

*The Historical Journal*, 64, 1 (2021), pp. 139–161 © The Author(s), 2020. Published by Cambridge University Press. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided that no alterations are made and the original article is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press must be obtained prior to any commercial use and/or adaptation of the article.

doi:10.1017/S0018246X19000694

## NARRATING JAPAN'S EARLY MODERN SOUTHERN EXPANSION\*

BIRGIT TREMML-WERNER 

*Linnaeus University, Växjö*

**ABSTRACT.** *This article explores how the Japanese translator-historian Murakami Naojirō created an understanding of the Japanese past that established seventeenth-century Japanese actors as equivalents to western European and overseas Chinese merchants. Creating a historical geography of the Southern Seas and the Pacific, Murakami celebrated Japan's expansionism, not only by stressing the seventeenth-century Japanese presence in South-east Asia, but also, more subtly, by identifying the existence of a progressive spirit in the Japanese individuals involved in it. His narrative strategy included implicit comparisons with the European age of expansion, whose protagonists in South-east Asia relied on the networks and services of both Japanese wakō ('pirates') and more complex actors such as the red seal merchant Yamada Nagamasa. The article is a case study for Japan's intellectual imperialism of the 1910s–1940s, which closely intertwined popular discourse and academic history.*

---

### I

Knowledge about seventeenth-century foreign exchange played an instrumental role in the making of the Japanese past. This article explores how academic historians shaped the genealogy of Japanese engagement with the outside world during the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialist intervention in the South China Seas and the Pacific. It is hoped that the current study will

*Linnaeus University, Centre for Concurrences, 35195 Växjö, Sweden [birgit.tremmlwerner@lnu.se](mailto:birgit.tremmlwerner@lnu.se)*

\* I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback and the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo for hosting me. I am indebted to Yeh Ping-li, who kindly shared research data with me, as well as to Joan Judge, Lisa Yoshikawa, the participants of the University of Zurich's Geschichtskontor on 31 Oct. 2017, and my colleagues of the HERA 'East Asian uses of the European past' project, who provided invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this article. That project was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 649307. I also extend thanks to the Swiss National Science Foundation.

contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of change within imperial knowledge circulation of what we call early modern Japanese foreign relations, commonly referred to as *gaikō* 外交 (Chinese *waijiao*) in the Sinosphere.<sup>1</sup> The indigenous term *gaikō* aims to emphasize the various levels of the co-production of knowledge involving Chinese, Japanese, and European practices of interpreting and writing about the past. The article will approach early modern foreign relations through the life and work of the imperial historian Murakami Naojirō 村上直次郎 (1868–1966) and make use of the case study of Yamada Nagamasa 山田長政 (1590–1630) to unpack the empirical, institutional, and translational choices behind a narrative of early modern expansion.

While the importance of Murakami's scholarly output, including source compilations and translations (among them the instrumental government-sponsored *Dai Nihon shiryō*), is widely acknowledged in Japan, this article seeks to trace his scholarly choices and investigates potential hidden agendas in his allegedly neutral scholarship. Looking specifically at what nowadays would be referred to as the connected histories of the China seas, it analyses how Murakami framed historical sources. Introducing a close reading of concrete examples of his work, the survey explores his specific use of the past and how implicit comparisons served him to construct both geographical and empirical connections between East Asia and Europe. Maritime expansion as the practice of foreign relations became a key element of this story. While these claims are often only indirectly articulated, Murakami's publications are full of references to individual decision-making as a driving force behind these developments.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the narrative of synchronized pre-modern Japanese and European advances into South-east Asia had a chance to become deeply rooted in the collective memory of Japanese history.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, scholarship in global conceptual history has discovered Reinhart Koselleck's theory of how any past is reproduced linguistically for a better understanding of political and historical processes beyond national boundaries and essentialist explanations.<sup>4</sup> The example of Yamada Nagamasa will show that it was not the historian or translator of later periods alone who determined these epistemological processes. In fact, co-production could

<sup>1</sup> 'Early modern' is used throughout the article as a neutral term and shorthand for Momoyama/Tokugawa prior to the 1850s. See also n. 13.

<sup>2</sup> At no point in his oeuvre does Murakami refer to Jakob Burckhardt's work or the idea of Renaissance civilization (as propounded in *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* of 1860) as the origin of individualism, but his engagement with European history suggests that he was aware of these arguments.

<sup>3</sup> From the 1970s onwards, historians of Japan began to criticize this overemphasis on relations with the Europeans and to shift focus to East Asia: see Kishi Toshihiko 貴志俊彦, Arano Yasunori 荒野泰典, and Kokaze Hidemasa 小風秀雅, *Higashi ajia no jidaisei* 「東アジア」の時代性 (*The age of East Asia*) (Hiroshima, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Hagen Schulz-Forberg, ed., *A global conceptual history of Asia, 1860–1940* (London and New York, NY, 2014).

occur at any moment of social interaction.<sup>5</sup> New encounters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries resulted in a shared understanding of the worlds in which people interacted, but also in unconscious co-production of concepts.<sup>6</sup>

Murakami Naojirō and Yamada Nagamasa lived three hundred years apart, yet they had more in common than their Japanese origin. Both were mobile imperial agents in their own rights. They benefited personally from their accesses to different worlds: living abroad and frequenting institutions such as ruling courts, multi-ethnic networks (Yamada Nagamasa was integrated in multinational trading networks including those of Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Dutch, and Spanish merchants), and colonial archives respectively allowed them to accumulate knowledge for future interpretation.<sup>7</sup> In examining Yamada Nagamasa's and Murakami's embedded knowledge production, I contend that their works had an impact on the writing and thinking of Japanese foreign relations to the extent of changing the historicity of Japan's early modern global integration.<sup>8</sup> Their awareness of change and changing attitudes towards the times in which they lived contributed to a different understanding of Japan's place in world history.<sup>9</sup>

## II

The first generation of university-trained historians in Japan is likely to have felt the tensions between experiences and expectations, which, according to Koselleck, generated a new, modern sense of historical time, while in the same process political concepts became more abstract and oriented towards the future.<sup>10</sup> This began in the 1890s, when history as an academic discipline as practised at Tokyo Imperial University (Tōkyō teikoku daigaku) came to set the standards for academic research: based on verifiable data, academic

<sup>5</sup> Kapil Raj developed a notion of co-production stressing the importance of intermediation and go-betweens in knowledge production in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kapil Raj, *Relocating modern science: circulation and the construction of knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1900* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 1–26.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Burke, *What is the history of knowledge?* (London, 2016), p. 37. With reference to Bernard Cohn's ideas on British reordering of Indian knowledge, Burke elaborates how knowledge was the product of cultural negotiation with many local actors involved. See also Antonella Romano, 'Rome and its Indies: a global system of knowledge at the end of the sixteenth century', in Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, and Christine Göttler, eds., *Sites of mediation: connected histories of places, processes, and objects in Europe and beyond, 1450–1650* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 21–45.

<sup>7</sup> For a letter by Yamada Nagamasa to the Bakufu, see Nakamura Kōya 中村孝也, *Shokan shūroku buke kōbōkan* 書簡集録武家興亡観 (*Compilation of letters on the rise and fall of the warrior class*) (Tokyo, 1919), p. 265.

<sup>8</sup> See Kris Manjapra, 'Transnational approaches to global history: a view from the study of German–Indian entanglement', *German History*, 32 (2014), pp. 274–93.

