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'Western entrepreneurs and the opening of Japanese ports (c. 1858-1868)'

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Work in progress

Western entrepreneurs and the opening of Japanese ports (c. 1858-1868)

From 1641 until 1858, Japan pursued a policy of seclusion from world affairs.¹ This started with a series of edicts from the Shogun, the military ruler of Japan, forbidding Japanese to travel abroad or to conduct trade with foreign countries without official licenses.² These laws also banned foreigners from entering Japan. After 1641, only the Dutch East-India Company (VOC), in Japan since 1609, was allowed to stay and to trade.³ This exceptional position of the Dutch lasted until 1858 when Japan concluded a number of treaties with western powers that opened the country for international trade. The treaties called for the opening of a number of Japanese ports and cities. Until 1898, when the treaties were revised, foreign trade in Japan was conducted in these Treaty Ports. In this paper we will investigate why Japan gave up its isolation and what role the Dutch played in the opening of these ports. Furthermore, we will look at how trade developed between 1859 and 1868. How many westerners came to Japan? From which countries did they come? How did they respond to the contact with the Japanese and vice versa?

The Dutch East India Company in Japan

In April 1600 a Dutch sailing vessel called *De Liefde* ('The Love') stranded on the shores of the island Kyushu.⁴ Its journey began in 1598 when it left the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands together with four other ships. The expedition was organized by two exiled Flemish merchants: Pieter van der Haagen and Johan van der Veeken.⁵ The Dutch received a trading passport in 1609 from Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) and they settled in Hirado. This direct trade with Japanese merchants was largely free of interference from the government.⁶ In Japan other European traders were active, but by 1639 these had left (the English in 1623) or were forced to leave (the Spaniards in 1624 and the Portuguese in 1639). In 1641, Ieyasu ordered the Dutch to tear down their trading post at Hirado and to move to Nagasaki. Here they could live on a fan shaped man-made island, called Deshima. It was possible to walk around the island with its two small streets and a dozen sheds and houses in about five minutes.⁷ Until 1858, the Dutch traded with the Japanese from this small island, which they leased from the Japanese. The 10 to 12 clerks, doctors and the *opperhoofd* (chief merchant) could not leave without permission and at night, the land gate connecting Deshima to Nagasaki was closed and the key remained in the hands of the local officials.⁸ Each year, later every four years, the

¹ For the history prior to 1858 see L.M. Cullen, *A history of Japan, 1582-1941. Internal and external world* (Cambridge 2003); C. Howe, *The origins of Japanese trade supremacy* (London 1996) 3-72. The Japanese term *sakoku* ('closed country') was not used until after 1800. Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities. Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the coming of the Americans* (Cambridge Mass. 2008) 49. On *sakoku* see also Tashiro Kazui and Susan Downing Videen, 'Foreign relations during the Edo period: sakoku reexamined', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8:2 (Summer 1982) 282-306.

² John L. McClain, *Japan: a modern history* (New York 2002) 44-45.

³ Femme S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen 1991) 53, 127-130; L. Blussé, W. Rimmelinck en I. Smits (red.), *Bewogen betrekkingen. 400 jaar Nederland – Japan* (Ede 2000).

⁴ The ship's original name was *Erasmus* after Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and on the back of the ship a wooden sculpture representing Erasmus was attached. This remained in Japan and ended up in the Ryūkō temple. The Japanese believed it was the saint Houdi, but in 1926 it was identified as Erasmus.

⁵ Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 16-23; N. De Roy van Zuydewijn, 'Zuid-Nederlanders als gangmakers', in M. van der Heijden en P. van de Laar (red.), *Rotterdamers en de VOC. Handelscompagnie, stad en burgers (1600-1800)* (Amsterdam 2002) 56-77.

⁶ Details on Shoguns and Emperors in Louis Frédéric, *Japan Encyclopedia* (Cambridge Mass. 2002).

⁷ Herman J. Moeshart (inleiding en annotatie), *Journal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek 1857-1870. Belevissen van een Nederlandse diplomaat in het negentiende eeuwse Japan* (Assen/Maastricht 1987) 14-15.

⁸ Huibert Paul, *Nederlanders in Japan 1600-1854. De VOC op Deshima* (Weesp 1984).

opperhoofd went a trip to Edo (after 1868: Tokyo) where the Shogun had its palace. Here they exchanged gifts and provided valuable information on world affairs.⁹ The Dutch accepted the rather humiliating treatment in the interest of their trading privileges. Already in 1633, the VOC issued an order that their servants should adapt to the local culture as much as possible and act like the Japanese, which meant they had to be modest, humane and obedient.¹⁰ This submissive attitude was perhaps favorable for trading, but bad for the status of the Dutch in Japan. Japan was a feudal society until 1868 with a strict societal hierarchy and traders ranked amongst the lowest status groups in Japanese society. The effect was that, when international pressure on Japan to give up its isolationist policy grew, the Dutch offer to help was turned down. Japan had no diplomatic relations with the Netherlands only trading relations and on several occasions the Japanese officials reminded the Dutch of their humble status.

Besides the Dutch, another group of merchants operated in Nagasaki. These were the Chinese, at times they numbered more than 5,000, and they too were relocated to a small island: the *tojin yahiki* (Chinese quarter).¹¹ All international trade of Japan was now concentrated in Nagasaki. The Shogun and the Bakufu (the Japanese government) controlled this trade that provided them with valuable products.¹² From 1698, this trade was handled by the Nagasaki *kaisho* or 'Clearing House' (Geldkamer in Dutch). The Dutch trade consisted of two parts: the Company or comps trade (trade by the VOC, mostly on behalf of the Shogun and landlords) and the private trade by VOC merchants (the *kambang* trade).¹³ Private trade, although officially forbidden, was quietly accepted in all trading posts of the VOC in South East Asia.¹⁴

At first the trade with Japan proved very profitable for the VOC, but after the Japanese began to restrict the export of high value commodities, including gold, silver, and silk, profits declined sharply.¹⁵ From 1715 only two Dutch trading ships per year could enter Nagasaki and after 1790 this was further limited to one. Only copper was traded during the later decades. The VOC was liquidated in 1799 and the Dutch government took over all its possessions and debts, including the trading post ('factorij') at Deshima. The private trade was farmed out by the government to merchants in the Dutch East Indies and Netherlands. From the 1830s, financial results of the trade with Japan were mostly negative. The Dutch could have left Japan, and this was indeed discussed on several occasions, but in the end it was decided to stay 'in the interest of trade'.¹⁶ The Japanese saw the Dutch as providers of valuable products, knowledge and information; they offered a window on the (western) world. Between 1785 and 1860, the Japanese ordered about 10,000 scientific books from the Dutch.¹⁷ John McMaster says that the Japanese had maintained the Dutch factory principally as an 'intelligence agency'.¹⁸

When C.T. van Assendelft de Coningh (see below) visited Deshima in May 1851 as captain of the annual ship from Batavia, he found conditions on the island much depressed. 'Most buildings on

⁹ Blussé, *Visible Cities*, 49.

¹⁰ Idem, 21, 35.

¹¹ Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge Mass. 1992) 5-11.

¹² Idem, 31; Blussé, *Visible Cities*, 44-50.

¹³ *Kambang* means 'signboard'. Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk Graeff van Polsbroek*, 30.

¹⁴ J. Feenstra Kuiper, *Japan en de buitenwereld in de achttiende eeuw* (Den Haag 1921).

¹⁵ Cees Camfferman and Terrence E. Cooke, 'The profits of the Dutch East India Company's Japan trade', *Abacus* 40:1 (2004) 49-75.

¹⁶ Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 53, 127-130.

¹⁷ R.H. Hesselink, *Twee spiegels op cambang* (Utrecht 1984) 21. These books were translated into Japanese.

¹⁸ John McMaster, 'The Japanese Goldrush of 1859', *Journal of Asian Studies* 19:3 (May 1960) 273-287.

Deshima are warehouses, the upper part of some of which are, like mine, adapted as living quarters; all, except the house of the *opperhoofd*, are extremely dilapidated, and it is high time to renovate things. I doubt, however, if this will happen soon, unless, as in 1794, everything is burned down'.¹⁹ He further noted that restrictions remained firm and even after more than 200 years Japanese spies kept a watchful eye on the Dutch.

The opening of Japan (1853-1858)

Until about 1800, the Dutch monopoly in Japan remained virtually unchallenged. However, after the 1780s, the number of foreign ships sighted near the Japanese coast increased steadily.²⁰ In most cases these were merchant vessels driven off course on their way to China or just nose whaling ships.²¹ Besides these merchant and whaling ships, the number of naval ships with diplomats grew. The Russians took the lead in these military and diplomatic missions that remained largely unsuccessful.²² Between 1795 and 1814, when the Netherlands was part of France, the British tried to break the Dutch monopoly in Deshima on several occasions but failed to do so.²³ Because of the increasing number of foreign ships near the Japanese coast, the Shogun issued a new order in 1825. This instructed the daimyo, the landlords, on the coastal domains to shoot at these ships without delay. The Shogun also ordered the modernization and improvement of coastal defenses, but because of financial constraints these works were not fully implemented. After the First Opium War in China (1839-1842), the Shogun relaxed these orders because it could provoke western countries to attack Japan. Foreigners washed ashore would get a better treatment and were transferred to Deshima to leave Japan on the next possible occasion with the Dutch ship.

