten years or so to visit Nagasaki persistently and in large numbers, and for that reason there was no necessity to change."⁽²⁶⁾

On October 9 (21) Goncharov noted how in contrast to the gloomy, despondent mood of the other Japanese officials, Moriyama's facial features were not contorted and he had a bold look. It seemed to him that judging from their conversations Moriyama and some of the other younger officials sometimes expressed envy of their European guests, and recognizing their own situation, feel despondent and constitute the silent, suppressed opposition. He called them "jeune Japon"—young Japan. The reason for their gloomy countenances and downward glances on that particular occasion became apparent when they announced the death of the shogun (Ieyoshi). (He had actually died on July 27.)

On October 5 (17) the Russians summoned the officials and interpreters and announced that they were departing Nagasaki. All were said to be delighted by the news, except for Kichibei, who seemed "...neither sadder nor happier than the others. He translated the questions and answers, without asking any questions himself or taking any interest in anything." When asked by Possiet why he doesn't learn English, he replied that he even regretted having studied Dutch. "Why?" he was asked. "I like to lie on my side and do nothing," he said. This seems like a very honest answer and also a very revealing one.⁽²⁷⁾

On October 7 (19) Goncharov reported how a superior official spoke for about ten minutes, after which Kichibei translated his words, in his own manner, briefly and haltingly, pausing frequently, conveying the main idea but without details or nuances. He seemed limited in ability and stubborn. He would soften any harsh expression in Dutch when translating into Japanese, or simply censor it, as far as they could tell. Pu-

tiatin was dissatisfied and considered asking for his removal from interpreting duties. In contrast, Moriyama, Goncharov attested, “understands everything and strives to explain every detail.”⁽²⁸⁾

On October 21 (November 2) Nishi Kichibei and Moriyama Einosuke, in the company of other officials, went aboard the frigate *Pallada* to declare that they had received an answer from Edo, but only to confirm that the Russian letter had been received. Moriyama was offered books from both Putiatin and Goncharov, but he steadfastly refused to accept them out of fear of the consequences of doing so.⁽²⁹⁾

On November 6 (18) Moriyama replaced Nishi in the hope that his superior interrogative skills could induce the Russians to reveal their destination (the Japanese feared that they would sail into Edo bay as Perry had done). Moriyama asked in Dutch: Where to? But the clever Russian interpreter Possiet would only answer: “Where the wind takes us.” In answer to Moriyama’s plea for a more concrete answer to take back to their superiors, Possiet professed to be ignorant of the admiral’s intentions, and so did not know what to tell him.⁽³⁰⁾

On December 23, 1853 (January 4, 1854) the Russian squadron returned to Nagasaki from Shanghai. The Russians greeted their old acquaintances among the Nagasaki officials and interpreters. Moriyama was apparently the only one who offered his hand to shake. Moreover, Goncharov reported how Moriyama peppered him with questions in “broken English” about where the Russians had been, and whom and what they had seen. Goncharov told him that they had been in China and seen the battles there between the insurgents and the imperial forces. Goncharov soon realized what Moriyama was after—news about the whereabouts of Commodore Perry and the Americans—but he felt like teasing him. He coyly mentioned Perry’s name but then admitted that they had not actually met him, but only seen the captain of the *Saratoga* in Shanghai. As Moriyama queried anxiously, Goncharov replied indifferently that he was either in Amoy, Ningpo or perhaps in Hong Kong. A half an hour later, Moriyama repeated this conversation verbatim to his superior officer, who dutifully wrote it all down. (Actually at that time Perry was preparing to leave Macao.)

Goncharov then asked Moriyama playfully if he didn’t want to visit Shanghai, explaining that he would see an example of a European city there.

“Oh, yes,” he answered. “I would like to travel even farther: I would like to travel around the world. This desire seduces me.” (He would have to wait several years to realize it.)

“So let’s go to Russia”, Goncharov proposed. “Such cities, churches, palaces! What military parades and displays you would see there!”

“No, not to Russia,” Moriyama interrupted emphatically, “there are no women there!”

“Who told you that?” Goncharov queried. “There are plenty! So are you married?”

“Yes, I have a ten-month old daughter; a few days ago she was vaccinated for smallpox.”

“So why are you interested in women,?” Goncharov asked. Moriyama laughed.

Goncharov likened him to a Japanese Don Juan.

On December 25 (January 6) all the Russian ships were decorated with flags and the Russians all dressed up to celebrate the Russian Christmas. Moriyama asked Goncharov what holiday it was and Goncharov frankly told him, despite the general reluctance to speak of the Christian religion with the Japanese. Goncharov thought it was better to gradually acquaint them with all aspects of Russian culture, including the central role of the Christian Orthodox faith.⁽³¹⁾

Meeting with the Japanese Plenipotentiaries from Edo

On December 31, 1854, (January 12, 1855) Putiatin, Possiet, and Goncharov met with the Japanese plenipotentiaries from Edo headed by Tsutsui Masanori (Hizen-no-kami) 筒井肥前神政憲 and Kawaji Toshiakira (Saemonjo) 川路左衛門尉聖謨. When the plenipotentiaries gave a sign that they wanted to talk, Goncharov described how Einosuke and Kichibei, suddenly emerging from separate corners, crawled on their hands and knees up to their feet, like two snakes. There they groveled at the feet of the plenipotentiaries, pressing their foreheads to the floor, to hear their greetings to the Russians, which they then conveyed to them, clearly pronouncing their names. Both interpreters wore ceremonial silken robes, as did all the other officials.

On the same occasion, Goncharov described the appearance of the two chief plenipotentiaries and then noted how Moriyama, owing to his resemblance to a European on whose face are etched traces of thought and education, appeared congenial.

"Yet, my God! in what a position he finds himself, and Kichibei, too. They are both crouching flat on the floor between us and the plenipotentiaries, like two setter hounds, getting ready to eat—you may think? No, to translate."⁽³²⁾

On January 3 (15), 1855 the Russian frigate took on a holiday look: washed, polished with sand and stones,...and the deck gleamed white as a sheet. On this day the plenipotentiaries and their retinue came on board the Russian frigate, marking the first time that such high shogunal officials had ever boarded a foreign ship. The most splendid and expensive gift to the Russian admiral was a sword. Goncharov explained that it was an undoubted symbol of friendship in Japan. He considered Japanese swords to be the finest in the world and were under strict prohibition of export. "Their blades are tested, if Einosuke did not lie, by the executioner on criminals." Here, Goncharov seems to be trusting Moriyama's words. Moriyama attested that the sword gifted to the admiral could cut off three heads in succession. Goncharov noted that swords were treated as the greatest treasures by the Japanese. Moriyama said that his own sword, given to him by a friend, was about 500 years old.⁽³³⁾

The Russians were made aware that no Japanese, of whatever rank, were permitted to receive any presents from foreigners without the permission of the shogunal government.

"Once Einosuke quietly told Possiet that one of our sailors gave an empty bottle to a Japanese." "Well, what of it,?" replied the latter." "Please allow us to return it to you, Moriyama pleaded." "Just throw it into the water," Possiet told him.

"Impossible: we will bring it, and then you, if you please, throw it into the water yourselves."

"What a people!" lamented Goncharov.⁽³⁴⁾

Goncharov opined that this little incident demonstrated the impossibility of commerce, enlightenment, and so on, under such a regime and although the eventual opening of Japan was inevitable, it would not happen so soon.