<sup>9</sup> See Stefan Tanaka, *New times in modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ, 2006), ch. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Douglas Howland, *Translating the West: language and political reason in nineteenth-century Japan* (Honolulu, HI, 2002), p. 7; Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979).

historians interpreted primary sources for Japanese nation- and empire-building.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the aspiring Meiji empire looked for ways to communicate the distinctiveness of the nation's past to a heterogeneous audience.<sup>12</sup> With a better take on multiple temporalities in the discovery of the past, Japanese scholars set out to tackle the problem of early modernity (*kinsei* 近世) as related to the Japanese state and society.<sup>13</sup> Newly discovered knowledge about pre-modern Japanese encounters with Europe came to attract both scholarly and public interest. From the moment when the members of the Iwakura mission (1871–3) were presented with letters by Christian converts from Kyushu visiting Europe in 1587 – a forgotten episode in Japanese history – in the Biblioteca del Reale Archivio del Stato in Venice, historians were encouraged to work archivally.<sup>14</sup>

The source discovery was essential to Japanese history, not only because of its content, but also because of its location. From that point onwards, the physical archive as the place of storage of written documents would provide the authors of national histories with a space for dialogue with forgotten pasts. Murakami's contribution focused largely on Japan's engagement with the outside world. For seven decades, he collected material showing what past foreign relations actually (or essentially<sup>15</sup>) looked like. His understanding of late nineteenth-century diplomatic practices as paramount would ultimately change the way that scholars talked about the period in which Europe encountered Japan and Japan in turn encountered South-east Asia and the Pacific. Hence, the terms he used to describe them often originated from the language of modern diplomatic relations such as *shinzen* 親善 for friendly relations or *kōshō* 交渉 for negotiation, and could, in retrospect, be called anachronistic. In his day, however, Murakami helped to redefine Japan's position in the wider world. The way in which he arranged historical sources regarding early modern Japan's encounter with the West constituted discourses of formal, horizontal relations with the outside world. In short, he added another layer of

<sup>11</sup> Lisa Yoshikawa, *Making history matter: Kuroita Katsumi and the construction of imperial Japan* (Cambridge, 2017); for academism, see Margaret Mehl, *History and the state in nineteenth-century Japan* (Basingstoke, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Sebastian Conrad, 'What time is Japan? Problems of comparative (intercultural) historiography', *History and Theory*, 38 (2016), pp. 67–83.

<sup>13</sup> The term *kinsei* first appeared in historical scholarship in the late Meiji period. Uchida Ginzō 内田銀藏, *Nihon kinseiishi* 日本近世史 (*History of early modern Japan*) (Tokyo, 1903), was the first to apply it to Tokugawa Japan. See Carol Gluck, 'The invention of Edo', in Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of modernity: invented traditions of modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA, 1998), pp. 262–84, at p. 267. A six-volume edition of Japanese history entitled *Kinsei nihon gaishi* 近世日本外史 (*Unofficial history of early modern Japan*) was published in 1876, where *gaishi* 外史 stands for an unofficial history in the Sinosphere.

<sup>14</sup> Margret Mehl, 'The European model and the archive in Japan: inspiration or legitimization?', *History of the Human Sciences*, 26 (2013), pp. 107–27, at p. 113.

<sup>15</sup> For debates on whether 'eigentlich' in Ranke's *bon mot* should be understood as 'actually' or 'essentially', the latter focusing on the essence behind the facts, see Georg G. Iggers, *The theory and practice of history* (London, 2010).

knowledge to the history of Japanese foreign relations, the beginning of a new diplomatic age within and beyond Sino-centred *gaikō*.

*Gaikō*, although commonly translated as 'diplomacy', is a complex concept with various meanings. For the pre-modern period it is considered as a specifically East Asian type of ritualized exchange.<sup>16</sup> For the modern era, the Friendship and Trade treaty between Meiji Japan and Qing China of 1871 introduced a new type of *gaikō* in the Sinosphere.<sup>17</sup> Historians working on this topic have stressed that *gaikō* and diplomacy in late nineteenth-century foreign relations were not semantic equivalents. In contrast to many other legal terms and concepts which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Sino-Japanese lexicon, *gaikō* was not a neologism.<sup>18</sup> As Morita Yoshihiko's etymological examination has shown, the term *gaikō* had existed in classical Chinese for centuries, but had always been tied to the notion of an envoy; it only became applied as a general term for diplomacy in the translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of international law* (1836) in 1864, and it first emerged as a direct translation for diplomacy in Japanese in 1888. All other types of bilateral exchange were referred to as *tsūshin* 通信 or *kōeki* 交易 in both Japan and China before the 1860s.<sup>19</sup> Needless to say, Murakami did not describe the subject of his research as *gaikō*; what he did, however, was to consistently integrate examples of Japan's bilateral trading relations with the history of the formation of a Japanese nation based on formal negotiations and correspondence.

Murakami's narrative of past foreign relations staged South-east Asia as a space for Tokugawa policy-makers to practise dynamic, multi-directional, and self-determined foreign relations in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In hindsight we could interpret this as Murakami's way of stressing that early Tokugawa Japan had stepped onto the path of modernity: in other words, it had become 'early modern', despite his consistent avoidance of the term (he used Japanese era names or centuries as time markers). His source compilations show how Tokugawa rulers employed the conventions of official *gaikō* following Confucian diplomatic protocol based on the ideas of tributary relations within the framework of the *tianxia* 天下 and the exchange of state letters (*kokusho* 国書) written by an entitled group of Zen Buddhist monks.<sup>20</sup> This rigid letter-based diplomatic culture strictly defined what would fall into

<sup>16</sup> Mitani Hiroshi, 'The transformation of diplomatic norms in East Asia during the nineteenth century: from ambiguity to singularity', *Acta Asiatica*, 93 (2007), pp. 89–105.

<sup>17</sup> Morita Yoshihiko 森田吉彦, *Nisshin kankei no tenkan to nisshin shūkō jōki* 日清関係の転換と日清修好条規 (*The change of Qing-Japanese relations and the treaty of amity between Japan and the Qing*) (Tokyo, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Joshua Fogel, ed., *The emergence of the modern Sino-Japanese lexicon: seven studies* (Leiden, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Yoshihiko Morita, 'From diplomacy to *gaikō*: Meiji Japan and its perceptions of "diplomacy"', in Takashi Okamoto, ed., *A World history of suzerainty: a modern history of East and West Asia and translated concepts* (Tokyo, 2019), pp. 119–50, at pp. 122–4.

<sup>20</sup> Matsukata Fuyuko 松方冬子, ed., *Kokusho ga musubu gaikō* 国書が結ぶ外交 (*Foreign relations tied together by state letters*) (Tokyo, 2019).

the category of *gaikō* as opposed to *taigai kankei* 対外関係, or ‘foreign relations’.<sup>21</sup> The latter included relations with Tsushima, and with Ryūkyū during the Edo period, as well as all other types of maritime exchange including Japanese pirate (*wakō* 倭寇) operations in the China seas or red seal ships (*shuinsen* 朱印船) trade.<sup>22</sup>

The semantic closeness of Leopold von Ranke’s term ‘diplomacy’ to ‘diplomacy’ as official foreign relations based on written documents raises questions about the links between *komonjo gaku* 古文書学 (or Japanese ‘diplomacy’) and writing about official foreign relations (*gaikō*).<sup>23</sup> Defining official foreign relations documents based on their purpose, material, and formal characteristics (such as a ruler’s signature or an official stamp), Murakami created equivalents to the sources used in Rankean European diplomacy.<sup>24</sup> These documents dealt in one way or another with ‘foreign countries’ (or with the ancient Japanese concept of *ikoku* 異国).<sup>25</sup> Within the process of compiling, translating, and annotating, he continued to classify and categorize both documents and events as part of a history of early modern foreign exchange. Murakami, being obsessed with the idea of official documents as proof for state-to-state relations, attempted to create a canon of foreign relations documents which would integrate contact with Europe into the category of *gaikō monjo* 外交文書, or ‘sources of foreign relations’. In other words, the boundaries between historical sources (*komonjo*) and foreign relation sources (*gaikō monjo*) blurred.

In 1911, Murakami prepared the first printed edition of the *Ikoku nikki shō*.<sup>26</sup> The original *Ikoku nikki* (*Chronicle of foreign countries*) was a source compilation of official correspondence between Japan and rulers in South-east Asia and Europe. It was primarily compiled by the foreign relations monk Ishin Sūden 以心崇伝 (1569–1633) of the Nanzen-ji. The Zen Buddhist monks of the Nanzen temple in Kyoto were thoroughly trained in Chinese classics and the diplomatic and ceremonial practices of the Sinosphere. They drafted official letters, collected information, and edited translations of foreign diplomatic letters to match them with the Sino-Japanese protocol. Eventually they copied these translations into the *Ikoku nikki* and other chronicles for preservation and future reference. Unlike his contemporary Tsuji Zennosuke (1877–1955),

<sup>21</sup> Tanaka Takeo 田中健夫, *Nihon zenkindai no kokka to taigai kankei* 日本前近代の国家と対外関係 (*The early modern Japanese state and its foreign relations*) (Tokyo, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Hayami Akira 速水融, *Kinsei nihon no keizai shakai* 近世日本の経済社会 (*Early modern Japans economy and society*) (Tokyo, 2003), pp. 3–11.