In the Netherlands worries about the future of Japan and the Dutch position in Deshima grew.²⁴ King William II (1792-1849, king 1840-1849) decided to write a letter to 'his friend' the Japanese Emperor (the Shogun).²⁵ The letter and accompanying presents arrived in Nagasaki in the autumn of 1844. William II pointed out the progress of western civilizations and technological changes (including steam ships), that made the Japanese isolationism no longer viable. He offered to help Japan to adjust to the new world order in exchange of better trading conditions for the Dutch. The Shogun's reply made it clear that the Japanese would hold on to their policy. They furthermore made it clear that Japan had no diplomatic relations with the Netherlands. William II was asked politely but firmly, never ever to send such an offending letter to the Shogun.²⁶

¹⁹ Citation in Huibert Paul, 'De Coningh on deshima. Mijn Verblijf in Japan, 1856', *Monumenta Nipponica* 32:3 (Autumn 1977) 347-364 (354).

²⁰ George Feifer, *Breaking open Japan. Commodore Perry, lord Abe, and American imperialism in 1853* (New York 2006) 37; Arthur Walworth, *Black ships off Japan. The story of Commodore Perry's Expedition* (New York 1946) 3.

²¹ McClain, *Japan*, 135.

²² J.C. Thomson, P.W. Stanley and J.C. Perry, *Sentimental imperialists. The American experience in East Asia* (New York 1981) 61-79.

²³ Paul E. Eckel, 'Challenges to Dutch monopoly of Japanese trade during the wars of Napoleon', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 1:2 (February 1942) 173-179.

²⁴ Ph. F. Von Siebold, *Met oorkonden gestaafd vertoog van de pogingen door Nederland en Rusland gedaan tot openstelling van Japan voor de scheepvaart en den zeehandel van alle natien* (Zaltbommel 1854); J.A. van der Chijs, *Neerlands streven tot openstelling van Japan voor den wereldhandel : uit officieele, grootendeels onuitgegeven bescheiden toegelicht : met vijf bijlagen, behelzende eene geschiedenis van het Nederlandsch marine-detachement in Japan* (Amsterdam 1867).

²⁵ Besides the Shogun, Japan had an Emperor (in Kyoto), but he had no political power. Foreigners had only a vague notion of this and addressed the Shogun usually as 'Emperor'. Americans and British spoke of the *Tycoon* when they meant the Shogun.

²⁶ Els M. Jacobs, 'Met alleen woorden als wapens. De Nederlandse poging tot openstelling van Japanse havens voor de internationale handel (1844)', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (BMGN)* 1 (1990) 54-77.

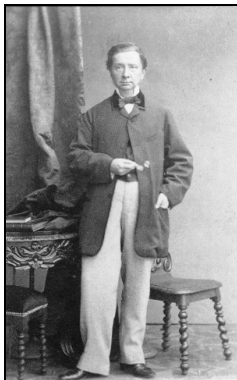
Panic broke out in Edo when in 1845 the much feared British navy surveyed the coastal area of southern Japan and the entrance of the port of Nagasaki.²⁷ The British, however, had no interest in Japan at that time because they focused on the profitable Canton Trade in thee, china ware and opium. In 1852, the Russians again tried to start diplomatic relations with Japan. The mission included several Japanese castaways that the Russians wanted to return to their homeland. Other countries, including the French and Americans, used the same tactic but the Japanese would not give in. The options to open Japan peacefully were by now exhausted and another, more forceful strategy was necessary.



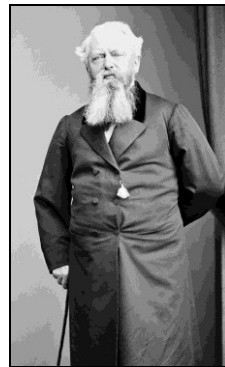
Commodore Matthew C. Perry



First visit of Perry in Japan 1853



J.H. Donker Curtius, Dutch Kommissaris in Japan



Townsend Harris, American Consul-General in Japan

The United States, Asia and Japan 1853-1854

American merchants on the east coast imported Chinese thee, silk, china ware and exported cotton since the 1780s. This important China or Canton Trade probably also fostered their interest in Japan.²⁸ The Napoleonic period, when the Netherlands was under control of France, hindered the government in Batavia to send its annual ship to Nagasaki and it had to resort to American, Danish and Brandenburg ships.²⁹ Because these chartered ships flew the Dutch flag and used the secret flag issued each year by the Japanese, the American captains entered these waters without being fired at. Interest in Japan grew further after the annexation of California in 1848. The Gold Rush in that same year led to a fast growth of the population and cities on the American west coast. This opened the possibility of trade across the Pacific Ocean. Steamships required sufficient ports for the intake of coal and Japan happened to lie on the route from San Francisco to Shanghai. However, besides these

²⁷ William McOmie, *The opening of Japan 1853-1855. A comparative study of the American, British, Dutch and Russian Naval Expeditions to compel the Tokugawa Shogunate to conclude treaties and open ports to their ships* (Kent 2006) 35.

²⁸ Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 185; Blussé, *Visible Cities*, 1-32; Howe, *Japanese trade supremacy*, 47-49.

²⁹ Blussé, *Visible Cities*, 91-95.

economic motives, other arguments were important. Americans believed that Japan was basically an uncivilized country because it lacked democracy, freedom and modern industry.³⁰ Christianity was unknown and it was the obligation of the Americans to change all this (the idea of 'Manifest Destiny').³¹ Samuel Wells Williams (1812-1884), a missionary and translator on the Perry expedition once said: 'I have a full conviction that the seclusion policy of the nations of Eastern Asia is not according to God's plan of mercy to these peoples, and their government must change them through fear of force (...)'.³² This American imperialistic attitude towards non-western cultures was comparable to that found in many other Western-European countries who wanted to bring 'commerce, civilization and Christianity' to all nations, preferably in this order.³³

Stories printed in newspapers, some true and others made-up, on the maltreatment of shipwrecked sailors by the Japanese enraged the American public. In 1849, the American Aaron H. Palmer, director of the American and Foreign Agency in New York, published a plan for a military operation against Japan in the influential journal *The National Era*.³⁴ Palmer strongly criticized the Netherlands for its submissiveness towards the Japanese and holding on to its trading monopoly. 'Such degrading acts of homage and submission with the servile obsequiousness of the Dutch Residents to the Japanese officials, on all occasions, for upwards of 200 years, with the object of maintaining their paltry trade at Deshima, have inspired the court of Yedo with a profound contempt for foreigners of the Western Nations'.³⁵ In the beginning of 1852, the American government ordered Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794-1858) to sail to Japan and negotiate a treaty thus opening Japan for the wider world.³⁶ At first Perry was not at all enthusiastic about this commission and instead preferred an assignment in the Mediterranean, but later he changed his mind and saw the historic opportunity to make a name for himself and the United States.³⁷ The letter President Millard Fillmore (1800-1874, President 1850-1853) wrote to the Japanese Emperor (Shogun) was extremely polite and began with the exalted salutation 'Great and good friend'.³⁸ The accompanying letter, written by the Secretary of State, instructed Perry, when all other means had failed, to keep a resolute attitude. In the absence of the Secretary of State, Perry had written most parts of the letter himself and it thus provided 'large discretionary powers'.³⁹ To prepare himself, Perry read books and articles on Japan. The available books, about 40, were mostly in Dutch or German, written by former merchants and civil servants of the VOC or the Dutch government. Perry therefore turned to sailors in ports on the east coast (e.g. the Port of New York). From this intelligence gathering Perry concluded: 'It is manifest, from past experience, that arguments or persuasion to this people, unless

³⁰ Micheal Adas, *Dominance by design. Technological Imperative and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge Mass. 2006) 1-33.

³¹ McClain, *Japan*, 135.

³² Citation in McClain, *Japan*, 135.

³³ B. Porter, *Empire and superempire. Britain, America and the world* (New Haven/London 2006); William L. Neumann, 'Religion, Morality, and Freedom: The Ideological Background of the Perry Expedition', *The Pacific Historical Review* 23: 3 (1954) 247-257.

³⁴ Established in 1847 in Washington, D.C., by the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. With its considerable circulation, this paper exerted a strong political and moral influence. Among its contributors were Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Theodore Parker. From: *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

³⁵ Palmer quoted in Moeshart, *Journal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek*, 4.

³⁶ Samuell Eliot Morison, "Old Bruin". *Commodore Matthew C. Perry, 1794-1858* (Boston 1967); J.H. Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry: Antebellum Sailor and Diplomat* (Annapolis 2001).

³⁷ Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 11.

³⁸ W.G. Beasley, *Select documents on Japanese foreign policy 1853-1868* (London 1967, reprint) 99-101.