Later, during the banquet in the admiral's cabin, while the plenipotentiaries were sitting at the table, Goncharov again described how both Kichibei and Einosuke crawled on the floor. He invited them to come to another room in vain. They refused all offers of food in the presence of such exalted personages. However, towards the end of the banquet, in which neither participated, he poured them each a glass of champagne. They were at first inclined to refuse even this, but Kawaji nodded his head, and so bowing their heads to

the floor, they drank greedily. Then they directed a glance of recognition at Goncharov and raised their glasses to their foreheads as a sign of gratitude.⁽³⁵⁾

Being in almost daily contact with Moriyama over the course of several weeks, and comparing his behavior to that of the other interpreters and officials, Goncharov observed: "Einosuke conducted himself the worst of all. He was the interpreter for Kawaji and so interpreted the most important part of the negotiations. He hardly paid any attention to the other plenipotentiaries; when Kawaji was not there, he sat sprawled on the stool, and put on airs. He generally did not conceal his feeling of superiority and towards the end of the negotiations conducted himself much worse than in the beginning. He often asked for champagne, and once, in front of Nakamura [Tameya] (the secretary to the plenipotentiaries) got so drunk on four glasses that he took it into his head to hold forth himself, not translating what was said to him. But he was told that they would use a different interpreter."⁽³⁶⁾

On January 16 (28) the Russians received the official reply of the senior council to the letter from the Russian foreign minister Nesselrode. It recognized that the traditional shogunal policy of restriction of foreign intercourse to the Dutch and Chinese traders in Nagasaki was no longer possible in the changing world circumstances. As such, it was considered to be of "historical significance" by the Russians. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that it would take 3–5 years to put this new policy into effect.

On January 20 (February 1), the plenipotentiaries paid a last visit to the frigate for a farewell banquet. During the banquet in the admiral's cabin, while all the others sat at the table, the two interpreters, Kichibei and Einosuke, again sat on the floor at the feet of the two senior plenipotentiaries, Kawaji and Tsutsui. In the middle of the banquet, Kawaji became somewhat nervous, but Tsutsui appeared calm. Champagne was served. When the cork popped out and the champagne gushed forth, their eyes bugged out in alarm. "Einosuke, being an experienced person, hastened to explain to them the [fizzy] nature of this wine."

After Kawaji had invited Putiatin and his retinue for a banquet on shore, Moriyama was seen to be measuring the table in the admiral's cabin. When asked why, he replied that it was in order to make a similar one, for when they would host them again.

As his personal interpreter, Moriyama also facilitated the exchange of gifts and souvenirs (a Japanese paper fan, tobacco pipes and pieces of silk for a Russian gold watch and chain) between Kawaji and Goncharov and Possiet, which in itself was a visible sign of changing times.⁽³⁷⁾ The Russian squadron departed Nagasaki on February 5, without revealing its destination to the magistrate.

When the Russians returned for a brief visit to Nagasaki on April 7 (19) they were met by Nishi Kichibei, who again told them that they had still not received any reply from Edo. They were told that Moriyama Einosuke was in Edo and was engaged with "people from the United States." They learned that the Americans were conducting peaceful negotiations, but not in Edo itself.⁽³⁸⁾ In fact, the negotiations by that time had actually already been concluded. Now we will examine the crucial role that Moriyama played in them.

Chief Interpreter at the Treaty Negotiations with Commodore Perry in March 1854

After the departure of the Russian squadron in early February, Moriyama next enters the English record about one month later, during the treaty negotiations in Yokohama, headed by Commodore Perry, and Captain Adams on the American side. Both English and Japanese sources indicate that Moriyama's trilingual command of Japanese, English and Dutch placed him in the center of communication between the two sides.

On March 3 Moriyama first went aboard the American flagship *Powhatan* having made the several hundred mile trip from Nagasaki in just twenty-five days. The chief interpreter Samuel Wells Williams, called him “a new and superior interpreter” and attested that Moriyama’s command of English was fluent enough to make communication between the two sides much faster and easier. “He speaks English well enough to render any other interpreter unnecessary, and thus will assist our intercourse greatly.”⁽³⁹⁾ This assessment seems to flatly contradict that of Goncharov, who had called his English “broken” only a few months before. One wonders if Moriyama had only been pretending to speak in broken English for some hidden purpose. Perhaps it was in order not to embarrass Goncharov, whose own English may not have been as fluent as Moriyama’s.

For his part, Moriyama inquired after Commander Glynn and the other officers of the *Preble*, and as the closest companion of Ranald MacDonald in Nagasaki, asked if the Americans knew him and whether he was well. He also asked to be given English dictionaries and grammars. This sort of request was also in stark contrast to his refusal to receive any books from the Russians in Nagasaki only a few months earlier. After examining the ship’s steam engine and other machinery, Moriyama sat down to dinner in the wardroom. He impressed the Americans favorably with “his education and breeding.” On this occasion, in the absence of the Japanese commissioners, the American customs of informality and equality prevailed.

On March 5 Moriyama and other Japanese officials went aboard the flagship again for an interview with Captain Adams. Perry was still secluding himself in his cabin. The Commodore was scheduled to go ashore on March 8 to meet the Japanese commissioners at the newly constructed pavilion in Yokohama and the Japanese wished to discuss the details for that event. In addition, as the senior council had already authorized the commissioners to agree to supplying the American squadron, the Japanese inquired about what provisions in what quantities would be needed and at which ports. According to the diary of the chief Japanese commissioner Hayashi Akira (Daigaku kami) 林大学頭, Perry agreed to enter into negotiations but warned that “...if his proposals were rejected, he was prepared to make war at once; that in the event of war he would have fifty ships in nearby waters and fifty more in California, and that if he sent word he could summon a command of one hundred warships within twenty days.” Two days later, Kayama Eizaimon 香山栄左衛門 and Moriyama reported this threat to the senior council in Edo.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Perry was of course bluffing, and playing diplomatic poker with the inexperienced Japanese. In reality, he had brought to Japan on this second visit approximately one-fourth of the entire US navy at that time and he knew that he had not even the smallest reserves to call upon. On the contrary, he would very soon have to send one of his three steamships, the *Susquehanna*, back to China. As such a threat, if reported, would have been a gross violation of his instructions from his superiors in the government in Washington DC to use force only as a last resort and in self defense, it is not surprising that there is no mention of it in the official Narrative, or any other American original source.

Moriyama, with his greater experience of dealing with Americans, may have seen through Perry’s bluff. He is the only one among the Japanese present who would have been able to understand the threat as expressed in English, and perhaps judge its credibility thereupon.

Although Moriyama was recognized in the official *Narrative of the American Expedition* as “the same man who figured so conspicuously during the visit of Captain Glynn in the *Preble*” from the latter’s official report,⁽⁴¹⁾ he is mentioned with his name misspelled: “Moryama Genoske [sic] who spoke a little English, which he is said to have acquired from an American sailor who had been a captive in Japan, and who was

one of those taken away by the “Preble.”⁽⁴²⁾ On the first day of talks in Yokohama with the commissioners (March 8, 1854), Moriyama acted as the principal interpreter, assisted by Hori Tatsunosuke. The Narrative observed how “As soon as the Commissioners had taken their seats, Yenosuke [sic] took his position on his knees, at the feet of Hayashi, the chief, and humbly awaited his orders.” This was followed by a long digression on the hierarchical nature of Japanese society in which each individual was obligated in turn to show obeisance to those of higher rank and an attitude of superiority to those of lower status.

Then attention was turned once again to the nimble prostrations of the chief Japanese interpreter in the presence of his superiors: “The commissioners, after a momentary silence, spoke a word to the prostrate Yenosuke [sic], who listened an instant, with downcast eyes, and then by a skillful maneuver, still upon his knees, moved toward the commissioners’ interpreter, and having communicated his message, which proved to be merely the ordinary compliments, with an inquiry after the health of the Commodore and his officers, returned with the appropriate answer to his former position. An interchange of various polite messages having been thus borne back and forth for several minutes, through the medium of the humble but useful Yenosuke [sic] refreshments, consisting of the invariable pipe, tea in porcelain cups, served on lacquered trays, cakes and some confectionary were handed around.”⁽⁴³⁾

Then, after reassembling in a side room, the chief Japanese commissioner Hayashi Akira had a Japanese scroll brought in, which was the formal reply to President Fillmore’s letter that was delivered in silence the previous summer in Kurihama. However, at this time, the Americans were given only a Dutch translation, signed by Moriyama Einosuke, but not by any of the commissioners. Perry wanted Hayashi to sign it as well. The content was very similar to the reply that Putiatin and the Russians had received on January 28 in Nagasaki. The second paragraph contained the unexpected concession that although it was forbidden by the so-called ancestral laws to agree at once to all of the American demands, “...for us to continue attached to the ancient laws, seems to misunderstand the spirit of the age; however, we are governed by imperative necessity.”