<sup>23</sup> Ernest Satow, *A guide to diplomatic practice* (London, 1932), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Murakami Naojirō, *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū* 異国往復書簡集 (*Collection of letter exchange with foreign countries*) (Tokyo, 1929), pp. 22–105.

<sup>25</sup> For the genealogy of *ikoku*, see Yanagihara Masaharu, ‘Some thoughts on the concept of territory in the late Edo and early Meiji periods’, *Japan Institute of International Affairs* (2011), [https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/resource/library/pdf/Yanagihara\\_Some\\_Thoughts\\_on\\_the\\_Concept\\_of\\_Territory\\_in\\_the\\_Late\\_Edo\\_and\\_Early\\_Meiji\\_Periods01.pdf](https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/resource/library/pdf/Yanagihara_Some_Thoughts_on_the_Concept_of_Territory_in_the_Late_Edo_and_Early_Meiji_Periods01.pdf), pp. 1–3.

<sup>26</sup> Murakami Naojirō 村上直次郎, ed., *Ikoku nikki shō* 異国日記抄 (*Selected entries from the chronicle of foreign countries*) (Tokyo, 1911).

who had worked with the *Ikoku nikki* for his extensive *Kaigai kōtsū shiwa* (*Historical essay on foreign communication*, 1917) and then published its source transcriptions over six years in a historical journal, Murakami transcribed and annotated selected sections and published them in one volume.<sup>27</sup> The edition was supplemented with the *Ikoku go-shuinchō* 異国ご朱印帳 (*Register of red seal licences to foreign countries*), a list of *shuinjō* 朱印状 passes for the Tokugawa Bakufu's official overseas trade (1604–35). In 1929, Murakami published an extended version under the title *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū* (*Collection of letter exchange with foreign countries*): in addition to the transcript of the *Ikoku nikki* he included translations of nearly fifty letters exchanged between various Japanese rulers and representatives of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, England, the Netherlands, and the pope between 1570 and 1641, rendering them into *gaikō monjo*.<sup>28</sup>

It was not only as a translator-historian that Murakami shaped narrative strategies and conceptual co-productions, but also as a second-rank scholar-diplomat.<sup>29</sup> His work in government-funded historiographical projects meant that he was involved in informing Japanese imperialism on various levels: as one of the few Spanish translators in Meiji Japan, he translated official correspondence with Spanish-speaking head of states for the Japanese foreign ministry.<sup>30</sup> In the 1920s he worked for the Japan Academy in allocating sources for historical intelligence projects. Not only in von Ranke's time but from the 1890s to the 1940s, the 'exchange of informations [*sic*] about historical documents' remained a diplomatic operation.<sup>31</sup> In the case of Japan and Europe itself, this involved academies, archives, and state embassies, as the records at the Japan Academy show.

<sup>27</sup> Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助, 'Ikoku nikki' 異国日記 ('Chronicle of foreign countries'), *The Shien*, 1–7 (1928–34). The same author relied on the *Ikoku nikki* for a monograph on Tokugawa foreign relations: see Tsuji Zennosuke, *Kaigai kōtsū shiwa* 海外交通史話 (*History of foreign exchange*) (Tokyo, 1917).

<sup>28</sup> Murakami, *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū*.

<sup>29</sup> Drawing on Abraham de Wicquefort's famous distinction between two different categories of diplomatic actors, ambassadors and second-rank diplomats (including ordinary envoys, agents, secretaries, and translators), we may conclude that, based on his many representing and mediating functions, Murakami belonged to the latter group. Abraham de Wicquefort, *The ambassador and his functions* (London, 1716), pp. 33–43.

<sup>30</sup> Japan Centre for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) archives, 'Boriwiyakoku daitōryō shinsho oyobi gaimu daijin shokan honyakuhō Tōkyō gaikokugo gakkō he irai no ken, Meiji 42nen 12gatsu' ボリヴェイヤ国大統領親書及外務大臣書翰翻訳方東京外国語学校へ依頼ノ件 明治四十二年十二月 ('Commission for a translation of a friendly letter from the President of Bolivia and a letter by the foreign minister to the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, Meiji year 42, December'), [https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image\\_B13080814900?IS\\_KEY\\_S1=Bolivia&IS\\_KIND=detail&IS\\_STYLE=default&IS\\_TAG\\_S1=InD&](https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/image_B13080814900?IS_KEY_S1=Bolivia&IS_KIND=detail&IS_STYLE=default&IS_TAG_S1=InD&).

<sup>31</sup> Letter signed by M. W. de Visser and H. T. Colenbrander, Japan Academy archive, Tokyo, Nichirankankei shorui dai 1 (Taishō 14–Shōwa 5) 日蘭関係書類第一 (Material regarding Japanese–Dutch relations, vol. 1).



When the Taishō (1912–26) government sent Murakami as the official Japanese delegate to the Panama Pacific Historical Congress held in June 1915—where he lectured about the historically justified interests of the Japanese nation in the Pacific—his function as a second-rank diplomat became particularly apparent. In front of politicians and leading American scholars he connected past relations to Japan’s current geopolitical interest in the Pacific, remarking that ‘It is only ten years since the steamers of the Tōyō Kisen Kwaisha began to run between the ports of Japan and Mexico, but attempts to open the same route were made more than three hundred years ago by one of the greatest statesmen of Japan.’<sup>32</sup> Here, he referred to Tokugawa Ieyasu’s (1543–1616) aspiration to send ships directly to New Spain in the early years of the seventeenth century. Murakami’s outspoken admiration for Ieyasu’s global aspiration was more than geopolitical boasting. It was also an attempt to rehabilitate the Tokugawa regime, which had to take the blame for Japan’s ‘backwardness’ in the nineteenth century. In this regard the congress chairman’s labelling of the only two participating countries outside the Americas, Spain and Japan, as ‘old’ and ‘new’ powers ‘interested in things of the Pacific Ocean’ must have made the modernizing Taishō state proud.<sup>33</sup>

The congress in San Francisco was one of the rare examples of Murakami disseminating his research abroad. His usual target audience was domestic and in reaching it he received help from various institutions. For instance, national newspapers mediated and translated his scholarship for public consumption not only by digesting narratives but also by introducing newly published work. The Tokyo *Asahi Shimbun* 朝日新聞 frequently featured Murakami’s editions. A closer look at these book advertisements reveals that these short texts themselves must have been thoroughly planned dissemination exercises, providing the reader with the relevant keywords of past Japanese participation in foreign relations and its strong position in South-east Asia in the early modern period.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, from the 1910s to the 1930s Murakami was actively involved in textbook publications and popular history books.<sup>35</sup> In an essay in the imperial periodical *Taiyō* 太陽 (*The Sun*, 1895–1928) he elaborated on how writing history and editing sources were not the same thing.<sup>36</sup> He argued that, while there was no objective way to narrate historical events in

<sup>32</sup> Murakami Naojirō, ‘Japan’s early attempts to establish commercial relations with Mexico’, in H. Morse Stephens and Herbert E. Bolton, eds., *The Pacific ocean in history: Panama Pacific Historical Congress, San Francisco 1915* (San Francisco, 1917), pp. 467–80, at p. 467.

<sup>33</sup> Session chairman, ‘Session of the Panama Pacific Historical Congress’, in Stephens and Bolton, eds., *Pacific ocean in history*, p. 113. (With regard to public intellectuals stressing the importance of the Pacific in Japan’s historical present and future, see Martin Dusinberre’s contribution to this special issue.)

<sup>34</sup> *Asahi Shimbun Tokyo*, 12 May 1911, p. 1; 5 November 1926, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> These include chapters in *Iwanami kōsa nihon rekishi kinsei* 岩波講座歴史近世 (*Iwanami course in history: early modern*), 1 and 2 (Tokyo, 1933).