³⁹ Walworth, *Black ships off Japan*, 27.

they be seconded by some imposing manifestation of power, will be utterly unavailing'.⁴⁰ A fleet of modern steamships would deliver the required display of force, but the Navy turned down his request and he had to content himself with two steamships and two sailing ships.⁴¹ To make clear his determination, Perry decided to go directly to the center of Japanese power: the Bay of Edo. He would not go to Nagasaki even if the Japanese pressed him to do so, because he feared that he would have to accept a posture similar to the Dutch. Perry suspected that the Dutch would do everything they could to frustrate the mission in order to protect their monopoly. He was wrong, like many other westerners at the time.

The Dutch eagerly followed the preparations of Perry and thanks to their consul they were kept well informed of its progress. To assist Perry in his mission, the American government requested charts from the Dutch, but they responded that it was not allowed to make maps of the Japanese coast. The Americans therefore ordered copies of some old maps of Japan from Dutch mapmakers.⁴² The Dutch government worried about a possible military conflict between Japan and the United States and its consequences for the Dutch position in Japan. Would Japan request the military support of the Netherlands? Should the Netherlands meet this request? The Dutch not only informed the Japanese of the Perry expedition, but again tried to change the policy of seclusion. The newly appointed *opperhoofd* at Deshima, Mr. J.H. Donker Curtius (1813-1879, chief between 1852 and 1860), should explain to the Japanese that the Netherlands could assist Japan in preventing a military clash with the United States if they accepted a Dutch proposal. This proposal, that was kept secret for the moment, was in fact a new trading agreement, drafted by Ph. F. Von Siebold (1796-1866).⁴³ Trade would remain in the hands of the Shogun and concentrated in Nagasaki, but Japan would open other ports for the intake of coal and the repairing of ships. The draft-treaty furthermore suggested allowing freedom of religion, extraterritoriality for foreigners and in case of conflicts the Dutch would offer their assistance.⁴⁴ The Japanese at first refused to accept the Dutch letter, but in the end they promised to deliver it to the Shogun if the Dutch accepted that no reply was required. The Japanese, however, were intrigued by the Dutch 'solution' to prevent a conflict with the United States and they urged Donker Curtius to reveal the content of the proposal. Once the content of the draft-treaty was revealed to the Japanese they immediately rejected it. It is, however, interesting to note that the treaties Japan concluded with foreign countries resembled most of the Dutch proposals, including the opening of three ports.⁴⁵

With Perry in Japanese waters

Before Perry arrived in the Bay of Edo, he visited the port of Naha on the Ryukyu Islands on 26 May 1853.⁴⁶ This visit was in fact a dress rehearsal for his show later near Edo.⁴⁷ Perry probably knew that

⁴⁰ McOmie, *The opening of Japan 1853-1855*, 71.

⁴¹ Walworth, *Black ships off Japan*, Appendix A, 239.

⁴² Worth about \$ 30,000. C. Crow, *He opened the door of Japan. Townsend Harris and the story of his amazing adventures in establishing American relations with the Far East* (New York/London 1939) 100-101.

⁴³ The German Von Siebold worked as physician in Deshima between 1823 and 1829. In 1829 the Japanese suspected him of espionage and banned him from Japan. This ban was lifted in 1859 and Von Siebold returned as advisor of the Dutch Trading Association (NHM).

⁴⁴ Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 42-43.

⁴⁵ R. van Lente, 'Door goeden raad en onderwijs'. *Nederland en de opening van Japan 1844-1858* (MA thesis, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam 2008) 117-120. See also Payson Jackson Treat, *The early diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan* (Baltimore 1917) 22 (note 36)

⁴⁶ Officially an independent kingdom, but under Japanese control. McOmie, *The opening of Japan 1853-1855*, 36-39.

⁴⁷ Walworth, *Black ships off Japan*, 45-59.

spies would report his visit to the Shogun and he expected that this would prove beneficial to his expedition. On the evening of 8 July 1853, the squadron entered the Bay of Edo, creating much unrest amongst the locals. For the first time they saw a squadron of well armed navy ships.⁴⁸ Perry added to the anxiety by staying in his cabin and communicating with the Japanese officials through his officers. Perry made it clear that he refused to negotiate with any Japanese official of a lower rank than himself. It seems unlikely the Japanese had a clue what the rank and status of a Commodore in the US navy was and they simply upgraded local authorities to deal with Perry. From a military point of view the squadron posed no threat to the Japanese. The coastal batteries could have easily destroyed the wooden ships, before Perry could have armed his canons.⁴⁹ According to John Black, Perry disregarded all international rules of diplomacy and by entering Japanese waters without permission he violated Japanese sovereignty. Black rightly asks what the United States would have done, had Japanese ships entered American ports without permission.⁵⁰ Even more critical was his translator S. Wells Williams who wrote in his memoirs: 'Perry cares no more for right, for consistency, for his country, than will advance his own aggrandizement and fame, and makes his ambition the test of all his conduct towards the Japanese'.⁵¹

The local authorities time after time asked Perry to sail to Nagasaki, because the bay of Edo was closed. Perry had anticipated this and he categorically refused to comply. After three days of negotiations, using Dutch as a shared language, both parties agreed at what time and place the letter of the American president could be delivered. On 14 July, this momentous occasion took place in a purpose build reception hall at Kurihama, near Uraga in the Bay of Edo. Both sides distrusted each other. Perry mobilized his forces and moved the ships near the reception hall with canons loaded. The Japanese hid ten samurai underneath the floor fully armed to attack at a given signal.⁵² The reception went ahead without any incidents. Perry explained that he would return in a few months with an even larger fleet and he thus expected that the Japanese would decide favorably to the American request for a treaty. Back in Shanghai, Perry met the Russian and French commanders who informed him of their plans to sail to Japan. This annoyed Perry very much. On September 26, he informed to Washington: 'I learn indirectly that the French government contemplates sending a force to Japan, and yet I can hardly believe it to be true, as it would be unfair to intermeddle just at this time'.⁵³ As a result Perry shortened his visit to Shanghai and returned to Japan early 1854. He definitely wanted to be the first person to negotiate a treaty with Japan and to make a name in history.⁵⁴

The visit of Perry required a Japanese response, but opinions on how to deal with these 'barbarians' diverged widely. Foreign policy had not been a priority for more than 200 years. When asked by the Shogun, the landlords gave conflicting replies, although most agreed on a kind of

⁴⁸ Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 31.

⁴⁹ Thomson, Stanley and Perry, *Sentimental imperialists*, 63.

⁵⁰ John Black, *Young Japan* (London 1880) Volume 1, 16. See also Inazo (Ota) Nitobe, *The intercourse between the United States and Japan. An historical sketch* (Baltimore 1891); M. Itoh, *Globalization of Japan. Japanese sakuko mentality and U.S. efforts to open Japan* (New York 1998).

⁵¹ Wells quoted in John Ashmead, *The idea of Japan 1853-1895: Japan as described by American and other travelers from the West* (New York/London 1987) 63.

⁵² Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 122.

⁵³ Walworth, *Black ships off Japan*, 126.

⁵⁴ In May 1853, Perry prevented a fast Russian expedition to Japan by buying up all available coal in Shanghai. Walworth, *Black ships off Japan*, 127.

'containment policy' that allowed trade for the moment, but kept the foreigners out of Japan.⁵⁵ In November 1853, Donker Curtius and local officials in Nagasaki met to discuss a possible Japanese reaction to the American request. Donker Curtius advised the Japanese to comply with American wishes and open two ports for the intake of coal, ship repair and provisioning.⁵⁶ Japan was much impressed by the two steamships of Perry and asked if the Dutch could provide similar military ships for defensive purposes. The Japanese request, although understandable, increased to possibility of Dutch involvement in a military clash and it led to long discussions in The Hague and Batavia.

On 12 February 1854, Perry returned for his second visit. For his squadron he had added more firepower and it consisted of three steamers, four sailing ships and two supply ships. Negotiations lasted until 31 March, when Japan and the United States concluded the *Treaty of Peace and Amity* (also: *Treaty of Kanagawa*).⁵⁷ The treaty stipulated that two ports would be opened for American ships immediately: Shimoda and Hakodate. Nagasaki remained closed for the Americans. Foreign sailors washed ashore would be treated with respect. The treaty furthermore provided for the exchange of consuls and included a most favored nation (MFN) clause (article 9).⁵⁸ In October 1854, Donker Curtius received a letter from the Japanese authorities in which they explained their 'foreign policy' and the treaty concluded with Perry. The Dutch would always be seen as 'most trusted nation' of Japan and were allowed to use the ports of Hakodate and Shimoda, without resorting to gunboat diplomacy.⁵⁹

Back in the United States, Perry received a splendid reception and a big reward. The American Congress also reserved funds for the official publication of the report of the expedition.⁶⁰ Perry died on 4 March 1858, in New York, shortly after the second and third volumes of the report were published.⁶¹ The *Treaty of Kanagawa*, negotiated by Perry, was 'little more than a shipwreck convention' and certainly no trading agreement.⁶² However, even before the ratification of the treaties, American merchants came to Japan. In February 1855, the clipper *Lady Pierce* arrived in Edo and one month later the schooner *Caroline E. Foote* entered the port of Shimoda. The merchants were told that they could not remain in Japan because the treaty simply did not allow this.⁶³

⁵⁵ Conrad Totman, 'From Sakoku to Kaikoku. The transformation of foreign-policy attitudes, 1853-1868', *Monumenta Nipponica* 35:1 (Spring 1980) 1-19.