This was the second formal admission by the shogunate to a Western embassy that its strict seclusion policy was no longer tenable and would have to be given up, not voluntarily, but from necessity. It was of course only owing to Moriyama’s clear Dutch translation that this remarkable change in shogunate policy was made known to the Americans. The Dutch interpreter Anton Portman could have orally summarized it in English for Perry on the spot.

Moreover, Moriyama deliberately made only very vague reference to the result of the negotiations with the Russians in Nagasaki in order not to give Perry an excuse to make more demands. He said nothing about Kawaji’s promise to Putiatin, or about the border issue. He deliberately kept the Americans in the dark, in accord with shogunal policy.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Moriyama and another superior official were entrusted with supervising the provisioning of the American ships with water and food and so went on board almost every day. On March 14 as they were preparing to leave one of the ships, an official from Kanagawa rushed on board excitedly to inform them that an American officer had passed through that town and continued walking rapidly toward Edo along the Tokaido. The interpreter Namura Gohachiro 名村五八郎 had reportedly tried to dissuade him. Moriyama told the American officers that such conduct was in violation of their laws and also of the promises made to them by the Commodore. Upon hearing of the incident, Perry ordered that cannons be fired as a signal for all boats and officers to return to their respective ships. He also issued written orders, which were sent in all directions, to the same effect. One of these orders was delivered to the truant American officer, the chap-

lain of the Susqhehanna. E.C. Bittinger. After some initial hesitation, Bittinger returned to his ship. This incident offers further evidence of how crucially important Moriyama's fluency in English and ability to communicate quickly and directly with the American officers was. Bittinger would not have been able to reach Edo in any case, but if his aggressive conduct toward the Japanese had continued for much longer, very unpleasant consequences might have ensued. He may have heard about the unprecedented admission in the shogunal reply. If so, he should have known that it in no way implied any *immediate* amelioration of restrictions.⁽⁴⁵⁾

On March 18 Moriyama, accompanied by two other officials, went on board the flagship with a document in Dutch that stated the commissioners' understanding of Perry's positions. By this time, Moriyama seemed to the Americans to have assumed a leading role in not only interpreting but also in explaining the commissioners' positions. Before leaving the ship, he and his companions were given gifts, including Colt pistols. Such gifts had been resolutely refused by Japanese officials the previous summer, claiming that it was against Japanese law to give or receive arms.

On March 22 the miniature steam locomotive first began to go round and round on its circular track. Williams thought that the Japanese were more pleased with the gift of the model steam train than anything else given to them. He reported that a large party of samurai from Edo and Kanagawa had come to see it and also witness the operation of the model telegraph. Aided by the Nagasaki interpreter of Dutch Namura Gohachiro, all of them seemed to grasp the general idea, if not the exact means, of the latter's operation.

By the time the negotiations resumed on board the Powhatan on March 25, Moriyama had been authorized by the commissioners to negotiate on their behalf. Williams was a witness to Moriyama's empowerment as chief interpreter and negotiator: "In all these consultations," he testified, "Yenosuke [sic] seems to possess decisive authority...all the management of the treaty seems to have been transferred to his hands by the commissioners..."⁽⁴⁶⁾ As Oliver Statler commented: "... Williams had a better sense of what was happening than any other member of the expedition."⁽⁴⁷⁾ In short, a better witness to Moriyama's *de facto* authority as manager of the treaty negotiations could hardly be desired. It was now Moriyama who did almost all of the parleying with the Americans, and directly in English, while the other Japanese officials, nominally his superiors, had to take a back seat. The process of negotiation for a treaty was now made easier by direct communication in English between the two sides, with Dutch and Sino-Japanese words probably used as needed for clarification and confirmation.

On the same day Moriyama informally brought up the issue of consular residence that Perry had proposed in order to test his resolve on it. Moriyama argued that consuls are unnecessary, as the local magistrates would conduct all the business of supplying the ships directly with their captains. So he proposed a delay of four to five years before appointing such an officer, to see how this new 'trade' with the Americans functioned. However, Perry countered that consuls would be advantageous to the Japanese as well, and insisted that they must be provided for in the treaty. He was willing, nevertheless to limit his demand to one consul who would reside at Shimoda.⁽⁴⁸⁾

As Perry had already given up any idea of obtaining a commercial treaty, leaving that task to his successor, he must have sensed that his last chance to secure a foothold for him was by providing for the appointment of a resident consul in the treaty. Knowing that such a new proposal would likely be controversial, Perry broached the topic only after the basic outline of the treaty had been agreed upon, on the morning of March 28, after the banquet and entertainment on board of his flagship. He probably hoped that that the free flow of alcohol accompanied by onboard entertainment at that event would have made his Japanese

counterparts more amenable. Yet they still objected to it. So how was it that in the face of Japanese opposition the provision for appointment of a consul to reside in the opened ports was agreed upon? The short answer is that it was not actually agreed upon, but proposed and then assumed to be accepted by one side—the American.

In the fourth and final round of negotiations that began on the same day Perry had Portman read aloud a Dutch version of a draft treaty that he had prepared, which as translated by Moriyama into Japanese became the basis for ensuing talks. In this draft, Perry had made a series of demands, most of which the Japanese could accept, but with certain restrictions. However, on the new issue of a resident consul the two sides were not able to reach a clear agreement. American sources indicate that the Japanese agreed to this demand on the condition that it not be implemented for at least eighteen months; Japanese records show that it was rejected.

“The proposal to allow consuls to reside in Japan seemed to cause the commissioners special anxiety. For this was another new demand for which they had not been given any specific instructions. As it involved foreigners establishing a residence in Japan outside of Nagasaki, it would mean a violation of ‘ancestral law,’ and so it provoked opposition.”⁽⁴⁹⁾

In addition, Mitani Hiroshi (三谷博) states that some of the Japanese records were altered, but notes taken by Deputy Inspector Hirayama Kenjiro (平山謙二郎) on that day were “fairly reliable as an eyewitness account.” According to Hirayama, at this session the Americans insisted that a consul “would absolutely have to be stationed at some time in the future” but were willing “to let the matter rest for the present.” They promised to transmit to their government the Japanese reassurance that Americans would be treated with great hospitality and as such there was no need for the stationing of resident agents. Moreover, in the event that the US government decided to send a consul it would not be for at least eighteen months. In contrast, the American account of this discussion simply states that Hayashi agreed to the stationing of a consul in Shimoda after eighteen months.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Perry admitted that what had been agreed to was not commerce but he still firmly insisted that such an official would be needed to settle the inevitable disputes that would arise in future years between Americans and Japanese; thus, it would be to the benefit of both sides. Hayashi conceded that when real commerce was involved such an official would be needed, but “when simply fuel, water, and provisions are to be supplied, it would seem as though an arrangement of this sort might be dispensed with. Furthermore, no foreigners but Chinese and Dutch may remain in our country.”

Perry replied that he would be very “apprehensive” if Hayashi did not agree to the proposal, but the latter still declined, saying that “the government would never consent to it.” It was then agreed to postpone any further discussion until an envoy might arrive in eighteen months. In this way, Hayashi and Ido, at least, agreed to allow a consul to live at Shimoda, but not until after a year or eighteen months from the date of the treaty, as reported in the Narrative. In fact they had not agreed to the stationing of a consul but only to discuss it further after eighteen months.

Significantly, Mitani thinks that it was probably the interpreting of Moriyama Einosuke during the final stages of negotiations on that day that produced these differing accounts. Yet it was not simply through unintended mistakes in interpreting, but more likely as a result of conscious omissions and inaccuracies that were meant to foster an illusion of mutual agreement that did not actually exist. In the first case, he seems to have neglected to translate for the Americans Hayashi’s stated wish to leave the new issue of the resident consul to future negotiations. In the second instance, he did this by translating “Perry’s adamant re-

solve [to station consuls] as if it were a hope for the future.”