<sup>36</sup> Murakami Naojirō, ‘Murakami Naojirō kundan’ 村上直次郎君談 (‘A talk by Mr Murakami Naojirō’), *Taiyō*, 17, no. 8 (1915), pp. 98–9.



monographs, in source compilations the historical sources themselves would always effectively determine their own meaning. However, the source compilations that Murakami participated in, from the *Historical documents concerning Japan* (*Dai Nihon shiryō* 大日本史料) to the accounts of the Dutch factory in Hirado and the Jesuit annual letters to Rome, suggest otherwise. To evaluate the relationship between publications and lecturing (both inside and outside academia) is a particularly difficult task. Indeed, the above-mentioned source compilations were oriented towards a small group of scientifically minded historians and university students. However, the themes he chose for his public lectures in the 1920s and 1930s followed the same narrative frame as the referential works based on European primary sources. There was always a very close focus on the interactions between the European colonial presence in Asia and the expanding Japanese merchant mercantilism of the early Tokugawa state.<sup>37</sup> Both in public lectures and in academic publications Murakami used the first-person plural, 'we' and 'us', when describing past events. The experience of the Japanese individuals active in the *Nan'yō* 南洋 (Southern Seas) represented *wa ga kuni* 我国 ('our country') without exception.<sup>38</sup> Murakami's engaging tone created a strong bond between national ancestors and contemporary imperial subjects, between past and future participation in expansionism by individual Japanese then and now, thus hinting at the ever-present potential for active imperial engagement.

### III

When media and propaganda scholarship celebrated Yamada Nagamasa as a key actor in reaching out to South-east Asia during the history fever of the 1890s, this clear image stood in stark contrast to what was actually known about him.<sup>39</sup> No one seriously tried to prove Nagamasa's ambitions as a sea-going merchant committed to increasing the influence of his community in Ayutthaya or even that of Ieyasu beyond the shores of Japan – a fact that bothered the generation of newly graduated historians from Tōdai, including Murakami Naojirō, who were instructed in the techniques and theories of Rankean historicism by the German historian Ludwig Rieß (1861–1928). Early generations of academic historians were educated in a mix of European diplomatics, universal history, and Confucian philology known as *kōshōgaku*

<sup>37</sup> Murakami Naojirō, 'Edo jidai shoki no Nichihi bōeki' 江戸時代の初期日比貿易 ('The short trading period between Japan and the Philippines in the Edo era'), in *Taihoku kōtōshōgyō gakkō kaikō jūshūnen kinen bunshū* 台北高等商業学校十周年記念文集 (*Collection of essays commemorating the tenth anniversary of Taihoku College of Commerce*) (Taipei, 1929), pp. 34–5.

<sup>38</sup> Murakami Naojirō, *Rokkonō Yamada Nagamasa* 六昆山山田長政 (*Rokkonō Yamada Nagamasa*) (Tokyo, 1942), p. 21.

<sup>39</sup> 'Shiamu tsūshin' シヤム通信 ('Siamese message'), *Asahi Shimbun* 朝日新聞, 23 March 1898, p. 3. The article features Yamada Nagamasa as a messenger from Siam.

考証学 ('evidentiary learning'); with its respect for evidence and facts, this was an important intellectual grid for the first generations of historians.<sup>40</sup>

For Murakami, Yamada Nagamasa was one of the many aspects of Japanese participation in early modern maritime exchange in East and South-east Asia that he needed to draw together with the help of foreign records. This agenda led him to travel and engage with foreign-language sources and literature, collecting, compiling, transcribing, editing, and translating sources in various languages. In the year of his graduation from Tokyo Imperial University in 1896, the newly appointed governor general of Taiwan assigned him to search for records showing Japanese involvement with the powerful Zheng empire in Kagoshima, Okinawa, Taiwan, and Xiamen.<sup>41</sup> This was when Murakami first came to identify joint Japanese and Chinese operations in the South China Sea, a view that differed profoundly from the popular historical image of Japanese pirates and adventurers.<sup>42</sup> More recent revisionist scholarship has convincingly argued that multi-ethnic communities of *wakō*, despite their status as outlaws, backed maritime exchange in the China seas between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>43</sup> Yet, in public discourse in the late Meiji and Taishō periods, propaganda for the southward expansion of Japan developed a purely Japanese version of *wakō*. Seiji Shirane has elaborated how scholars and politicians in the early twentieth century overemphasized circumstantial evidence of sixteenth-century *wakō* raids towards the Philippines for the sake of implying a continuity of Japanese presence there.<sup>44</sup> Being purely East Asian, the *wakō* spirit was a welcome example of an emerging dynamic commercial organization which developed before the arrival of the Europeans and was thus independent of Western influence. In interwar Japan, educational youth literature titles advocated the spirit of a people in motion.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Joshua A. Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese relations in space and time* (Cambridge, MA, 2009). Both Rankean historicism and *kōshōgaku* built upon meticulously collecting and compiling sources for the sake of recording past events. Neo-Confucian Sino-Japanese historiography of recording the past for present and future political purposes was instructive for the 397-chapter-long *Dai Nihonshi* 大日本史 (*Great history of Japan*) by the Tokugawa Mito branch, initiated in 1657.

<sup>41</sup> 'Murakami Naojirō hakase ryakureki' 村上直次郎博士略歴 ('Short CV of Dr Murakami Naojirō'), *Kirishitan bunka kenkyūkai kaihō* キリシタン文化研究会会報, 9, 4 (1967), p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Murakami Naojirō, *Taigai kōeki no shiteki kaiko* 対外交易の史的回顧 (*Foreign exchange in historical perspective*) (Tokyo, 1940), p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Igawa Kenji, 'At the crossroads: Limahon and wakō in sixteenth-century Philippines', in Robert J. Antony, ed., *Elusive pirates, pervasive smugglers: violence and clandestine trade in the greater China seas* (Hong Kong, 2010), pp. 73–84.

<sup>44</sup> Shirane Seiji, 'Mediated empire: colonial Taiwan in Japan's imperial expansion into south China and Southeast Asia, 1895–1945' (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton, 2014), pp. 156–7; Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, *Kyōkai wo matagu hitobito* 境界をまたぐ人びと (*People at the frontiers*) (Tokyo, 2006).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Ashima Kei 芦間圭, *Shōnen wakō to Yamada Nagamasa* 少年倭寇と山田長政 (*Young wakō and Yamada Nagamasa*) (Tokyo, 1934). The book omits citations and ends with a call for a renewal of the *wakō* spirit to strengthen the country.

Murakami's German mentor, Ludwig Rieß – who, in addition to his work on the 'History of the English factory at Hirado, 1613–1623', published an extensive essay on Taiwanese history in 1897 – encouraged his protégé to continue researching the history of the island. Hence, Murakami began to publish on Taiwan's colonial past.<sup>46</sup> It was, in particular, previously discovered rare source material – so-called Sinkan contracts drawn up between the indigenous Sirayans and Dutch merchants – that allowed Murakami to investigate pre-nineteenth-century Taiwanese history.<sup>47</sup>

Two years later, Murakami finished his first book-length publication. The two-volume edition of a diary by the head of the English factory in Hirado, Richard Cocks, was a valuable source for tracing seventeenth-century Japanese connections in the China seas.<sup>48</sup> After having read an 1883 edition of the diary by the palaeographer and British Museum librarian Edward Maunde Thompson, Murakami decided to make the source available for Japanese historians. Surprisingly, his 'Japanese' edition was a mere reproduction of the English text without any translation. In the preface – likewise written in English – Murakami reveals his intentions:

The intercourse of Japan and the Western Nations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with its romantic beginning, rapid growth, and sudden cessation after the lapse of a century, is a peculiarly attractive subject for our study. Unfortunately, Japanese materials on the subject are very scanty, most of the manuscripts and printed books having been destroyed by the Tokugawa Government in pursuance of its policy of seclusion. We must, therefore, turn to foreign materials to supplement the deficiency.<sup>49</sup>

With regard to his editing efforts he pointed out that

it was no easy task to me to identify the Japanese names in the text, which are often very much corrupted, and in the case of many private, and even of some public, personages, all my attempts have proved futile. As regards the Japanese terms I have of course had an advantage over the English editor, and I flatter myself that I have been in some cases more fortunate in finding explanations for other foreign words having had an invaluable help in Hobson-Jobson, or a 'Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of kindred Terms', by Col. Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell.<sup>50</sup>

While Murakami is certainly right about the many corrupted Japanese titles, names, and places in the English edition, expressing criticism helped him to

<sup>46</sup> Ludwig Rieß, 'Geschichte der Insel Formosa', *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, 6 (1897), pp. 405–47.

<sup>47</sup> The first results of his research on Taiwanese sources were published as Murakami Naojirō, 'Taiwan shinkansha monjo' 臺灣新港者文書 ('Manuscripts of the Taiwan Shinkan people'), *Shigaku Zasshi* 史学雑誌, 8, no. 7 (1897), unpaginated.