⁵⁶ Van Lente, 'Door goeden raad en onderwijs', 121-122.

⁵⁷ Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with imperialism: the unequal treaties and the culture of Japanese diplomacy* (Cambridge 2004); Beasley, *Select documents on Japanese foreign policy*, 119-123.

⁵⁸ Shinya Murase, 'The Most-Favored Nation treatment in Japan's treaty practice during the period 1854-1905', *The American Journal of International Law* 70:2 (April 1976) 273-297.

⁵⁹ Moeshart, *Journal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek 1857-1870*, 6.

⁶⁰ Francis L. Hawks (compiled), *Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan. Narrative of the Expedition of an American squadron to the China Seas and Japan, 1852-1854. The Official Report of the Expedition to Japan* (Stroud 2005, originally 1856-1858).

⁶¹ Perry received \$ 20,000 and Congress reserved \$ 400.000 for publication of the report. In Newport, Rhode Island, in the Touro Park a statue of Perry was unveiled in 1868. Its restoration in 1993 was partly financed by gifts from the Japanese town Shimoda. Feifer, *Breaking open Japan*, 328. The first biography appeared in 1887: W.E. Griffis, *Matthew Calbraith Perry: Atypical American naval officer* (Boston 1887).

⁶² Henry Heusken, *Japan Journal 1855-1861* (transl. and edited by J.C. van der Corput and R.A. Wilson) (New Brunswick 1964) xviii.

⁶³ Patt Barr, *The coming of the barbarians. The opening of Japan to the west* (New York 1967) 43-44; H.F. Van Zandt, *Pioneer American Merchants in Japan* (Tokyo 1981).

New treaties with the Netherlands

In the Netherlands the government was still discussing the Japanese request for a modern steam powered naval ship. Building a new ship would take months to complete and it was decided to provide Japan with an electro-magnetic telegraph. This equipment would be delivered by the paddle-wheel steamship *Soembing*, under the command of Gerhardus Fabius (1801-1888).⁶⁴ The arrival of the *Soembing* in Nagasaki on August 22, 1854, immediately attracted a lot of interest of the Japanese officials. Not only because it was a well armed, modern steam ship, but perhaps also because Fabius was a soldier and in Japan their status was higher than simple traders like Donker Curtius. During his stay in Nagasaki, Fabius lectured on naval techniques, steam technology and made several outings with local officials on board.

In March 1854, the Crimean War began that spurred the opening of Japan.⁶⁵ Great Britain and France supported the Turks against their fight against the Russians. One effect of the war was the coming of naval ships to Japanese ports. These included Russian, British and French ships. As a result, the Japanese concluded treaties with these countries, much like to the *Treaty of Kanagawa*.⁶⁶ The Dutch got the impression that Japan was willing to negotiate treaties with other western countries but not with the Netherlands. In The Hague, members of parliament asked the Dutch government to take a firm stand against Japan. They discussed alternative measures including leaving Japan altogether and to give up the Dutch monopoly. The Dutch government decided to give the Japanese a steamship as a present in exchange of a new treaty. The choice fell on the *Soembing*, because the Japanese already knew the ship and it had made a favorable impression.⁶⁷ It was also decided to change the old fashioned and outdated name 'opperhoofd' (chief merchant), used by the VOC, in 'Nederlandsch Kommissaris in Japan' (Dutch Commissioner in Japan). Donker Curtius received permission to buy a tailor-made costume with decorations to impress the Japanese.⁶⁸ On 21 July 1855, the *Soembing* and its captain Fabius arrived for the second time in Nagasaki. Drills, excursions and education should make a favorable impression on the Japanese that would result in a new trading agreement. On November 9, the Netherlands and Japan did indeed conclude a new 'provisional treaty'.⁶⁹ The articles included: ownership of Deshima was transferred to the Netherlands, the keys of the land gate to Nagasaki was kept by the Dutch commissioner, the Dutch could leave Deshima and visit Nagasaki without hindrance and body searches were suspended. This 'provisional treaty', however, was never ratified because it was soon replaced by a trading agreement on 30 January 1856, later extended by 'additional articles' (16 October 1857). The Japanese believed that the Dutch treaty of 1856 could serve as a model for similar treaties with Russia, Great Britain and the United States.

After the handing over of the *Soembing* it was renamed *Kankō Maru* ('fire ship'). The Dutch provided for a naval school in Nagasaki, headed by Lieut. G.J.C. Pels Rijken and later (September

⁶⁴ Herman Stapelkamp, *Gerhardus Fabius (1806-1888): een leven voor de marine* (Amsterdam 1999); Van Lente, 'Door goeden raad en onderwijs'. 128-130.

⁶⁵ Paul E. Eckel, 'The Crimean War and Japan', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 3:2 (February 1944) 109-118.

⁶⁶ W.G. Beasley, *Great Britain and the opening of Japan 1834-1858* (Kent 1995).

⁶⁷ J. Stellingwerff (inleiding en uitgave), *Zijne Majesteits radarstoomschip Soembing overgedragen aan Japan : de drie diplomatieke reizen van kapitein G. Fabius ter opening van Deshima en Nagasaki in 1854, 1855 en 1856* (Zutphen 1988).

⁶⁸ Van Lente, 'Door goeden raad en onderwijs', 136.

⁶⁹ Herman J. Moeshart, 'The conclusion of the first Dutch treaty with Japan', *Crossroads: A journal of Nagasaki history and culture*, No. 5 (1997) http://www.uwosh.edu/home_pages/faculty_staff/earns/

1857) by W.J.C. Ridder Huyssen van Kattendyke (1816-1866).⁷⁰ In Akunoura, near Nagasaki, the Dutch also build a small shipyard and machine shop, managed by H. Harges.⁷¹ These became part of the Mitsubishi shipbuilding company. The newly build screw propelled naval steamer (*Japan*) arrived in the autumn of 1857 and was renamed *Kanrin Maru*. In 1860 it was the first Japanese vessel to sail to San Francisco with an almost wholly Japanese crew.⁷²

Townsend Harris and the American trading agreement of 1858

International political developments became ever more important for the Japanese national policy.⁷³ We have already seen how during the Crimean War naval ships entered Japanese ports and forced Japan to conclude treaties with Russia, Great Britain and France. British and French military operations in China during the First Opium War increased pressure on the Japanese to end their seclusion. Great Britain and France forced China to open additional Treaty Ports and to allow foreigners (including merchants and missionaries) unrestricted travel in China. These demands in particular frightened the Shogunate and it undertook all possible actions to prevent this from happening in Japan.

On 21 August 1856, the first American Consul-General in Japan, Townsend Harris (1804-1878) arrived in Shimoda.⁷⁴ He was accompanied by Henry Heusken, actually called Hendricus Conradus Joannes Heusken (1832-1861), born in Amsterdam and migrated to the United States in 1853. Their arrival came as a complete surprise to the Japanese, because according to their reading of the *Treaty of Kanagawa*, no article provided for the unilateral stationing of a consul. In his diary Heusken wrote: 'In consequence, they would be delighted if His Excellency, the Consul-General, didn't mind leaving and coming back in a year or two. The Consul answered that he could do nothing of the kind, that he had to obey the orders of his government'.⁷⁵ After long negotiations they were allowed to enter Japan and housed in the Gyokusenji temple, about eight kilometers from Shimoda. According to Heusken, the temple would be their prison, making it impossible to establish contact with ordinary Japanese. Both Americans would indeed be isolated for a long time, although occasionally a merchant ship arrived from America and Dutch naval ships from Nagasaki. They also met with local officials because Harris was eager to get a reception by the Shogun as soon as possible, but the officials made it clear that this was out of the question.⁷⁶ Harris rejected the Dutch treaty of 1856 and wanted to negotiate a new, more extended treaty that allowed free trade.

In the following months, both Harris and Donker Curtius increased their pressure on Japanese authorities to conclude a trading agreement. They told the Bakufu that now that the war in China was over, the powerful British and French navy would soon arrive in Japan and demand diplomatic and trading arrangements.⁷⁷ The result was the Convention of Shimoda (June 17, 1857) signed between Harris and Japanese negotiators that would be followed by a full trading agreement

⁷⁰ His diary is published in W.J.C. Ridder Huyssen van Kattendyke, *Uitbreuk uit het dagboek gedurende zijn verblijf in Japan in 1857, 1858 en 1859* (Den Haag 1860).

⁷¹ Jan de Vries, 'Diplomatieke en culturele betrekkingen', in: M. Van Opstal et al, *Vier eeuwen Nederland en Japan. Kunst, wetenschap, taal en handel* (Lochem 1983) 50-57.

⁷² Japan zou meer (marine)schepen in Nederland bestellen, zoals in 1865 de *Kaiyō Maru* bij de scheepswerf van C. Gips in Dordrecht. Zie hiervoor: R. Spruit, *Kaiyō-Maru* (Wormer 1997).

⁷³ Marius B. Jansen, *The making of modern Japan* (Cambridge Mass/London 2000) 257-294.