It seems that Moriyama chose to deceive both sides. As Mitani explains, “Moriyama, caught in the middle of this clash of wills at the meeting that was supposed to bring the talks to their conclusion, chose the path of trying to paper over the differences.”⁽⁵¹⁾

Although Moriyama had initiated this ruse, he was aided by others on the Japanese side in carrying it through to the conclusion of the talks. On the following afternoon, (March 29) Moriyama, was said to take total charge of the negotiations on the Japanese side from his erstwhile superiors from the Uraga commissioners’ office. He was said to have made several petty objections to various articles of the draft proposed by the Americans. However, in regard to the crucial issue of the future stationing of consuls, Hirayama clearly noted the Japanese consent to it, in accord with the Dutch and English text of the relevant article. Mitani speculates that Moriyama may have made his many petty objections in order “to cover up for this major error.” However, this begs the question of whether what seems to have been a deliberate error can properly be termed an ‘error.’

That Moriyama played a central and determining role in the outcome of the negotiations and the finalized treaty texts seems to be confirmed by another passage in the account of Hirayama. “Thus great affairs of state are determined by the tongue of a lowly interpreter. [We] officials can only look on as bystanders, without being able to put in a single word.”⁽⁵²⁾

It seems remarkable indeed that an interpreter of low social status could play such a decisive role in such a rigidly hierarchical society as Tokugawa Japan, and the only explanation seems to be his prodigious talent as an interpreter whose peerless command of both Dutch and English made him the indispensable conduit of communication between the two opposing sides. This, together with his confidence and boldness, enabled Moriyama to overcome the otherwise rigid Tokugawa social hierarchy. Even so, as we shall see, his days as a “lowly interpreter” would soon be a thing of the past.

On the following day, March 30, the definitive Dutch version of the treaty text as well as the official Chinese version were approved by both sides. Hirayama, a scholar of Chinese, Williams and his Chinese teacher Luo Shen proofed the Chinese text and corrected one discrepancy with the Dutch text regarding the definition of the zone of liberty for Americans in Shimoda. However, Mitani notes that “Williams overlooked the fact that the provisions of the clause on consular residence had been altered to read as follows: “If our two countries should both deem such an arrangement necessary, a United States general consul shall be stationed at Shimoda.”

According to this revised phrasing, the Japanese retained the right to refuse to consent to the placing of a consul. Mitani felt that this alteration was “clearly an act of deception on the part of the Japanese. The Japanese envoys were attempting to mislead not only the Americans but also the senior councillors of their own government.” They subsequently reported to the senior council that it was the Chinese version that was to be the official text of the treaty, in place of the Dutch version that had been the main instrument of the negotiations, and that the Japanese version of the treaty was a translation of the Chinese text. In fact, there was also a Japanese version of the treaty translated from Dutch, which was faithful to the Dutch text on this crucial point. In this way, Mitani concluded that what had begun with a misinterpretation by Moriyama had ended with an expanded deception in which the chief commissioner Hayashi was himself an accomplice.

It was the English version of the treaty that had been translated from the Dutch that empowered President Pierce to appoint Townsend Harris as consul general to Japan without having to first seek Japanese assent. Article 11 stipulated that:

“There shall be appointed by the government of the United States, consuls or agents to reside at Shimoda, at any time after the expiration of eighteen months from the date of signing of this treaty, provided that either of the two governments deem such arrangement necessary.”

This was a faithful translation of the relevant section of the official Dutch version. However, in the official Chinese version of the treaty, and the Japanese translation from it, that same article specified, as quoted above, that *both* countries had to agree to the stationing of a consular agent on Japanese soil.⁽⁵³⁾

The Japanese side interpreted this to mean that the stationing of a resident consul or agent in the opened ports was not a settled matter, as the Americans supposed, based on the English wording, but one that required their consent, and which they could still reject.

In reality, it was only the American side that wished to station a consular agent in Shimoda, not ‘either’ side. So, in effect, it granted the right to the Americans to send a consul to Shimoda, regardless of whether the Japanese wanted one or not.

How did such a major discrepancy in wording and interpretation between these different versions escape the notice of the interpreters who were supposed to have carefully proofread and checked them against each other prior to the signing ceremony on board of the American warship? Moreover, was it the simple result of a mistake in translation? Or, was it owing to a deliberate alteration of one of the texts? The answer seems to be the latter. This was the conclusion reached by Mitani from his detailed analysis of the available Japanese primary sources.

The final deception occurred during the ceremony of signing and exchanging the different versions of the treaty on March 31, 1854. Although it was an established custom in the West for both sides to sign the same copy of the document, the Japanese had refused to do this. Instead they presented Perry with a copy of the Japanese version that the four commissioners had signed and sealed previously. Meanwhile, Perry signed a copy of the English text in their presence and presented it to them. The Dutch and Chinese texts were then compared and signed by their respective officials from both sides.⁽⁵⁴⁾

All of these documents were assumed to have the same content and validity as texts of the treaty. In fact, there were at least two different versions: one Dutch and one Chinese. Accordingly, the Japanese translations from each of those versions agreed with the parent text, but disagreed with each other on the crucial point of the right to station consuls. It was the Japanese version translated from Chinese that the commissioners had signed and presented to Perry. If he had been able to read Japanese, he might have noticed in Article 11 the crucial clause regarding the right to station consuls was different. In contrast, to the English text, the Japanese text required the consent of both nations to station a consul. This discrepancy revolved around the crucial point of whether or not diplomatic relations (通信) (tsushin) had been established between the two nations. For the Americans it seemed to be settled, but for the Japanese it was still very much a moot point.

There was a further deception at work in the preface to the treaty which lists the names of all the signatories, both Perry and the Japanese commissioners, who “...have agreed to the following articles.” However, as we have seen, the Japanese commissioners refused to sign the English version of the treaty and so did not in fact formally agree to the provision in Article 11 for consular residence.⁽⁵⁵⁾

The completed treaty was dispatched on the *Saratoga* under the special care of Captain Adams, on April 5. The following day, Perry went ashore with several of his officers to explore the countryside around Yokohama within the limits permitted to the Americans by the treaty. Moriyama, and several other Japanese officials, escorted the party on a circuit of some five miles. As soon as a village was approached, one of the

Japanese attendants would hurry ahead to order the women and the “rabble” out of the way. This was contrary to Perry’s desire to observe the common people and learn about their manners and customs. So Perry spoke to Moriyama and reportedly “took him to task, particularly for dispersing the women.” In response, Moriyama reportedly claimed that “...it was entirely for the benefit of the ladies themselves, as their modesty was such that it could not withstand the sight of a stranger.”

Perry flatly told Moriyama that he did not believe a word of his explanation, however clever it may have been. However, this expression of doubt about his truthfulness did not offend him at all; rather, he took it “...as a compliment to his duplicity, which is one of the most cherished accomplishments of a Japanese official.” Nevertheless, seeing that Perry was onto his “Japanese cunning” Moriyama promised that at the next village the women would not be chased away. Accordingly, everyone thronged out to see the strange-looking men in their bizarre tight-fitting uniforms,—men, women and children.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The final challenge in communication for Moriyama and the other interpreters and officials assigned to the American expedition, came on April 10 when the entire remaining American squadron got underway from the anchorage at Kanagawa and moved up the bay. At the celebratory banquet on March 31, and again on the previous day, Perry had informed the commissioners of his intention to approach with the steamers as near to Edo as the depth of water would allow. Despite their urgent protests against such a move, Perry had resolved to do so. Moriyama and Hirayama boarded the Powhatan just as she was getting underway, and pleaded with Perry not to carry out his intention. They argued that perhaps the safety of the country and without doubt their own lives depended on his decision. They conveyed the fears of the commissioners that if the squadron anchored in full view of the capital, its immense population would become greatly excited, which might result in disaster. This, in turn, might lead to the possible injury or death of the commissioners themselves. While the Narrative reported that the Japanese interpreters seemed to be “in great dismay” to Williams they seemed “to have little fear to any dreadful result of the day’s excursion” and remained on board as observers only. Having rounded the point at Haneda, the Americans could see clearly the rows of boats anchored at the Edo suburb of Shinagawa. Perry summoned Moriyama to ask him about the lighthouse beacon on top of the tower of the famous shrine in Kawasaki. As if on cue, Moriyama slyly assured him that it was in Edo and that the sailing ships were anchored in Edo bay.