<sup>48</sup> Murakami Naojirō, ed., *Dairy of Richard Cocks, cape-merchant in the factory in Japan, 1615–1622, with correspondence. Japanese edition with additional notes* (Tokyo, 1899).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. i–ii.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ii.

place Japanese historians on a par with their Western peers and allowed him to suggest that the former were better qualified when it came to historical sources concerning Japan. By mentioning the dictionary, he accomplished two things: first, he integrated Tokugawa Japanese relations with Europe into the world historical context of English merchant capitalism in Asia; and, second, he subtly hinted at the English editor's omissions.<sup>51</sup> The preface is followed by several hundred pages of detailed accounts of the multinational maritime merchant community based on the small island of Hirado, the main trading centre for Dutch, English, and overseas Chinese merchants until 1641.<sup>52</sup> These accounts reveal the rivalries and collaborations of individual members of different backgrounds who all shared the characteristics of pragmatism, an entrepreneurial spirit, and courage.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, Murakami's discoveries about early modern Japanese crossing the sea to South-east Asian port cities, and their lives and experiences there, were gradually mediated to a broader public. This shared process of knowledge production not only synchronized Japan with Western colonial powers but also provided a chapter on its past role within the Sinosphere: the trope of maritime private agency and entrepreneurial spirit as a signifier of early modernity was a way to stress the equal abilities of Japanese with Chinese maritime merchants and the overseas Chinese network. In this way, the *Nan'yō* turned into a shared discursive space, combining Murakami's knowledge, language skills, and political functions, and the geopolitical agendas of his employers.

Soon afterwards, Murakami collaborated with Kengo Murakawa (1875–1946), the translator of Leopold von Ranke's world history,<sup>54</sup> in editing letters exchanged by English merchants in Japan. In the preface to the edition, he explains how 'The history of Japan's early relations with Europe is now interesting many Japanese scholars. The present volume ... will supply them with the most important materials for the history of the intercourse with England.'<sup>55</sup> This is again reminiscent of Murakami's life-long desire to

<sup>51</sup> The dictionary was published in 1886, three years after Thompson's edition of the diary. Murakami omits the publication date in his reference.

<sup>52</sup> For the history of Hirado as part of the multinational maritime trading networks of the seventeenth century, see Adam Clulow, 'From global entrepôt to early modern domain: Hirado, 1609–1641', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 65 (2010), pp. 1–35. Both Martin Dusingberre and David Mervart address the role of Hirado as a global knowledge hub in their contributions to this special issue.

<sup>53</sup> On enlightened rationalism, see Alexander Woodside, *Lost modernities: China, Vietnam, Korea, and the hazards of world history* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), pp. 8–10.

<sup>54</sup> Murakawa Kengo 村川堅固, trans., *Seikaishi romshin kōroku* 世界史論集講録 (*Epochs der neueren Zeit/Epochs of modern times*) (Tokyo, 1918). In the years following his graduation, Murakawa worked on the period of Japanese–European encounter and contributed to James Murdoch's *History of Japan during the century of early foreign intercourse (1542–1651)* (Kobe, 1903).

<sup>55</sup> Murakami Naojirō and Murakawa Kengo, eds., *Letters written by English residents in Japan, 1611–1623* (Tokyo, 1900), p. ix. For Rieβ on Hirado, see Ludwig Rieβ, 'History of the English factory at Hirado', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 26 (1889), pp. 1–114, 163–218.

shed light on Japan's forgotten engagement with the outside world, encouraged by his mentor's example.<sup>56</sup> During a research leave from Tōdai in 1893, Ludwig Rieß had arranged that transcripts of archival material dealing with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japan would be sent to Japan.<sup>57</sup> Murakami understood that there was the promise of many additional documents from these archives. Between the summer of 1899 and 1902 he also carried out archival research in Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands.<sup>58</sup> During his stay in Europe, which he described as study abroad for the 'languages, history and geography of the *Nan'yō*',<sup>59</sup> he began to gradually feed his fellow historians (and ultimately a larger public) with brand-new insights from Western source material: for instance, from an inventory of Japanese-language sources in London and the Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), or from vocabulary lists extracted from sixteenth-century linguistic manuals.<sup>60</sup> From 1901 onwards, the *Shigaku Zasshi* 史学雑誌 (*Historical Journal*) as the first and main scientific journal for historical studies began to publish Murakami's archival reports.<sup>61</sup>

In the 1910s, when Murakami was president of the renowned Tokyo School of Foreign Languages (the later Tokyo University of Foreign Languages, 東京外国語大学) 'history fever' had long turned into 'southern advance fever' (*Nanshin netsu* 南進熱) in Japan.<sup>62</sup> This was a symptom of the expanding *nanshinron* 南進論, the idea of the Southern Seas as a new and non-contested frontier for a Japanese territorial expansion and economic intervention. Politicians and intellectuals alike used examples of past relations such as the Japanese presence in South-east Asian ports to justify a maritime expansionist cause into the

<sup>56</sup> Certain episodes such as the diplomatic mission by Hasekura Tsunenaga to Philip III in Spain and Pope Paul V in Rome had in fact disappeared from the collective memory until 1873, when members of the Iwakura delegation were presented with documents drafted by Hasekura. See Murakami Noajirō, *Nihon to Firipin* 日本と比律賓 (*Japan and the Philippines*) (Nagasaki, 1945), p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> Kanai Madoka, 'Ludwig Riess to Nihon kankei kaigai shiryō' ルートヴィヒ・リースと日本関係海外史料 ('Ludwig Rieß and foreign sources regarding Japan'), *Shigaku Zasshi*, 87, no. 10 (1978), pp. 43–53.

<sup>58</sup> Yoshikawa, *Making history matter*, p. 103. It had become a common practice of the education ministry to send scholars abroad on study or research tours. The programme started in 1875 with natural scientists.

<sup>59</sup> Murakami, *Nihon to Firipin*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Murakami Noajirō, 'Rondon no komonjokan' ロンドンの古文書 ('Archival sources in London'), *Shigaku Zasshi*, 14, no. 9 (1903), pp. 22–54; idem, 'Shimankasu monjo' シマンカス文書 ('The Simancas sources'), *Shigaku Zasshi*, 13, no. 9 (1902), pp. 76–84; idem, 'Ōji no seiyō kōtsū ga kokugo ni oyobashitaru eikyō' 往時の西洋交通が国語に及ぼしたる影響 ('The influence of past exchange with the West on the Japanese language'), *Shigaku Zasshi*, 14, no. 10 (1903), pp. 1–33.

<sup>61</sup> Mehl, 'European model', pp. 107–27, describes the collecting processes in the establishment of *komonjo gaku*.

<sup>62</sup> Yano Tōru 矢野暲, '*Nanshin' no keifu: Nihon no Nan'yō shikan* 「南進」の系譜 日本の南洋史観 (*Genealogy of the progress to the south: the perception of the Southern Seas in Japan*) (Tokyo, 2009), pp. 31–78.

South China Sea and the Pacific.<sup>63</sup> As indicated, this public discourse on the Japanese economic and political engagement in the Southern Seas pre-dated academic efforts at writing and teaching about it. However, its common themes, including maritime protagonists such as Yamada Nagamasa, *wakō*, and Japanese migrants to South-east Asian port cities, served Murakami's own agenda as a point of departure. One example was Luzon in the Philippines, which became a popular destination for Japanese merchant vessels after the colonization by Spain and was where opportunistic Japanese merchants such as two named Harada actively forged bilateral relations between the two islands.<sup>64</sup>

Yamada Nagamasa first appeared in official records in 1612 as the recipient of a red seal trading licence (*shuinjō*) from the Tokugawa Bakufu for a passage from Nagasaki to Taiwan.<sup>65</sup> Since 1604, the Bakufu had issued these licences first to control and ultimately to monopolize foreign maritime trade in Japanese silver, Chinese silk, and other commodities being shipped by European and overseas Chinese merchants. By inviting foreign rulers to participate in the Bakufu's licensed trade, *shuinjō* trading passes were a significant element in its foreign relations practice. They served the Bakufu as means to reach out to South-east Asian rulers with diplomatic letters. Until 1635, when the system was abolished, the above-mentioned foreign relations monks issued and recorded 180 *shuinjō* and 60 pass recipients. Between 1604 and 1616, up to four passes were issued annually for Ayutthaya and Patani in the Siamese kingdom. Indeed, Tokugawa Ieyasu sent a first diplomatic letter to the Thai king in July 1606 together with a *shuinjō*, in which he requested aloe wood and some guns. Honda Masazumi 本多正純 (1566–1637) also sent letters to his ministerial counterpart in Siam.<sup>66</sup> In 1616, the first Thai embassy reached Japan.<sup>67</sup>

Yamada Nagamasa became a key figure in this inter-related story of diplomacy and trade. In 1626, he led a delegation from the Siamese king to Sunpu and Edo as the envoy of the Siamese king.<sup>68</sup> The embassy was given an audience with the shogun, in which the fine royal letter and gifts were presented.<sup>69</sup> Japanese records thus list Nagamasa as recipient of a *shuinjō* for the return trip from Nagasaki to Ayutthaya.<sup>70</sup> During that stay in Japan, Yamada

<sup>63</sup> See Shirane, 'Mediated empire', pp. 156–7; Mark Peattie, *Nan'yo: the rise and fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1895–1945* (Honolulu, HI, 1988); Tanaka, *New times in modern Japan*, p. 112.