⁷⁴ Crow, *He opened the door of Japan*, 89.

⁷⁵ Heusken, *Japan Journal*, 84-85.

⁷⁶ Idem, 86.

⁷⁷ Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon* (London 1863, reprint 2000) Volume I, 210.

in 1858. The Netherlands was able to conclude an 'additional treaty' with forty articles on 16 October 1857. The treaty lifted most restrictions on the private trade (kambang trade), the number of ships allowed to call at Japanese ports, the volume of goods handled and the number of private traders. The Dutch even received permission to bring their wives and children to Japan.⁷⁸ With this treaty the Dutch in fact received the long sought after unrestrained trade in Japan, although certain limitations remained in force. An almost similar treaty was conducted between Japan and Russia in November 1857.⁷⁹ Now that the private trade was liberated, Dutch ships could sail to Nagasaki. The First Dutch merchant vessel to enter the Bay of Nagasaki under the new regulations was the schooner *Cornelia Hendrika* a few days after the conclusion of the additional treaty of 1857.⁸⁰

In December 1857, Harris and Heusken finally met the Shogun in Edo. In the spring of 1858 they also spoke with Donker Curtius in Edo, who had his meeting with the Shogun on 13 May.⁸¹ Despite strong protests from the Japanese authorities in Nagasaki, Donker Curtius persisted in his wish to visit Edo as Dutch Commissioner in Japan. On his journey overland he was accompanied by Dirk Graeff van Polsbroek (see below), administrative clerk in Deshima.⁸² After long talks, Donker Curtius and the Japanese negotiators came to an agreement on 7 July that would be signed at a later date. A week later he and De Graeff van Polsbroek left Edo to start their long journey back to Deshima.

During his meeting with the Shogun, Harris pointed out that the world had changed and new powerful nations existed. If Japan persisted in its isolation from world trade, these countries would certainly resort to force. 'The English Government hopes to hold the same kind of intercourse with Japan as she holds with other nations, and is ready to make war with Japan. (...) If war should break out between England and Japan, the latter would suffer much more than the former. (...) The President is of opinion that if Japan makes a treaty with the United States, all other foreign countries will make the same kind of a treaty, and Japan will be safe thereafter. The President wants to make a treaty that will be honorable to Japan, without war, in a peaceable manner, after deliberate consultation'.⁸³ This treaty could serve as a model for successive treaties and it would spare the Japanese a possible humiliating defeat against Great Britain. The Arrow War in China, mentioned by Harris, hastened Japan to sign the *Treaty of Amity and Commerce* on 29 July 1858.⁸⁴ The treaty provided for the opening of several ports and cities according a fixed schedule. Nagasaki and Kanagawa (replacing Shimoda) would open on 1 July 1858, Niigata on 1 January 1860, Hyogo (Kobe) on 1 January 1863. Two cities would be opened for trade: Edo on 1 January 1862 and Osaka on 1 January 1863. Americans were allowed to live in these ports, but they could only trade in the two cities. Merchants were not allowed to travel freely in Japan. Diplomats would be housed in Edo and could travel freely. Additional articles regulated trade and fixed duties. The treaty Harris concluded

⁷⁸ Beasley, *Select documents on Japanese Foreign Policy*, 128-156.

⁷⁹ Gordon Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes. British representative in Japan 1865-83* (Richmond 1996) 20-21.

⁸⁰ Huyssen van Kattendyke, *Uitriksel uit het dagboek*, 29.

⁸¹ Moeshart, *Journal van Jonkheer Dirk Graeff van Polsbroek 1857-1870*, 46-47.

⁸² J.L.C. Pompe van Meerdervoort, *Vijf jaren in Japan (1857-1863)* (Leiden 1868) Volume 2, 15-36. This was actually the first time a western diplomat made an excursion into the interior of Japan. Donker Curtius trip is summarized in 'Journey from Nagasaki to Jeddo', *Journal of the American Geographical and Statistical Society* 1:10 (December 1859) 296-298. The claim made by Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British Consul-General, is thus wrong. See Rutherford Alcock, 'Narrative of a journey in the interior of Japan, ascent of Fusiyama, and visit to the hot sulphur-baths of Atami, in 1860', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 31 (1861) 321-356.

⁸³ <http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob76.html>

⁸⁴ Beasley, *Select documents on Japanese Foreign Policy*, 157-195.

would indeed serve as a model for other treaties (the Ansei Treaties) concluded in 1858: Netherlands (18 August), Russia (19 August), Great Britain (28 August) and France (10 October):⁸⁵

These treaties opened Japan for international trade. In the following months, however, political tensions in Japan mounted. For the treaties to become official they needed to be signed by the Emperor in Kyoto. When asked by the Shogunate, he refused to do so. This further increased the resistance against the Shogun and the Bakufu by the landlords (daimyo). The succession of the childless Shogun Iesada added to the turmoil and a regent was appointed: Ii Naosuke (1815-1860). His manipulations led to the nomination of Tokugawa Iemochi (1846-1866, Shogun 1858-1866). As a temporary solution, the Emperor agreed to respect the treaties but the Shogunate had to promise to revise the 'unequal treaties', expel the 'western barbarians' and restore the seclusion as soon as possible.⁸⁶ The Western powers were kept in the dark of the internal political difficulties in Japan, but they soon discovered, through numerous murderous attacks, that the Shogun was in trouble getting the treaties signed. In the mean time the Shogun began sending diplomatic and intelligence gathering missions to the United States and Europe to have the treaties revised. He also introduced some changes. The landlords of Chosu and Satsuma felt that these changes progressed too slowly and that the Shogun wanted to control trade as much as possible. They decided to illegally send their own missions to the west and started buying second hand ships, including naval ships.⁸⁷

The construction of Foreign Settlements in Japanese ports

The Japanese policy to contain the foreigners and keep them at a distance, physically and mentally, led to the construction of separate settlements. In Nagasaki, Deshima provided the required separation and it became a template for other settlements starting with Kanagawa (Yokohama). The new settlements had a wooden palisade and a large gate provided access to a Japanese village with local traders. At night the gate closed and samurai guarded the settlement. To further increase the distance between foreigners and Japanese the settlements were separated from the main land by a swamp, marsh lands, a canal or river.

Prior to the coming into force of the Ansei Treaties on the beginning of July 1859, the Japanese constructed a Foreign Settlement near a swamp by Yokohama.⁸⁸ Until the building of the Foreign Settlement, Yokohama was a small fishing village located on the other side of Kanagawa. Its location was also several kilometers of the important trading road: the *Tokaido*. Early June the newly appointed Dutch vice-consul and merchant Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek (1833-1916) arrived in Kanagawa and, according to his diary, made it clear that he would reside there on behalf of the Dutch government. The Japanese, however, were determined that all westerners would stay at Yokohama. They told him that his safety was not guaranteed in Kanagawa, but De Graeff van Polsbroek would not change his mind and was finally given one of the temples as his residence. Because he was for the moment the only diplomat at Kanagawa, foreign merchants awaiting the opening of the port relied very much on him. In his diary he noted: 'Especially the English behaved very impudent and brute, beyond comparison. They imagined to live in an uncivilized and conquered land'.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Thereafter Japan concluded treaties with many other countries including Prussia, Belgium, Swiss, and Portugal.

⁸⁶ Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes*, 21-22.

⁸⁷ W.G. Beasley, *Japan encounters the barbarian. Japanese travelers in America and Europe* (New Haven & London 1995).

⁸⁸ Harold S. Williams, *Tales of the foreign settlements in Japan* (Tokyo 1958) 17-27. The Dutch treaty mentioned 4 July 1859 as date of opening. Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek 1857-1870*, 53.

⁸⁹ Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek*, 54.

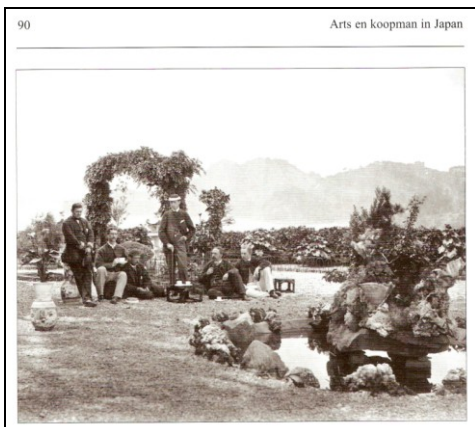
The first British Consul-General, Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1879), arrived in Yokohama on the opening day only to discover that the Japanese had constructed 'a second Deshima'.⁹⁰ In his memoirs Alcock recounted his first impressions: 'They had gone to vast expense in building a causeway across the lagunes and marshy ground for nearly two miles (...). I found solid granite piers and landing-places had already been build: and an extemporized town for Japanese traders, with a number of small houses and go-downs for the foreign merchants (...)'.⁹¹ Alcock is mistaken, because actually only five wooden houses were built for the diplomats of the five treaty powers. The merchants remained on board of their ships or slept in tents. According to Alcock several foreign ships with dozens of merchants on board anchored in the vicinity of Yokohama.⁹² In the weeks after the opening of the port the merchants rented plots of land and constructed primitive wooden sheds and houses. This was much to the chagrin of the diplomats because they rejected the site at Yokohama. The treaty mentioned Kanagawa and not Yokohama, but the merchants did not care about that and the diplomats had to accept the reality.⁹³ The Japanese thus got their way and had built a second Deshima in Yokohama. Like De Graeff van Polsbroek, the other diplomats refused to stay at Yokohama and lived at Kanagawa for several years.