Having summoned several officers to view the city through a telescope, Perry ordered the squadron to turn around and return to its anchorage off Kanagawa. After all of the concessions that he had forced upon the commissioners, he considered it to be a last gesture of good will toward them. The anxiety of the interpreters who had remained on the ship the whole time was thus relieved, and they eagerly accepted the invitation to dine in the Commodore’s cabin.

Now that Edo had been seen, or at least believed to have been, there was no further reason for the squadron to remain in Edo bay. Having sent the sail ships ahead, the two steamers got underway for Shimoda very early in the morning on April 18.

Inaccurate Translation Produces an Anglo-Japanese Treaty by Mistake

On September 7, 1854, the unexpected arrival of a British squadron of four ships, including three steamers, under the command of Rear Admiral James Stirling dramatically demonstrated how inadequate and inaccurate interpreting could also distort the communication and materially alter the course of negotiations between a Japanese magistrate and an English admiral. In the process, it also demonstrated the ever more

urgent need for competent interpreters and translators of English, as well as Dutch.

In this case, it was not deliberate mistranslation. Although the resident Dutch Commissioner Donker Curtius assisted with the translations from English into Dutch, as a neutral party, he was not in a position to correct the mistranslations and misconceptions on both the English and Japanese sides. Stirling had not brought a competent Dutch translator such as Portman, but Curtius was able to fulfill that role as far as written documents went. As a Japanese translator Stirling had only brought the semi-literate Japanese cast-away Otokichi, who could only write in katakana and could not read or understand fully the Japanese texts based on the more complicated Sino-Japanese characters. On the Japanese side, as Moriyama was in Edo or Shimoda, the main task of interpreting once again fell to the senior interpreter Nishi Kichibei. Besides his relative lack of proficiency in Dutch, and his inability in English, his fear of the British and the preconceived notion that they were obsessed with opening Japanese ports to trade, which he shared with all the other interpreters and officials in Nagasaki, caused him to misinterpret Stirling's letter as a demand to open all Japanese ports to British trade.

Tragically, the heavy burden of negotiating with the British, coupled perhaps with the knowledge of his own serious mistranslation, and incompetence in both Dutch and English, had likely proved too much for Nishi. His lifeless body was found at his home, the cause of death unknown. In some measure, Goncharov had foretold his sad end when he described his essential indifference to everything and lack of motivation to study English or improve his interpreting in order to advance his career. He had confessed that he regretted ever learning Dutch and it indeed seemed to have proved fatal for him.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Negotiating the First Russo-Japanese Treaty in 1854–1855

After the natural disaster of the powerful earthquake and destructive tsunami in Shimoda, and the subsequent sinking of the new frigate *Diana*, the treaty negotiations resumed in Shimoda on January 1, 1855 with the presentation of a draft treaty by the Russian side. The Japanese commissioners, again led by the very experienced Tsutsui Masanori and very able Kawaji Toshiakira, with Moriyama serving as his interpreter, refused to give Admiral Putiatin a copy of the Kanagawa treaty, fearing that he would also insist on an article providing for appointment of a consul to reside in one of the opened ports.

In his memoirs, one of Putiatin's staff officers, Lt. Nikolai Schilling, recalled that "The Japanese made a big secret out of this treaty, and then became much more conciliatory when they realized that it was known to us."⁽⁵⁸⁾ The Russians had got a Dutch copy of the US-Japan treaty from Hori Tatsunosuke, who had also been assigned to deal with Captain Adams, who had come to exchange the Kanagawa treaty ratifications in Shimoda. He had been bribed by Lt. Schilling with various gifts into giving the Russians a copy of the Kanagawa treaty. Kawaji and Tsutsui had tried to deny the right of consular residence to the Russians but the action of the interpreter Hori had effectively sabotaged their efforts.

For his part, Moriyama immediately recognized that the draft was based on the Kanagawa treaty and advised Kawaji not to accept the draft and to negotiate verbally. Considering the central role that he had played in the negotiation of that treaty, and in particular the article concerning consular residence, it is quite possible that Moriyama may have had a hand in facilitating the leak in some way. Seeing how Putiatin, assuming that Perry had obtained such an article, was attempting to include a provision for Russian trade, Moriyama may have sought to deflect his efforts towards obtaining the right to station a consul as the lesser evil. If the right to station a consul in Japan was granted to Russia, it would make it all but impos-

sible to refuse the right of residence to an American consul. In this way, the possibility that he might have been 'covering his tracks' also exists.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Moreover, the third plenipotentiary Koga Kinichiro 古賀 謹一郎, had remonstrated with Kawaji for attempting to conceal the American treaty from the Russians. He argued that if they did not deal honestly with the Russians, the latter would become suspicious and demand even more. He thought that to assume the Russians did not yet know about the treaty was dangerous.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In fact, before it was leaked by Hori, they didn't know about it. This difference of opinion between Kawaji and Koga may have also helped to facilitate the leak.

On the critical issue of stationing a consul, Putiatin explained that it was for the purpose of policing Russians coming to Japan and especially to prevent the import of opium. He was willing to wait the same eighteen months after signing. The Japanese still denied that they had permitted the residence of a consul; they maintained that they had only promised to begin talks in eighteen months. Putiatin was very displeased by this answer. If consular residence was not accepted, then there was no point in further discussing a treaty.⁽⁶¹⁾

Here Putiatin seems to be linking the issues of consular residence and commerce in a way that Perry did not. In doing so he was confirming the suspicions of the Japanese, and seconding the arguments of Perry in favor of consular residence, but without his knowledge or approval. In this way, the Russian admiral probably played an instrumental role in the Japanese decision to finally allow the first US consul Townsend Harris to reside in Shimoda. Given their competing demands to open Japanese ports, how could the senior council in Edo in the end deny to the Americans what they had permitted to the Russians? As Putiatin now had a copy of the American treaty in Dutch, Kawaji reluctantly concluded that they would have to abide by its content and offer the Russians the same right to unilaterally station a resident consul in Shimoda or Hakodate.⁽⁶²⁾

In addition, the text of the relevant article in the Russian treaty differed from the deceptive and disingenuous "either country" wording of the American treaty. It clearly stated that the Russian government would appoint a consul, when it felt it necessary to do so:

Article VI "The Russian government will, when it finds it indispensable, appoint a consul to one of the two first mentioned ports." [Shimoda, Hakodate]

It seems that as with the Americans in Yokohama in March 1854, Moriyama, together with the Japanese commissioners' secretary Nakamura Tameya, 中村為弥 did much or most of the actual negotiating with the Russians in Shimoda, in December 1854 and January 1855, while the main commissioner Kawaji, and his colleagues remained aloof.

The first Russo-Japanese treaty was duly signed in Shimoda on February 7, 1855, the text of its Dutch, Russian and Japanese versions having been carefully cross-checked by all the translators on both sides.⁽⁶³⁾

In recognition of his indispensable interpreting and negotiating skills, Moriyama was assigned to the office of the Shimoda magistrates 奉行所 (bugyosho) for Shimoda was now to be a critical location, along with Nagasaki, for foreign relations. Moreover, he had been promoted to the mid-level rank of superintendent, or 御普清役, which elevated him well above the rank of interpreter, one of the lowest-ranking official posts. In addition, he was made a vassal of the shogun 幕臣 (bakushin) and raised to samurai status. This promotion brought his social status more in line with his outsized influence on shogunal relations with the encroaching Western powers. He would also change his name to Takichiro 多吉郎 in accordance with his changed social status

Pioneer American Merchants in Japan in 1855

Commander John Rodgers, the head of a scientific and surveying expedition to the north Pacific ocean on the sloop-of-war *Vincennes* entered the harbor of Shimoda on May 13, 1855. There Rodgers found ten Americans from the schooner *Caroline E. Foote* living at the Buddhist temple in Kakisaki 玉泉寺 (Gyokusenji). He was impressed by the enterprise shown by them in “colonizing Japan, so soon after the treaty.”⁽⁶⁴⁾ In the absence of a consul, the Americans asked for his protection. They had falsely been led to believe that the Treaty of Kanagawa permitted Americans to reside in Shimoda and Hakodate and to supply the American whaling ships that visit that latter port.