<sup>64</sup> Murakami, *Nihon to Firipin*, pp. 12–22.

<sup>65</sup> The full name given on this licence was Yamada Nizaemon Nagamasa 山田仁左衛門長政.

<sup>66</sup> Nagazumi Yōko, 'Ayutthaya and Japan: embassies and trade in the seventeenth century', in Kennon Breazeale, ed., *From Japan to Arabia: Ayutthaya's maritime relations with Asia* (Bangkok, 1999), pp. 89–103, at p. 90.

<sup>67</sup> Hayashi Akira 林麓, *Tsūkō ichiran* 通航一覽 (*Survey of navigation*) (8 vols., Tokyo, 1913; orig. edn 1853), vi, pp. 529–31.

<sup>68</sup> Nagazumi, 'Ayutthaya and Japan'. See also Cesare Polenghi, *Samurai of Ayutthaya: Yamada Nagamasa, Japanese warrior and merchant in early seventeenth-century Siam* (Bangkok, 2009).

<sup>69</sup> Nagazumi, 'Ayutthaya and Japan', p. 91.

<sup>70</sup> Murakami, *Yamada*, p. 12.

Nagamasa sought the patronage of an influential elder (*rōjū* 老中) of the Bakufu, Sakai Tadayo 酒井忠世 (1572–1636). He negotiated special trading arrangements between Siam and Japan and moreover provided the Bakufu with geopolitical information, including the privateering activities of Europeans.<sup>71</sup> This episode would qualify Nagamasa as an important agent of state affairs and point to a link between seagoing merchants and *gaikō* as important tropes in Murakami's interpretation of early modern connections. The ceremonial coronation of Vajiravudh (Rama VI) as new king in 1911 provided the Japanese media with a welcome opportunity to celebrate former friendly Japanese–Thai relations. Indifferent to dynastic changes over the centuries, newspapers hyped how bilateral relations dated back to a single Japanese individual: Yamada Nagamasa.<sup>72</sup> One editorial labelled Siamese–Japanese relations as the most ancient ones, only surpassed by China and Korea (*Shina Chōsen* 支那朝鮮).<sup>73</sup>

The most important element in the heroic tale of Yamada Nagamasa was his position as head of a Japanese overseas community in Ayutthaya, Thailand. Such seventeenth-century Japanese settlements (*Nihonmachi* 日本町 or *Nihonjin machi* 日本人町) in places such as Manila, Hoi An, and Ayutthaya became another anchor point for academic research on pre-modern southern expansion. In Ayutthaya, Yamada Nagamasa controlled incoming Japanese trade and oversaw the 500 residents of the Japanese settlement. In the 1620s, he would even enjoy a career at the Ayutthaya court, rising from low military rank to become a senior adviser to King Songtham, who employed him in various military campaigns, including a strike against Spanish galleons from Manila.<sup>74</sup> When Yamada Nagamasa became the commander of the Japanese guard in the king's palace in the late 1620s, he was commissioned to put down a rebellion in the south of the country and was poisoned by a rival in 1630.<sup>75</sup> Both Murakami and the tabloids essentialized Nagamasa's Japanese-ness as represented in a blend of military and economic strategies: Yamada Nagamasa was celebrated as *eraijin* 偉人 ('an authority') who, despite his ventures abroad, did not forget Japan, and his story served educational purposes until the end of the Pacific War.

Murakami eventually published a biography of Yamada Nagamasa in 1942. It showcases his methodology of source criticism and his tendency to over-emphasize European-language sources.<sup>76</sup> The quality, style, and agenda

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>72</sup> 'Yamada Nagamasa', *Asahi Shimbun*, 3 March 1910, p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> 'Shamuro kōtei' 暹羅皇帝 ('The Siamese emperor'), *Asahi Shimbun*, 1 December 1911, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Florentino Rodao, *Españoles en Siam (1540–1939)* (Madrid, 1997), pp. 58–63.

<sup>75</sup> For Tokugawa–Thai relations, see Iwamoto Yoshiteru and Simon Bytheway, 'Japan's official relations with Shamuro, 1599–1745: as revealed in the diplomatic records of the Tokugawa shogunate', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 99 (2011), pp. 81–104.

<sup>76</sup> In addition to the monograph in Japanese, Murakami contributed a chapter on Yamada Nagamasa to a world history encyclopaedia in 1962.



differed from anything else published in Japanese. In the preface, we find the manifesto of a historian who collected bits and pieces of information from textual primary sources (*komonjo gaku*) and corrected previous misinterpretations.<sup>77</sup> His only secondary reference is to Ernest M. Satow, the nineteenth-century British diplomat in Japan (1862–9 and 1895–1900) and Thailand (1884–7) who himself had authored books on early Tokugawa engagement with the outside world.<sup>78</sup> For the rest, he exclusively drew on Dutch and Thai primary sources, and transcripts such as the *Tsūkō ichiran* 通航一覽 (*Survey of navigation*). The seven-volume *Tsūkō ichiran* shows many parallels to the *Ikoku nikki* in both content and style. Its editor, Hayashi Akira (1800–59), was an offspring of the influential Hayashi clan of Neo-Confucian scholars, of whom Razan 羅山 (1583–1657) was the most prominent representative. Hayashi Akira served Tokugawa Iesada (1824–58), Iemochi (1846–66), and Yoshinobu (1837–1913) as chief diplomatic adviser and thus played a vital role in the treaty port negotiations with Commodore Matthew Perry in the late 1850s.<sup>79</sup> In reaction to Western penetration into Japanese waters, Hayashi Akira collected foreign relations sources from the period 1566–1825, dividing them by country and putting them into chronological order. The collection was first published in 1853.<sup>80</sup>

The positivist use of Dutch early modern accounts is another key characteristic of Murakami's biography of Yamada Nagamasa. Thanks to Jeremias van Vliet's detailed manuscript of the Dutch trading factory in Ayutthaya between 1636 and 1640, which Murakami found in The Hague, he was able to fill in many blanks.<sup>81</sup> The material served him as ultimate proof for the narrative of Nagamasa as an important figure in the Japanese community in South-east Asia, his connections to the Siamese king, and the significance of trading passes. At no point did Murakami question the accuracy of this primary source.<sup>82</sup>

#### IV

With the foundation of the Imperial University of Taipei in 1928 came the institutionalization of the history of the Southern Seas. *Nan'yō shi* was designed as a specific programme, with Murakami Naojirō as its first chair. In organizing the

<sup>77</sup> Murakami, *Yamada*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Ernest M. Satow, *The Jesuit missionary press in Japan, 1591–1610* (London, 1888); Ernest Mason Satow, *Yamada Nagamasa jiseki gakkō* 山田長政事跡合考 (*Historical sites of Yamada Nagamasa*) (1896).

<sup>79</sup> Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with imperialism: the unequal treaties and the culture of Japanese diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Hayashi, *Tsūkō ichiran*.

<sup>81</sup> Chris Baker, Dhiravat na Pomberja, Alfons van der Kraan, and David K. Wyatt, eds., *Van Vliet's Siam* (Washington, DC, 2005). It appeared as early as 1673 in French (*Description du royaume de Siam*).