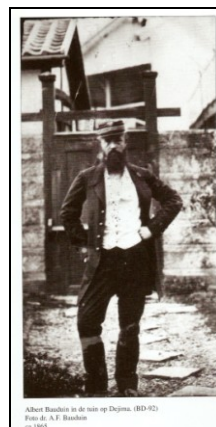
Dutch Consul Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek with his guards.



The body of Henry Heusken after the attack 1861



Western merchants at Glover's house in Nagasaki.



Albert Bauduin, agent of the Dutch Trading Association (NHM) in Nagasaki

⁹⁰ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, volume I, 136-145.

⁹¹ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, volume I, 144,135-136.

⁹² Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, volume I, 137-138.

⁹³ M. Paske-Smith, *Western Barbarians in Japan and Formosa in Tokugawa days 1603-1868* (Kobe 1930) 266.

The development of the trade in Japan

Even before the official opening of the ports of Nagasaki, Yokohama (Kanagawa) and Hakodate, traders came to Japan. According to the memoirs of the Dutch physician in Deshima, J.L.C. Pompe van Meerdervoort (1829-1908, physician 1857-1863), some British merchants arrived in 1858 using the Dutch treaty to start trading in Deshima.⁹⁴ Between September 1858 and June 1859, about 118 ships entered the port of Nagasaki, including 80 merchant vessels.⁹⁵ Most merchants came from Treaty Ports on the Chinese coast, where similar Foreign Settlements had been built after the Opium Wars.⁹⁶ 'The lucky few traders in Nagasaki who had struck it rich tried to keep confidential the profits they were making – 100 to 400 per cent was common – but the secret was soon out. Many adventurers decided to move from the China coast to Japan to cash in'.⁹⁷ By the time Alcock arrived in Nagasaki on his way to the British legation in Edo in June 1859, the first traders had settled in Deshima and the town. Amongst them were agents and managers from the large British merchant houses Jardine, Matheson & Company and Dent & Company, and the American traders John E. Walsh, Richard J. Walsh and John Hall (later: Walsh, Hall & Co.).⁹⁸ The Dutch Trading Association (NHM), until then active in the Dutch East Indies, came to Japan to start to trade. Shortly before the traders arrived, a fire in March 1859 destroyed most of the houses on Deshima. The Dutch trader J.A.C. Gerlach, a ship captain stranded on the coast of Nagasaki, who thereafter started the firm Gerlach & Co. offered space to Albert J. Bauduin (1829-1890), agent of the NHM in April 1859. According to the journalist John Black the atmosphere in these months was excellent. 'The profitable results of almost every transaction that was entered into, kept all in good spirits, and as the society was very limited, everybody knew everybody, and kind feeling and good fellowship were the rule'.⁹⁹ The westerners soon discovered that the Japanese authorities tried to regulate and monopolize the trade as much as possible. They also found that the diplomatic corps held very negative views of them. Alcock once said that they belonged to 'the scum of the earth'. He was promptly barred from entering the British Club in Yokohama. Tensions also grew between merchants: '(...) they are always squabbling and fighting'.¹⁰⁰

The traders operated mostly isolated from world affairs, because communication and transport were slow. A telegraph line between Nagasaki and Shanghai was not operational before 1871.¹⁰¹ In 1859 the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company (P&O) began sailing between Shanghai and Nagasaki, after 1864 including Yokohama. In 1862 the China and Japan Steam Navigation Company (later: China Navigation Company) started a competing line and after 1865 the French line Compagnie des Services Maritimes Imperiales (after 1872: Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes) started to operate a regular service. The American shipping company Pacific Mail Steamship Company opened a fixed route from San Francisco to Hong Kong via Japan in 1867.¹⁰² Because of the slow communication and transport '...trading in those days was at times not much

⁹⁴ Pompe van Meerdervoort, *Vijf jaren in Japan*, Volume 2, 150.

⁹⁵ Huyssen van Kattendyke, *Uitriksel uit het dagboek*, 189-190.

⁹⁶ E. Hoare, *Japan's Treaty Ports and Foreign Settlements. The uninvited guests 1858-1899* (Folkstone 1994) 5.

⁹⁷ Alexander McKay, *Thomas Blake Glover 1838-1911. Scottish Samurai* (Edinburgh 1997) 17.

⁹⁸ Paske-Smith, *Western barbarians*, 230. The diary of the American merchant Francis Hall provides many details. F.G. Notehelfer (ed.), *Japan through American eyes. The journal of Francis Hall* (Boulder 2001).

⁹⁹ Black, *Young Japan*, I, 51.

¹⁰⁰ Hoare, *Japan's Treaty Ports*, 14.

¹⁰¹ S. Sugiyama, *Japan's industrialization in the world economy 1859-1899* (London 1988) 37.

¹⁰² Idem, 36-37.

more than a form of gambling. Three months or more could pass between shipment in Japan and arrival in the West and wild changes in the price of goods were common'.¹⁰³

Most merchants liked Nagasaki because it was much cleaner and healthier than Shanghai or Hong Kong. After the opening of the port in 1859, the number of merchants was soon too large to be housed at Deshima. Opposite of Deshima, at Oura, a new Foreign Settlement was established. In 1860 the first hotel opened and shortly thereafter the British Nagasaki Club opened its doors. Entertainers came from Shanghai to perform in the local theatre. Butchers, bakers and churches gave the settlement a western ambiance. In 1861 the merchants established the first Chamber of Commerce in Japan, followed by a sailors' home and Freemasons' lodge.¹⁰⁴ Competition mostly came from the Chinese, who controlled almost half of the foreign trade. The Chinese sometimes worked for western traders, because they often could not speak Japanese.¹⁰⁵ Amongst the first traders in Nagasaki we find William J. Alt (Alt & Co) and Thomas Blake Glover (1838-1911) from Scotland. Glover arrived in Nagasaki a few weeks after the official opening as an agent for Jardine, Matheson & Company. In 1861 he established his own partnership (Glover & Co) to trade in rice, seaweed, sugar, silk, copper, and cotton. Glover constructed a processing plant for tea leaves in Nagasaki that employed several hundred Japanese and Chinese workers. He made a fortune selling (illegally) ammunition, weapons and second hand ships to landlords including the rebellious Satsuma and Chosu. Later he accepted orders for new ships, mostly constructed in Aberdeen. After 1867-1868, the selling of ships and weapons was no longer profitable and Glover invested in new projects including the Takashima coal mine near Nagasaki. This led to his bankruptcy in 1870 and he was forced to sell his share in the coal-mine to his creditors, including the Dutch NHM. Its agent, Bauduin hired Glover to manage the mine, until it was taken over by the Japanese government in 1871.¹⁰⁶

Although Nagasaki was the principal port in the early years, it was soon surpassed by Yokohama. Already in 1859, the British consul predicted '(...) it is the opinion of merchants here that Kanagawa is in many respects much better situated both as regards exports and in its position for the distribution of imports to the country'.¹⁰⁷ At the end of 1859, more than forty merchants had settled in Yokohama, but the number of merchants' fluctuated wildly.¹⁰⁸ The large trading houses on the China coast had established agencies in Yokohama, including Jardine, Matheson & Company, Dent & Company, Barnett & Company and Fletcher & Company.¹⁰⁹ In the second year after the opening the value of the trade had risen to £1,000,000.¹¹⁰ The fast growing trade led to shortages of housing and storage facilities. The American trader Francis Hall, in Yokohama from the start in July 1859, wrote in his diary in November 1863: 'Yokohama is crowded with foreign industry. We are, all told English, Americans, Dutch, French, Prussians, Swiss, Portuguese, and non-descript, four hundred souls, already stifling for room'.¹¹¹ British merchants dominated foreign trade in Yokohama. In 1865 there were about 300 foreign merchants in Yokohama, according to reports written by the consuls. About half of them were British nationals. Of the 170 ships visiting Yokohama, 100 came from Great

¹⁰³ McKay, *Thomas Blake Glover*, 37.

¹⁰⁴ Paske-Smith, *Western barbarians*, 202.

¹⁰⁵ Howe, *Japanese trade supremacy*, 79.

¹⁰⁶ McKay, *Thomas Blake Glover*. See also the historical novel based on the life of Glover: Alan Spence, *De drijvende wereld* (Amsterdam 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Paske-Smith, *Western barbarians*, 221.

¹⁰⁸ Hoare, *Japan's Treaty Ports*.

¹⁰⁹ John McMaster, 'The Japanese Gold Rush of 1859', *Journal of Asian Studies* 19:3 (May 1960) 282.

¹¹⁰ Barr, *The coming of the barbarians*, 100.

¹¹¹ Notehelfer, *Japan through American eyes*, 17.