On May 7, 1855, on behalf of the Shimoda magistrate, three junior officials, Gohoru, [sic] Murayama, and Moriyama, had written to them to enjoin them to leave Shimoda as soon as the schooner returned.

“About leaving this place, your intention is heard, which you have declared, that staying in this place is not properly your intention, but because the Russians have engaged the schooner which is manned by you, with which they have gone home, you have been compelled to land here, and that you with the return of the schooner will leave this place. Or should the schooner not return in the intended time, to await the arrival of a ship that sails for your country and with that vessel to leave this place.”⁽⁶⁵⁾

The English is quite stilted, redundant and overly complex grammatically, and for that reason somewhat hard to understand. Nevertheless, it can be understood if read carefully. Its unnaturalness may partly stem from having been translated from Japanese and, perhaps Dutch as well. It would have been composed chiefly, or wholly, by Moriyama, and demonstrates a surprising degree of command of written English.

Besides dealing with the Americans in Shimoda, Moriyama is also thought to be one of the shogunal officials assigned to Heda village in Izu to supervise the construction of more Kimizawa style Western ships following the model of the schooner Heda built by the Russians with the aid of Japanese carpenters in that same place. He would later sail on one of these ships together with the Shimoda magistrate from Edo to Shimoda in only a fraction of the time it would have taken in the usual arduous journey by land.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Conclusion

In this article, we have focused on the essential role of the Nagasaki interpreters and scholars of Dutch in both inventing the concept of the “closed country” policy and then half a century later in facilitating the peaceful and gradual transition to an “open country” policy. In particular, we have traced the career of the most prominent and talented of these interpreters Moriyama Einouske (Takichiro) from his boyhood and youth in Nagasaki as the heir to a prominent family of interpreters of Dutch up until his promotion to samurai status as a lower-ranking shogunal official whose advice on foreign affairs would be sought out by the highest shogunal councilors. Through diligent study augmented by natural talent, Moriyama acquired fluent command of spoken and written Dutch at an early age. However, while still in his early twenties, the letter from the King of the Netherlands Willem II to the shogun Ieyoshi, translated by his interpreter father into Japanese, warned of the growing might of England in the world and the danger that its power posed to the peace and welfare of Japan. In 1845 the sudden appearance of the American whaler Manhattan carrying Japanese castaways and the necessity to communicate with its captain in English demonstrated dramatically the need to become fluent in that language as well. The subsequent, fortuitous arrival of Ameri-

can seamen in Nagasaki, and, in particular the six-months of intensive instruction in American English by the American adventurer Ranald MacDonald, enabled him to quickly acquire the ability to communicate successfully with the American naval commander James Glynn and arrange for the early liberation of the seamen and the peaceful resolution of the crisis. Having thus proved his mettle as both interpreter and negotiator with Americans, the shogunate began to rely on him more and more when dealing with the Russians as well.

In Ivan Goncharov's memorable and humorous depictions of Moriyama and his fellow Nagasaki interpreter of Dutch Nishi Kichibei we see them both crawling on the floor up to the feet of the Japanese plenipotentiaries, while in their absence also the great contrast in their innate ability as interpreters and motivation to study English, as well as in their personal conduct. While Nishi's career and life ended abruptly in failure in Nagasaki, Moriyama had already distinguished himself as the chief interpreter and day-to-day manager of the negotiations with Commodore Perry and his officers and interpreters. This led to his being stationed in Shimoda and again assigned the role as chief interpreter during the treaty negotiations with the Russian admiral Putiatin and his officers and interpreters.

Because of his outstanding talents, despite his low social status, men of much higher official rank such as Hayashi Akira and Kawaji Toshiakira, came to rely on him for his accurate interpreting and bold negotiating style with their American and Russian counterparts on their behalf. Given his unique knowledge and experience in such matters, he was granted the authority by his Japanese superiors to essentially manage the negotiations.

After the Russo-Japanese treaty had been concluded, Moriyama was promoted to the role of a multilingual liaison officer who dealt with both the American merchants who came to Shimoda and the Russians from the sunken frigate *Diana* stranded in Heda.

Times of crisis in the life of nations generally call forth men and women with the necessary talent and ability to lead and point the way to their resolution. Although Moriyama was only a commoner until the end of the time period covered in this article, he stood head and shoulders above his fellow Nagasaki interpreters; he was unrivalled in his linguistic gifts and unmatched in his diplomatic skills. He was definitely the man of the hour for the shogunate, and in the next articles we will two follow his career to the end. He deserves more attention and appreciation from historians of the bakumatsu period for his outstanding contributions to the peaceful opening of Japan to the West in the waning years of the Tokugawa shogunate.

References

- The Deshima Diaries, Mariginalia 1740–1800, (2004) Leonard Blussé, Willem Rémelink, Cynthia Viallé, Isabel van Daalen, Eds., Japan-Netherlands Institute, Tokyo
- Dulles, Foster Rhea, (1965) *Yankees and Samurai: America's Role in the Emergence of Modern Japan: 1791–1900*
- Egoshi Hiroto, (2008) 江越弘人, Moriyama Einosuke-bakumatsu diplomat 森山栄之助・幕末外交官
- Goncharov, Ivan, Гончаров, Иван (1986) Фрегат Паллада (Frigate Pallada), Nauka
- Executive Document 59, (1852) US Senate, 32nd Congress, 1st Session, Washington, D.C.
- Goodman, Grant K., (1986) *Japan: the Dutch Experience*, Athlone Press
- Greene, D.C., (1907) "Correspondence between William II of Holland and the Shogun of Japan, A.D. 1844," TASJ, XXXIV, pp. 99–132
- Hawkes, Francis, L. (Comp.), (1856) Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853 and 1854, under the command of M.C. Perry, United States Navy, Congress of the United States, Washington, D.C.
- Hayashi Daigaku (unsigned), (1930) "Diary of an Official of the Bakufu," TASJ, 2nd Series, VII, pp. 98–120
- Hirao Nobuko, 平尾信子, (1994) 黒船前夜の出会い・捕鯨船長クーパーの来航, (Kurofune zenya no deai: ho-geisencho Cooper no raiko), NHK ブックス
- Lensen, George Alexander, (1955) *Russia's Japan Expedition of 1852–1855*, Greenwood Press, 1982 (Reprint of University of Florida, 1955)
- Levysohn, Joseph Henry, (1852) *Bladen over Japan*, 's Gravenhage
- Matsutake Hideo, 松竹秀雄, (1993) 英艦フェートン号事件 (Eikan Phaeton go jiken),
- McOmie, William (2011) (マコウミ・ウイリアム『アメリカ人見た幕末日本 1842–1846』(American Views of bakumatsu Japan, 1842–1846) 神奈川大学人文学研究所人文学研究所報 No. 45
- McOmie, William (2014) *Of Whale Oil and the Spirit of Adventure: American Seamen in Japan, 1846–1850*, ウイリアム・マコウミ, 鎖国日本を訪れたアメリカ捕鯨船の水兵たち: 油の冒険のために 1846–1850, (神奈川大学人文学研究所人文学研究所報 No. 52
- McOmie, William (2006), *The Opening of Japan, 1853–1855*, Global Oriental, Folkestone, UK
- McOmie, William, (2011) "From Russia with All Due Respect: Reconsidering the Rezanov Mission to Japan," Proceedings of the Japan Society (London), Number 148
- MacDonald, Ranald, Edited and annotated from the original manuscripts by Willam S. Lewis and Naojiro Murakami, (1994) Ranald MacDonald: The Narrative of his early life on the Columbia under the Hudson's Bay Company's regime; of his experiences on the Pacific Whale Fishery; and of his great Adventure to Japan, with a sketch of his later life on the Western Frontier 1824–1894, Oregon Historical Society Press
- Mitani Hiroshi, (2006) *Escape from Impasse: the decision to open Japan*, (translated by David Noble), International House of Japan Press
- Plutschow, Herbert E., (1983) *Historical Nagasaki*, The Japan Times
- Sakamaki Shunzo, (1939) *Japan and the United States, 1790–1853*, TASJ, 2nd Series, Vol. XVIII,
- Statler, Oliver, (1969) *Shimoda Story*, Random House
- Toby, Ronald P., (1984) *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, Princeton University Press
- Van Zandt, Howard, (1984) *Pioneer American Merchants in Japan*, Tuttle
- Wada Haruki, 和田春樹, (1991) 開国一日露国境交渉, (Kaikoku-nichiro kokkyou koshou), NHKBooks
- Wallach, Sidney, Ed., (1952) abridged edition of Hawkes, Francis, L. (Comp.), *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan...*, Coward-McCann
- Walworth, Arthur, (1946) *Black Ships Off Japan: the Story of the Opening Up of Japan by Commodore Perry in 1853*, Alfred A. Knopf
- Wiley, Peter Booth, (1990) *Yankees in the Land of the Gods; Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan*, Penguin Books
- Winslow, C. F., (1846) "Some account of Captain Mercator Cooper's visit to Japan in the whale ship Manhattan of Sag Harbor," Chinese Repository, Vol. XV, April 1846