<sup>82</sup> Shirane, 'Mediated empire', pp. 259–70. Exploring the involvement of the colonial Taiwanese government's research activities in close collaboration with the academic staff at Taipei Imperial University, Shirane refers to Yano Tōru when arguing that Nagamasa's name appeared neither in Dutch nor in Thai sources.

programme, he made immediate use of material he had found during another extended research stay in England, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal.<sup>83</sup> The university served him as sort of laboratory for testing and further developing how the past should be represented, and he began to research *Nihonmachi* as Japanese towns in South-east Asian ports. Together with Iwao Seiichi 岩生成一 (1900–88) as assistant professor, Murakami consulted European source material for the history of the first Japanese southern advance based on the expansion of red seal trading ships.<sup>84</sup> Early modern Japanese settlements in the *Nan'yō* were considered a key element in legitimizing expansionist considerations of both previous and contemporary generations. Conceptually, they were embedded in a larger narrative of private maritime enterprises and of the mercantilist spirit as the driving force in the establishment of trading outposts and colonies far away from the metropolis.<sup>85</sup>

The Taipei programme in the history of the Southern Seas is a peculiar example of imperial co-production. It reflects both scientific sophistication and the European bias in Japan's imperial repertoire: classes focused on European expansion and lessons learnt from European colonial experience in South-east Asia during the seventeenth century. Whereas neither Chinese, nor Malay, nor Arabic were included in the programme, classes in the essential source languages, such as Dutch and Spanish, were compulsory.<sup>86</sup> (Note that the Spanish presence on Taiwan was geographically limited to a small area around present-day Taipei and only lasted between 1626 and 1642, generating a relatively small archive.<sup>87</sup>) When the department added a course on Japanese relations with the *Nan'yō* in 1930, students were offered a history of a linear development of foreign relations and the development of trade in South-east Asia, in which Japan was one of several civilizing powers, but the one with the best grip on the political and cultural context thanks to its integration into the Sinosphere.<sup>88</sup>

In his inaugural lecture, entitled 'Japanese development of the Southern Seas before the Tokugawa closed country', Murakami offered a definition of the historical *Nan'yō*.<sup>89</sup> He explicitly linked the Japanese epistemology with the

<sup>83</sup> Yeh Pi-ling 葉碧苓, 'Murakami Naojirō de Taiwanshi jiangjiu' 村上直次郎的臺灣史研究 ('Murakami Naojirō's research on Taiwanese history'), *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 國史館學術集刊 (*Bulletin of Academia Historica*), 17 (2014), pp. 1–35.

<sup>84</sup> Iwao Seiichi 岩生成一, *Nanyō Nihonmachi no seisui* 南洋日本町の盛衰 (*The rise and fall of Japantowns in South-east Asia*) (Taipei, 1937).

<sup>85</sup> This shows parallels with ideas elaborated in William Lytle Schurz, 'The Spanish lake', *Spanish American Historical Review*, 5 (1922), pp. 181–94.

<sup>86</sup> The European bias of the programme was furthered by the fact that the majority of course literature was by Western scholars.

<sup>87</sup> José Eugenio Borao Mateo, Pol Heyns, Carlos Gómez, and Anna Maria Zanducta Nisce, eds., *Spaniards in Taiwan: documents (1584–1641 and 1642–1682)* (2 vols., Taipei, 2001).

<sup>88</sup> Yeh, 'Murakami', pp. 12–13.

<sup>89</sup> 'Kanei sakoku mae ni okeru nihonjin no nan'yō hatten' 寛永鎖国前における日本人の南洋発展 ('Japanese development of the Southern Seas before the *Kan'ei sakoku*'), *Taiwan Nichi*

terminology of European exploration. Instead of Chinese equivalents such as the Sinophone *nanhai* or *nankai* in Japanese – a term that literally meant ‘southern sea’ and had been used for the waters surrounding present-day Indonesia and the Philippines since the Song era<sup>90</sup> – Murakami described how the Spanish navigator Vasco Nuñez de Balboa (1475–1519) called the ocean beyond the isthmus of Panama the ‘southern sea’ (*mar del sur*), before Ferdinand Magellan coined the term ‘Pacific’.<sup>91</sup> This strategy of introducing analogies from European maritime explorations and conquest recurs in Murakami’s work and served as a synchronization of the Japanese experience in the South China Seas with those of the European trading nations. In terms of methodology, he not only explicitly mentioned new source material found in Europe as evidence for the importance of Japantowns, but also presented quantifiable data such as exact numbers of Japanese passengers disembarking in Batavia (present-day Jakarta), another important node in the *Nihonmachi* network. The key message was that Japanese expansion into and development of the Southern Seas – and particularly of Siam (暹羅発展) – had been cut short.<sup>92</sup>

## V

In the opening pages of Murakami’s Yamada Nagamasa biography we find a comparison to arguably the best-known European explorer and conquistador, Christopher Columbus.<sup>93</sup> His choice of drawing a parallel between the discoverer of the New World and the Japanese ‘red seal ships’ merchant must not be dismissed as a mere stylistic device for two reasons. First, the 1890s in Spain, where Murakami spent ten months during the formative years of his scholarship, witnessed a period of extensive publications and commemorative events focusing on the Spanish discovery of the Americas. In particular, the quadricentennial of Columbus’s journey was turned into ‘a spectacle to be consumed by Spain and the world’.<sup>94</sup> Second, the narrative of Columbus’s personal motivation as a Genoese discoverer, in which his employment by the Spanish monarchs is considered to be secondary, provides an essential framing device

---

*Nichi Shinpo* 台湾日々新報, 19 June 1929, [http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/das/jsp/ja/ContentViewM.jsp?METAID=00501466&TYPE=IMAGE\\_FILE&POS=1](http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/das/jsp/ja/ContentViewM.jsp?METAID=00501466&TYPE=IMAGE_FILE&POS=1). *Kan’ei* is a Japanese era name for the period from 1624 to 1644. *Sakoku* 鎖国 (literally ‘closed country’) was a term to describe Japanese seclusion policies after 1639. However, the word itself was not used before 1715.

<sup>90</sup> The term is used by Ming historical memorialists, for instance in the *Ming shilu* 明實錄 (*Veritable records of the Ming*), as well as by Japanese *nan’yō shi* scholars in the same period.

<sup>91</sup> See Rainer F. Buschmann, Edward R. Slack Jr, and James B. Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish lake: the Pacific in the Iberian world, 1521–1898* (Honolulu, HI, 2014), pp. 3–14.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Kan’ei sakoku’, *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Shinpo*, 19 June 1929.

<sup>93</sup> Murakami, *Yamada*, p. 11.

<sup>94</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the past: power and the production of history* (Boston, MA, 2015), p. 125.

for Murakami's writing. It was Columbus's geographical knowledge, nautical skills, and strong will that made him convince Queen Isabella I of Castile, rather than the monarch ordering him to cross the ocean to discover new territory or navigable routes. Indeed, biographies of explorers and adventurers were central to the European narration of the discovery of the New World. Important narrative elements included the individual agency of a heterogeneous group of men whose knowledge, courage, and determination led Europe into a new and modern age. Murakami was convinced that Yamada Nagamasa and other Japanese merchants and residents in South-east Asia acted in a similar spirit. By applying European methods of writing history, he mimicked their models of male adventurers going overseas and their politico-economic success stories.

In making a connection to an example from the European past, Murakami was able to synchronize Japan with the early modern period in Europe.<sup>95</sup> He elaborated how, in both cases, numerous cities and regions claimed to be the birthplace of a national hero. In this way, Murakami not only turned Yamada Nagamasa into a highly relevant figure for the modern Japanese nation, but also glossed over the uncertainty regarding Nagamasa's place of birth (a puzzling fact, considering Murakami's urge to provide verifiable sources to dispel doubts). The section containing the Columbus analogy ends with the conclusion that Yamada Nagamasa most likely grew up in Owari near Sunpu.<sup>96</sup> As Sunpu was the court of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Nagamasa's adolescence in close vicinity to the retired shogun and de facto ruler may be an indication that he frequented the castle town or even the castle itself. Nevertheless, Murakami, as a true advocate of *komonjo gaku*, refrains from such speculation, owing to the absence of source-based evidence.