Britain.¹¹² The United States may have been the first to open Japan, they soon lost the initiative to the British. One explanation for this is the outbreak of American Civil War (1861-1865). After the war, Americans again entered Japan in numbers and were able to gain a share in the foreign trade of Japan. The British took the initiative to organize the merchants and to protect their interests they established a Municipal Council. In 1864 this was followed by a Chamber of Commerce. By 1868 Yokohama's Foreign Settlement included five hotels and two banks. Horse races, a cricket field, and a shooting range provided the necessary amusement.

Compared to Nagasaki and Yokohama, Hakodate in the North of Japan remained a very small and unimportant port. It was mainly frequented by whalers. In 1863 its Foreign Settlement housed three British subjects (including the consul) and several Russians.¹¹³ Trade developed slowly and remained well below the level of Nagasaki and Yokohama. The total value of Japanese export increased between 1860 and 1867 from about 7.5 million Yen to 13.6 million Yen; the total value of the import grew from 3.1 million Yen to 23.5 million Yen.¹¹⁴ The development of trade can also be assessed by looking at the number of ships. Between 1859 and 1864 the annual number of western ships entering Japanese ports increased from 150 to 369.¹¹⁵

The precise number of foreigners in Japan between 1858 and 1868 is unknown, because their registration started after 1860 and some foreigners were left out of the records including the Chinese, sailors, soldiers, females, and tourists. About 10,000 sailors came to Yokohama during this period. Until 1868, the British outnumbered all foreigners in Japan, followed by the Americans, Dutch, French, Russians and Germans. Besides these nationalities, there were Italians, Portuguese, Spaniards, Swiss, Scandinavians and even Indian merchants. The total number of foreign merchants in 1862 was about 340.¹¹⁶ In 1868 this had risen to about 1,000, including the Chinese in Nagasaki.¹¹⁷

Dutch merchants in Japan

There were several Dutch entrepreneurs in Japan besides the large trading company of NHM, but their names and histories are largely forgotten or unknown. Examples include Gerrit Batteke, Jr en Petrus J. Batteke (agents of Textor & Co.), C. Bavink, J.N. Besier (Hartmans & Besier), J. Van Berkem (J. Van Berkem & Co.), R. Bousema (Lake & Co.; Hansard & Co.; owner of the New Amsterdam Hotel in Nagasaki), C.E. de Eerens (N. Mess & Co.), T.A.A. Groenervont (J. Schut & Co.; Lesent & Co.), A.A. Pistorius (Adrian & Co.) en Henri P.M. Wachtels (Gaymans & Co.).

An interesting Dutch merchant and diplomat was Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek (1833-1916). In 1853 he went to the Dutch East Indies to work in Batavia with his nephew, but in 1857 he became an undersecretary at Deshima. He joined Donker Curtius on his trip in 1858 to Edo to negotiate a new Dutch trading agreement. He later resigned because he expected that with the liberalization of trade starting on 1 July 1859, he would be sent back to Batavia. He started a trading firm in Yokohama with Carl Julius Textor (1816-?) under the name of Textor & Co. Textor, born in Germany, but employed by the Dutch government in Batavia and later Deshima, was an expert of agricultural crops ('cultures') from the Dutch East Indies. While Textor went to Java in early 1859, De Graeff van Polsbroek began

¹¹² F.V. Dickens, *The life of Sir Harry Parkes sometime her majesty's minister to China and Japan* (London/New York 1894) Volume 2, 29.

¹¹³ Paske-Smith, *Western barbarians*, 203.

¹¹⁴ Howe, *Japanese trade supremacy*, 80.

¹¹⁵ Paske-Smith, *Western barbarians*, 222.

¹¹⁶ Idem, 218.

¹¹⁷ Hoare, *Japan's Treaty Ports*, 21-24.

to set up the business. During the first two months in Yokohama, they earned a small fortune that allowed them to erect two large sheds and a house. In Yokohama De Graeff van Polsbroek met Henry Heusken who requested a position as secretary in Deshima, probably because of Harris' alcoholism.¹¹⁸ This request, not mentioned in the Heusken diary, was superseded because of the assassination of Heusken in January 1861 by Japanese swordsmen.¹¹⁹ Because the Dutch had no diplomat in Yokohama, De Graeff van Polsbroek accepted a post as acting vice-consul on 18 June 1859. In those days traders often acted as part time (vice) consuls. They represented the interests of their fellow countrymen and acted as judge. According to De Graeff van Polsbroek one merchant in particular - J. Schut Jr. - behaved very rude and impolite towards the Japanese, including the staff from the consulate. He proposed to put him under arrest for 7 to 14 days or to punish him with a fine if he continued to behave like this. De Graeff van Polsbroek was appointed Dutch consul in Kanagawa on 30 March 1861 and he probably resigned as a partner from the firm Textor & Co. at that date. In 1863 he succeeded Mr. J.K. de Wit who had become Consul-General in July 1861, replacing Donker Curtius.

The Dutch merchant Cornelis Theodoor van Assendelft de Coningh (1821-1890) arrived in Yokohama on 4 September 1859 on the sailing ship *Argonaut*.¹²⁰ He returned to the Netherlands after about two years. It was his third visit to Japan, because in 1845 and 1851 he was in Deshima as captain of the annual ship from Batavia. From these visits De Coningh learned much about Japan and the Japanese. He thought very admirably about them. De Coningh established a trading firm in 1855 in Amsterdam and after the opening of the Japanese ports in July 1859 he sailed for Yokohama. According to his interesting memoirs published in 1879, he owned part the ship that was laden with cargo from Europe. He had hoped to sell the brand new ship, but the Japanese were only interested in steam ships. On his arrival he met two fellow countrymen and noticed their firearms. They explained the dangerous situation in Yokohama. Japanese swordsmen frequently attacked the westerners in an attempt to prevent them from starting to trade. On the next day he met the vice-consul, De Graeff van Polsbroek, although he does not mention his name. De Coningh severely criticized the vice-consul and the Dutch diplomats in Japan. The *Commissaris* Donker Curtius opted to remain in Deshima that was comfortable and relatively safe from Japanese attacks. However, because of the large distance between Deshima and Edo, the Dutch lost all contact with other western diplomats and their influence in Japan had virtually disappeared. This undermined the trading possibilities of the Dutch in Japan. De Coningh furthermore complains that before the opening several clerks (De Graeff van Polsbroek included) had received permission to trade and were thus able to make a small fortune before the arrival of the merchants. When De Coningh arrived in Yokohama, there were only five wooden houses build for the western diplomats. No houses had been built for the merchants and they remained on board of the ships that had carried them to Japan. Some decided to temporarily live in tents on the beach. Because the diplomats refused to accept Yokohama as port and wanted to stay at Kanagawa, where they eventually lived in temples, the houses had been given to some of the first merchants. In each house four or five merchants lived together. Later arrivals had to wait for the construction of new houses. Because he knew some of the Japanese translators from his days in Deshima, De Coningh was able to rent a farm from a Japanese

¹¹⁸ De Graeff van Polsbroek writes about Townsend Harris: 'This otherwise friendly person had the habit of becoming drunk once a month, staying in bed for three days, while drinking. On the fourth day he got up and ate, while drinking a cup of thee'. Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek*, 14-15.

¹²⁰ C.T. van Assendelft, *Ontmoetingen ter zee en te land* (Haarlem 1879). Volume 2: De pionier in Yokohama.

family.¹²¹ Here he lived with a strong shipmate from the *Argonaut* as his servant and protector. At nightfall they loaded their weapons and kept a light burning. In December 1859, De Coningh could finally rent a house. He says that 80 merchants lived in Yokohama at the end of 1859, of which about 25 from the Netherlands.

These merchants lived in Yokohama largely unprotected by their navy, because no naval ships stayed in the port in the first two years. The diplomats, including the English, French and Americans, frequently complained by the Japanese, threatened with military action and demanded compensation when a countryman was killed or badly wounded. However without military protection from their country they could do little more than protest and the Japanese knew that very well. In the middle of January 1860 a fire destroyed most of the wooden houses of the Foreign Settlement. De Coningh's home and his goods were spared because he lived at the edge of the settlement. Although it was not possible to prove that it was intentional, the fire led to the organization of the merchants. They established the 'Yokohama Volunteers', about 60 or 70 merchants from western countries who patrolled the streets at night. Despite this, fires and attacks continued to occur. In February 1860, Japanese *ronin* (masterless samurai) killed two Dutch ship captains. Although De Coningh remains rather secretive about his business he was able to sell his merchandise to the Japanese and made a handsome profit. In the first months some merchants, De Coningh speaks rather negative about them although he envied them for their shrewdness, made a fortune buying golden Japanese coins (Kobans) and selling them in Shanghai at much higher prices. According to John McMaster, however, 'the profits from the Japanese Gold Rush were comparatively low'.¹²²

Probably one of the largest Dutch traders in Japan was the NHM.¹²³ The NHM was set up in 1824 to promote trade between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. Although a private organization, it was largely controlled by the Dutch government. The NHM monopolized the plantations in the East Indies, organized shipping, and acted as investor and bank. The first agent of the NHM, Albert Johannes Bauduin, arrived on 3 April 1859 in Nagasaki with a shipload of trade goods from the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies.¹²⁴ Bauduin noted in his diary that the NHM had arrived rather late, because other major British and American companies were already trading in Deshima. These trading houses could easily buy and sell products from their warehouses on the China coast, while the NHM had to sail to Batavia. Soon after his arrival Bauduin decided for the moment not to open an agency in Yokohama because he believed that Deshima offered better opportunities. Japan was not ready to produce for world markets and the demand for East Indian products remained low. He noted how the Shogun interfered with the trade wherever and whenever possible. The consignment sent from the East Indies proved unmarketable. In 1860, the conditions improved and Bauduin ordered new products from Batavia. In May 1861 he sailed to Yokohama and concluded that it had surpassed Nagasaki as the major Japanese port. He thus changed his mind and proposed to open an agency in Yokohama. The Directors of the NHM in Batavia did not agree. An

¹²¹ According to Moeshart the farm was deserted, but the memoirs of De Coningh make it clear that this was not the case at all. The Japanese farmer and his family rented the farm to De Coningh and moved to another place nearby. Herman J. Moeshart, *Arts en koopman in Japan 1959-1874. Een selectie uit de brieven van de gebroeders Bauduin* (Amsterdam 2001) 17.