注

- (1) Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 11–18
- (2) Grant K. Goodman, *Japan: the Dutch Experience*, p. 32
- (3) William McOmie, “From Russia with All Due Respect: Reconsidering the Rezanov Mission to Japan,” *Proceedings of the Japan Society* (London), Number 148, 2011, pp. 218–219 This conversation was translated from Russian by the author as reported by Rezanov. It was not stated what in what language the conversation was originally conducted. but it was probably a combination of Russian and Japanese, with some English, French or Dutch words possibly added. As there was no proper Japanese ‘equivalent’ for the English word ‘freedom’ at the time, it was probably a translation of the Dutch ‘vrijheid’ or Russian свобода ‘svoboda.’
- (4) Egoshi Hiroto 江越弘人, 森山栄之助・幕末外交官, (Moriyama Einosuke: bakumatsu gaikokan), pp. 17–22
- (5) マコウミ・ウイリアム 『アメリカ人見た幕末日本 1842–1846』 神奈川大学人文学研究所人文学研究所報 No. 45, pp. 26–27 (cf. original source: the Chinese Repository (1846) Vol. XV, April 1846, p. 174)
- (6) Hirao Nobuko, 平尾信子, 黒船前夜の出会い 捕鯨船長クーパーの来航, (Kurofune zenya no deai hogeisen-cho Cooper no raiko) p. 72
- (7) Ibid, 文学研究所報 No. 45, pp. 33–34
- (8) ウイリアム・マコウミ, 鎖国日本を訪れたアメリカ捕鯨船の水兵たち：油の冒険のために 1846～1850, 神奈川大学人文学研究所人文学研究所報 No. 52, 2014 年 8 月 pp. 28–31 (cf. Endnote 3 for original sources)
- (9) 人文学研究所報 No. 52, 2014 年 8 月 pp. 31–35 (cf. Endnote 4 for original sources)
- (10) Ranald MacDonald, *Narrative*, pp. 210–11, 220; McOmie, 人文学研究所報 No. 52, 2014 年 8 月 pp. 44–47
- (11) MacDonald later reported to Commander Glynn that he had answered: “Yes, that I believed in the the ‘Father, Son and Holy Ghost’ and in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” MacDonald, p. 282
- (12) MacDonald, pp 220–221
- (13) Egoshi, pp. 29–30 He was apparently the son of the Motoki Shozzaemon who had the above quoted conversation with Rezanov.
- (14) MacDonald, Appendix II-C, p. 283
- (15) MacDonald, *Narrative*, pp. 209–10
- (16) MacDonald, *Narrative*, pp. 225–227 This quotation shows how well he came to understand the Japanese sound system with its inherent handicaps for learning English, no less troublesome for Japanese students of English today. He must have been familiar with the Scottish burr from his own father or other Scottish immigrants to America, but the usual Japanese pronunciation of his last name employs a distinctive Japanese ‘r’ sound with an inserted short vowel ‘u.’ Thus his name would today be transcribed as the familiar Japanese fast-food chain Makudonarudo, with whose human mascot he must not be confused.
- (17) William McOmie, *The Opening of Japan*, pp. 44, 45
- (18) McOmie, No. 52, pp. 48–50
- (19) Egoshi, p. 31
- (20) U.S. Senate, Executive Document 59, 32 nd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 11, 46
- (21) Egoshi, pp. 37–38
- (22) McOmie, Ibid., pp. 65–69
- (23) Egoshi, pp. 42–44
- (24) The former date is according to the Julian calendar still in use in Russia at the time.
- (25) Goncharov, *Fregat Pallada*, p. 288. Goncharov doesn’t mention that Moriyama had studied English from Ranald Macdonald; Moriyama may not have told him. All translations are from the original Russian by the author.
- (26) Ibid, p. 290
- (27) Ibid, p. 303
- (28) Ibid. p. 304
- (29) Ibid. p. 299
- (30) Ibid, p. 304
- (31) Ibid, pp. 345–347; McOmie, pp. 202–203 In fact, Moriyama had recently married a teenage courtesan from the

- Maruyama quarter, by whom he had an infant daughter. Moreover, the Dutch physician on Deshima had previously introduced the practice of vaccination against smallpox to Nagasaki.
- (32) Ibid, p. 354, 355, 357; Egoshi, p. 45
 - (33) Ibid, p. 363 Although Moriyama like other Nagasaki interpreters belonged to the merchant class 商人 he possessed a sword.
 - (34) Ibid, p. 364
 - (35) Ibid, p. 367
 - (36) Ibid. p. 375 As any other interpreter would have been inferior, this threat was probably not acted upon.
 - (37) Ibid, p. 375.
 - (38) Ibid, p. 468
 - (39) McOmie, Opening, pp. 240–241
 - (40) Ibid, p. 242 (cf. Note 49 “Diary of an Official of the Bakufu,” TASJ, VII (1930))
 - (41) Wallach, Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, p. 157
 - (42) Francis Hawkes, Narrative, p. 396. This sailor would seem to have been MacDonald.
 - (43) Wallach, Narrative, p. 158
 - (44) McOmie, Opening, p. 247
 - (45) McOmie, Opening, p. 256
 - (46) McOmie, Opening, pp. 240–1, 263
 - (47) Oliver Statler, Shimoda Story, p. 55
 - (48) McOmie, p. 264
 - (49) Ibid, p. 268
 - (50) Mitani Hiroshi, Escape from Impasse, pp. 194–5
 - (51) Mitani, p. 194; McOmie, p. 268
 - (52) Mitani, p. 196
 - (53) 両國政府に於いて, . . . cf. Egoshi, p. 54
 - (54) Mitani, p. 197
 - (55) Mitani, p. 207
 - (56) Hawkes, Narrative, pp. 394–5; Wallach, Narrative, pp. 218–219
 - (57) Mitani, p. 231
 - (58) McOmie, 350 Cf. Note 38 for original Russian source: Nikolai Schilling, *Recollections* (1892)
 - (59) Mitani 245–6; McOmie, 350
 - (60) Lensen, Russia’s Japan Expedition 1852 to 1855, pp. 118–119
 - (61) Mitani, 246
 - (62) Ibid, p. 253
 - (63) Statler, p. 364
 - (64) McOmie, p. 384
 - (65) Van Zandt, Pioneer Merchants, p. 135
 - (66) Egoshi, p. 76

概要

本稿では、幕末日本に於いて「鎖国」から「開国」への根本的な変化に長崎オランダ通詞が果たした中心的役割を主なテーマとしています。幕末時代、森山栄之助（多吉郎）は長崎のオランダ通詞の家庭に生まれ、その言語的な才能は少年時代から際立ち注目されていました。

森山家のオランダ通詞としてオランダ語を勉強し、読み書き会話共堪能になりました。しかし、英艦フェートン号事件の後、英語の必要性が認められ、長崎にいる英語を話せるオランダ人に英会話のレッスンを申し出ました。

1845年浦賀沖に突然現れたアメリカの捕鯨船マンハッタン号の船長が乗せていた日本人漂流民についての大事な交渉は森山栄之助の最初のアメリカ人との出会いでした。その時英語の知識はまだわずかでしたが、手振りなどで大成功に終わりました。

その後長崎に戻り、1846年から1850年にかけて太平洋に於いて活動するアメリカの捕鯨船が日本近海で難破したために避難し日本に滞在したアメリカ人水兵たちから実践的英語を習いました。しかし、特にアメリカ英語を教えてくれたのは別の捕鯨船で日本近海にきた大胆なアメリカ人冒険家ラナルド・マクドナルドでした。森山は彼と親しくなり、数ヶ月の間ほぼ毎日英語のレッスンを受け、長崎の通詞たちの間で一番優れた生徒でした。1849年4月アメリカの軍艦 *Preble* 号が長崎に来航しました。船長はラナルド・マクドナルドを含むアメリカ人水兵たちの即日解放を要求し、緊張した雰囲気となりました。森山はその船長と英語で交渉に入り、彼の巧みな通訳が大いに役立って危機状態は速やかに平和的に終わり、*Preble* 号はアメリカ人水兵たちを乗せて日本を後にしました。その時以来長崎奉行所や幕府政府は益々森山の通訳や外交官としての経験や優れた能力に頼る事となりました。マクドナルドは後に思い出話の中で森山を詳しく描写し、彼に対する友愛を感動的に書いています。

1853年から1855年にかけて、次々に長崎や横浜にロシア、アメリカ、イギリスの海軍遠征隊がやってきました。彼らは森山や他の日本人通詞たちや役人たちとの事象、交流について詳しい記録を残しています。それらは異文化的にも歴史的にも大変興味深い史料です。それらから森山は交渉の重大時において、単なる「通訳」ではなかった事がわかります。全権者たちにアドバイスをしたり、彼らと自分の意見を直接相手側に表して交渉の成果に大きな影響を与えました。特に横浜で行ったペリー提督らと日米条約締結交渉の際、アメリカ側の記録にも日本側の記録にも森山が条約文の最終案を担当していると書かれています。彼は言語的な才能と頭の良さのおかげで、長崎のオランダ通詞という非常に低い身分でありながら、外国人との交渉に多大な影響を及ぼしました。その結果1855年に外国人との交渉に不可欠な役割を認められ、幕府は森山を御普請役に任命し幕臣にしました。森山は幕末時代の最も優秀な人物の一人と言えます。森山をはじめ、日本外国とも幕末時代の通詞たちの果たした役割の重要性は歴史家の注目をより集めるべきでありましょう。



Figure 1 Captain Konstantin Possiet, interpreter of Dutch and second in command of Russian naval expeditions to Japan in 1853–55 (sketch by an unidentified artist)



Figure 2 Collegiate Assessor Ivan Goncharov, secretary to Admiral Putiatin, author of travelogue *Frigate Pallada* (by an unidentified photographer)



Figure 4 The Japanese interpreter of Dutch Hori Tatsunosuke (adapted from a daguerreotype by Eliphalet Brown in the *Narrative of the American Expedition...*)

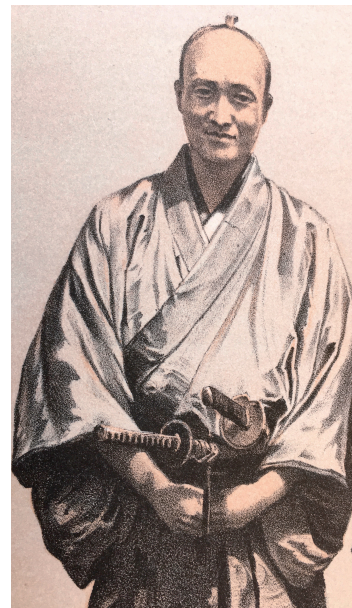


Figure 3 The Japanese interpreter of Dutch and English and de facto diplomat Moriyama Einosuke (Takichiro) (Section of a Lithograph from a daguerreotype by Eliphalet Brown, in the *Narrative of the American Expedition...*)



Figure 5 The Japanese interpreter of Dutch Namura Gohachiro (adapted from a daguerreotype by Eliphalet Brown in the Narrative...)



Figure 6 The American interpreter of Dutch Anton Portman (left) and American chief interpreter Samuel Wells Williams, interpreter for Japanese and Chinese. (drawing by an unknown Japanese artist) (adapted from MIT Visualizing Cultures.)

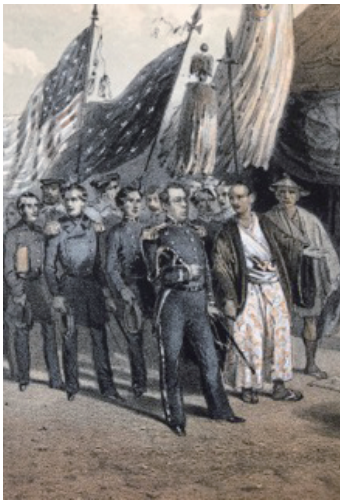


Figure 7 Commodore Perry and accompanying officers being escorted to the entrance of the reception pavilion in Yokohama on March 8, 1853. The Japanese official standing beside Perry and gesturing towards the entrance is not identified but may in fact be Moriama Einosuke, who would have been the most likely Japanese official to entrust with such an important role (adapted from a drawing by Wilhelm Heine in the Narrative...)

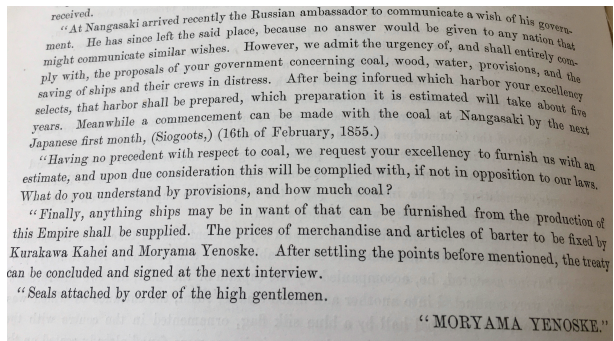


Figure 8 English translation of a document in Dutch written and signed by Moriama, which specifies his joint responsibility for fixing prices for merchandise, etc. (adapted from the Narrative..)

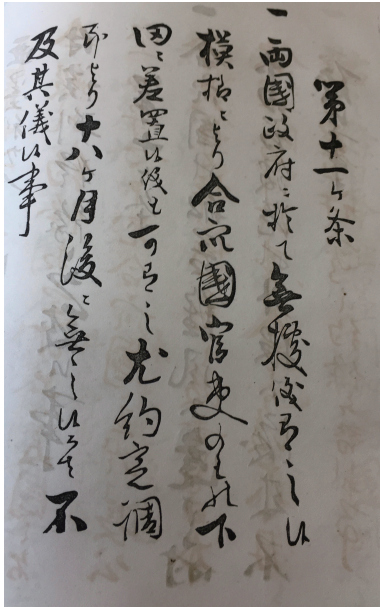


Figure 9 Facsimile of the Japanese version of the Treaty of Kanagawa showing Article 11 (adapted from the Narrative…)



Figure 10 Drawing of the four Japanese plenipotentiaries and their secretary and interpreter during negotiations with Admiral Putiatin for the Treaty of Shimoda. The interpreter, shown kneeling in front of the second plenipotentiary, is thought to be Moriyama Einosuke. (from a drawing by Alexander Mozhaitsky, in the collection of the Central Naval Archives in St. Petersburg, Russia)