¹²² McMaster, 'The Japanese Gold Rush', 273-287.

¹²³ Moeshart, *Arts en koopman in Japan*. The NHM developed into a bank, the Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN), later ABN-AMRO, and in 2008 it was acquired by Fortis, Bank of Scotland and Bank of Santander.

¹²⁴ His brother, Anthonius Franciscus (Toon) Bauduin (1820-1885) succeeded Dr. L.J.C. Pompe van Meerdervoort in 1862 as physician in Nagasaki.

important export product from Yokohama – silk - had become worthless because the American Civil War had destroyed the demand for silk in that country. Instead, Japanese cotton was much in demand because American production had declined. In 1863, the NHM finally decided to send a permanent agent to Yokohama. Back in Nagasaki, Bauduin advised the sale of new and second hand ships to the Japanese Shogun and several landlords. From 1864, the NHM and Glover & Company began working together. When the American Civil War ended, prices of cotton and thee plummeted and the large trading houses lost substantial amounts of money, including the NHM. Bauduin decided to try his luck in sugar production in Satsuma, but the quality was inferior. Luckily, after 1866, the silk trade picked up again. After 1868, the NHM opened several offices (including in Osaka and Hyogo), but pulled out of Japan after 1880. In 1874, Bauduin returned to the Netherlands and became Japanese consul in the Japanese legation in The Hague until his death. Many of the smaller trading firms (e.g. Textor & Co.) closed after the abolition of the domains in 1871 that had become major trading partners of the Dutch in the 1860s. The long history of Dutch presence in Japan, their knowledge of the country and culture and the head start during the negotiations of the Ansei Treaties, resulted in few economic advantages. Japan lost its interest in the Netherlands soon after the opening of the ports, because they learned that no foreigner was able to speak Dutch. Learning English was much more important.¹²⁵

Hostile conditions and the Meiji restoration 1858-1868

Living in the Foreign Settlements resembled a ‘wild east’, with its shootings and killings, besides the regular earthquakes, typhoons and fires, ignited on purpose or by accident that destroyed property. The merchants discovered that they not only had to deal with the Japanese government and their own diplomats, but also with anti-western Japanese. This applied mainly to the newly opened ports (e.g. Yokohama) where westerners and Japanese first met and the culture shock was noticeable. During the Deshima-period foreign trade was strongly regulated and limited in value and volume. After the opening of the ports in July 1859, dozens of ships entered Japanese ports to trade but the economy was not prepared for this transition. It led to shortages of commodities and foodstuffs, including rice. Furthermore, inflation rates increased and both factors fed anti-western sentiments. These sentiments found expression in numerous attacks. Between 1859 and 1869 about fifty westerners, including officers, sailors, diplomats, and merchants, were murdered by the Japanese.¹²⁶ Hardly one month after the opening of the port in Nagasaki were two Russian sailors brutally killed and six months later a Dutch merchant was slaughtered. A climax occurred in early 1861 when Henry Heusken, the Dutch translator of Harris who was very popular with the merchants and the Japanese woman in Yokohama, was killed.¹²⁷ The diplomats decided to temporarily leave Edo and retreated to Yokohama (Harris, however, remained in Edo). Despite Japanese protests the British and French stationed soldiers in Yokohama and naval ships anchored in the port. The atmosphere in Yokohama worsened: ‘Everywhere men still carried revolvers, and overall Europe and the United States had only

¹²⁵ For this see the autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901). N. Tamaki, *Yukichi Fukuzawa, 1835-1901. The spirit of enterprise in modern Japan* (Basingstoke 2001).

¹²⁶ Ashmead, *The idea of Japan 1853-1895*, 340.

¹²⁷ Heusken was a kind of ‘lady killer’ and had several affairs with Japanese woman, including Otsuru who had fathered a child. Moeshart, *Journaal van Jonkheer Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek*, 15; Reinier H. Hesselink, ‘The Assassination of Henry Heusken’, *Monumenta Nipponica* 49:3 (Autumn 1994) 331-351.

an uneasy foothold on the shore of Japan'.¹²⁸ Rumors about imminent Japanese attacks only fed the anxiety of the foreigners.

The conflict between the Shogun and Emperor, and between the Shogun and the landlords affected foreign trade. Glover on 26 May 1863 informed the Jardine, Matheson office in Shanghai '(...) owing to the political troubles Trade is almost completely stopped'.¹²⁹ Consul-General Alcock concluded that the Shogun no longer held absolute power in Japan and to not undermine his position further, he agreed to postpone the opening of additional ports and cities, including Osaka, Edo, Hyogo and Niigata. According to the London Protocol (1862) these cities remained closed until 1868. This did not stop the attacks on the westerners. In August 1862, the British legation in Edo was attacked a second time. Shortly thereafter, samurai murdered the British merchant Charles L. Richardson. Both attacks called for a strong reaction by the western powers. Edo was required to apologize and the attackers should be captured and punished. The Shogun and the landlord of Satsuma, held responsible for the murdering of Richardson, were to pay a large financial compensation. Because in August 1863 nothing had happened with these claims, the western powers decided to attack Satsuma. Four British warships bombarded the castle of the landlord of Satsuma. To show their determination, the western powers also attacked Chosu that had blockaded the Street of Shimonseki. In September 1864, British, French and a Dutch warship attacked Chosu. The defeated domains concluded that they were too weak to fight the western powers and that it was thus necessary to modernize as soon possible. This was, however, hampered by the Shogun who kept control of foreign trade. They decided to jointly bring down the Shogunate.

In 1864, Sir Harry Parkes replaced Alcock. Parkes would defend the British interest in Japan without choosing the side of the Shogun or the rebellious southern domains Satsuma and Chosu. In contrast, the French openly supported the Shogun in an attempt to further the interest of French traders in Japan and to oppose British dominance. The French strategy failed. In September 1866 Shogun Tokugawa Iemochi died. He was succeeded by Tokugawa Yoshinobu (also known as Keiki) (1837-1913). He was to be the last Shogun and, although, anti-western during his youth, he initiated a number of reforms to consolidate the power of the Bakufu. These reforms came too late. Early 1867, the Emperor Komei (1831-1867) died and he was succeeded by the pro-western Emperor Meiji (1852-1912). By the end of November 1867, soldiers from Satsuma and Chosu captured the Shogunal palace and in January 1868 they 'restored' the Emperor Meiji to its former power. The final victory came on 26 November 1868, when the Emperor moved to Edo that was renamed Tokyo. This ended Tokugawa rule in Japan.

Concluding remarks

Western pressure opened Japanese ports and ended its seclusion. The opening of Japan was never a wholly American affair, although the first treaty was conducted between America and Japan. This treaty could not have been concluded without the involvement of other western countries including the Netherlands, Russia, Great Britain and France. Internal developments in Japan are equally important in explaining the opening of Japan. The Netherlands tried on several occasions to change the Japanese isolationist policy, but it was in Japanese eyes only a trader. Soldiers had a higher standing in society and modern warships made a bigger impression, as Perry and Fabius experienced. After 1859, trade was concentrated in a few ports where Japan created Foreign Settlements. Until

¹²⁸ Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes*, 31.

¹²⁹ McKay, *Thomas Blake Glover*, 46.

1868 this trade was highly speculative and not without danger. The Foreign Settlements acquired the ambiance of small western villages, with hotels, bakeries, butchers, churches, theaters, and horse racing. Western entrepreneurs introduced new institutions including Chambers of Commerce and banks. After the opening of the ports, the British dominated foreign trade and they would do so until after 1868. Dutch merchants, although present from the start, lost their interest in Japan. They seemed to prefer the Dutch East Indies that was opened for private investors after 1870. The Japanese lost their interest in the Netherlands after they discovered that the Netherlands was no longer a super power as in the seventeenth century. Internal tensions between pro and anti-western Japanese hindered trade. It led in 1868 to a coup by pro-western landlords that restored power to the Emperor. After 1868 Japan quickly modernized and industrialized. By 1890s it had become a world power and was finally able to enforce a revision of the 'unequal treaties' of 1858.