Just as Christian Europeans attributed the birth of a golden age to Columbus's achievements with regard to interstate relations of maritime empires, early modern Japanese maritime activities became intrinsically linked to the narrative of state-controlled negotiations with the outside world, namely *gaikō*. Stressing the interface of official diplomatic relations and maritime trade, Murakami placed special emphasis on Nagamasa as a diplomatic envoy to Tokugawa Hidetada in Genna 7 (1621) delivering a letter from the Siamese king. During Yamada's stay in Japan, he exchanged letters with Hidetada's chief counsellor (*toshijori* 年寄り), the aforementioned Honda Masazumi, who had already been in diplomatic contact with the Thai elite in 1606, in relation to the embassy and Nagamasa's post in Siam.<sup>97</sup>

In the shogunal reply drafted by the foreign relations monk Ishin Sūden 以心崇伝 (1569–1633), Hidetada voiced his delight about the mutually beneficial relations. A very similar line of argument could be found in the twentieth-

<sup>95</sup> Tanaka, *New times in modern Japan*, pp. 121–3.

<sup>96</sup> Murakami, *Yamada*, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Murakami, *Yamada*, p. 26; Nagazumi, 'Ayutthaya and Japan', pp. 90–2.

century mass media. Newspaper articles show that journalists had picked up on the idea of red seal-licensed maritime trade as legitimizing foreign relations. Their headlines cemented the historicity of Tokugawa foreign relations, while Yamada Nagamasa's operations between Japan and Siam become commonly translated as *shinzen* 親善 ('good will' or 'friendship').<sup>98</sup> However, strictly speaking it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the term *shinzen* was coined as diplomatic jargon for friendly relations between sovereign nations and it was thus a somewhat anachronistic label for seventeenth-century relations between Siam and Japan. Nevertheless, journalists explained how friendly relations dated back to the era of red seal ships passing between the two nations, and also to Taiwan, Tonkin, and the Philippines, where early modern Japanese colonies emerged. In Ayutthaya, so the story went, the majority of an estimated 1,000 Japanese residents engaged in trade, sold weapons, and built small ships. Thereafter the storyline described how the Thai king employed residents from the Japantown in Ayutthaya (*Nihonjinmachi*, *Ban Yipun* in Thai sources) and how Nagamasa was ennobled (*daijin* 大臣) thanks to his military accomplishments in the naval battles. As head of the Japantown, Nagamasa, the pathfinder in a 'southern advance' (*nanshin* 南進), controlled commercial ships from Japan licensed by the third shogun, Iemitsu.<sup>99</sup> What is noteworthy in this one report is the mention of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–98). This highlights another paradox when it came to popular uses of national pasts in imperial Japan: the heroization of a warlord who made Japan strong, and who even set it on a par with the Ming dynasty, was so central to the nation-building narrative of liberal Taishō historians that no room was left for the fact that Toyotomi probably did not even know about the existence of the kingdom of Ayutthaya.<sup>100</sup>

In 1941 the Biographical Academic Association (Denki gakkai 伝記学会), in collaboration with the Rokkō Shobō 六甲書房, a publisher active in distributing books on the Japanese overseas empire, published a book entitled *Nanshin Nihon no senkusha* 南進日本の先駆者 (*Pioneers of Japan's southern expansion*) based on the latest academic research. Beginning with Itō Manjū, the leader of the Tenshō mission sent via Goa to Europe in the 1580s, followed by Yamada Nagamasa, Hasekura Tsunenaga 支倉常長 (1571–1622), and Sukanuma Teifū 菅沼貞風 (1865–89), among others, it introduces in eleven chapters those considered to be the central protagonists of the Japanese southward advance of previous centuries.<sup>101</sup> The final chapter is dedicated to the

<sup>98</sup> 'Go-shuinsen no mukashi kara muzubareta shinzen' ご朱印船の昔からむずばれた親善 ('Friendly relations originating from the time of the red seal ships'), *Asahi Shimbun*, 16 June 1940, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> "'Nanshin' no senkusha" 「南進」の先駆者 ('Pioneers of the southern expansion'), *Asahi Shimbun*, 19 June 1940, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> Yoshikawa, *Making history matter*, p. 159.

<sup>101</sup> Denki gakkai 伝記学会, *Nanshin Nihon no senkusha* 南進日本の先駆者 (*Pioneers of Japan's southern expansion*) (Tokyo, 1941).

Japantowns in the Southern Seas, rendering the many unnamed urban migrants into expansionists in their own right. The book followed Murakami's lead in linking engagement in the *Nan'yō* as closely as possible with official foreign relations. This is interesting because all the articles in this special issue deal with knowledge co-produced in discursive spaces, be they physical, intellectual, or imagined. The discursive space of the *Nan'yō* was not only negotiated between academic historians and journalists in imperial Japan but also shaped as a result of transformations inherent in the *longue durée* of any topic. But after the Second World War, Japanese historians distanced themselves from historical discourses about a necessary economic and territorial south-bound expansion.<sup>102</sup> As a result, no significant new publications on *wakō* or Nagamasa appeared between 1945 and 1990. Yet no-one seemed to question the academic ethics of Murakami's work.<sup>103</sup> What is more, Murakami himself has long joined the list of Japanese pioneers heralded by Yamada Nagamasa: he appears, for instance, in a hagiographical compilation with the official English title *People who gazed at the world and three wise men of Bungo*.<sup>104</sup>

## VI

Right up to the present, historians working on Tokugawa foreign relations have classified the *Ikoku nikki* as exemplary because of its status as providing official primary sources from the Tokugawa Bakufu. What is usually overlooked (as historians in the twenty-first century remain as fixated on written primary records as their nineteenth-century academic ancestors) is that, when Murakami published the *Ikoku nikki shō* in 1911, he presented a digest with an overemphasis on relations with Europeans. Within the realm of *gaikō*, translations of the rediscovered story of Japan's foreign relations posed various challenges for interpreting the past.<sup>105</sup> The idea of the neutrality of Murakami's source editions and

<sup>102</sup> While the trope of expansion featured prominently in pre-war scholarship, it gained negative connotations thereafter. Terminologically speaking, *bōchō* 膨張 ('expansion' or 'growth') was the most common term in the imperial era, while contemporary scholarship prefers *kakudai* 拡大 ('enlargement') and *kaigai shinshutsu* 海外進出 ('advancing overseas') as the least contested. See also Martin Dusinberre's contribution to this special issue.

<sup>103</sup> Other scholarship has been viewed more critically. See Dick Stegewerns, 'Forgotten leaders of the interwar debate on regional integration: introducing Sugimori Kōjirō', in Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., *Pan-Asianism in modern Japanese history: colonialism, regionalism and borders* (London and New York, NY, 2016), pp. 101–14, whose author alludes to striking parallels between Arano Yasunori's *Ajia no naka no Nihon* ('Japan in Asia') and the popular slogan of the Meiji era *sekai no naka no Nihon* ('Japan in the world').

<sup>104</sup> Ōita kenritsu sentetsu shiryōkan, *Sekai wo mitsumeta hitobito to Bungo sanken* 世界をみつめた人々と豊後三個人 (People who gazed at the world and three wise men of Bungo) (Ōita, 2017).

<sup>105</sup> Shinobu Junpei 信夫淳平, *Kinsei gaikōshi* 近世外交史 (History of early modern foreign relations) (Tokyo, 1930). As a diplomat and law professor at Waseda, Shinobu described mainly nineteenth-century diplomatic affairs in Europe. He started (p. 4) with a general explanation and an attempt to define *gaikō* (which he translated as 'diplomacy' and strictly distinguished from international law, here referring to J. R. Seeley's *The expansion of England* (1883)).

translations, which empowered both contemporaries and future generations of historians to use, abuse, and reinterpret early modern Japanese foreign relations, has been taken for granted.<sup>106</sup> Yet terminological choices and additional annotations to Murakami's translations indicate how his engagement with European history modified his understanding of traditional and modern patterns of foreign relations and expansion. Under the ideological influence of Western scholarship, with its emphasis on nineteenth-century diplomatic relations, he came to consider modern diplomatic practices as universal and sought to interpret Japanese practices along those lines. Co-produced historical knowledge was multi-layered, based on source compilations and translations which themselves reflected idealized images of past connections.<sup>107</sup>

Careful readers of this entire issue will have noticed Martin Dusinberre's own mention of a familiar name, Suganuma Teifū, and will probably even remember that Suganuma's history of Hirado as foreign port and gateway to the outside world was published posthumously in 1892. Twenty-five years later, Murakami also authored a monograph on the history of the Hirado port, full of references to official state letters. Murakami summarized the positive impact of European residents in Hirado in his last chapter, on the arrival of Western civilization (*seiyō bunmei* 西洋文明), noting that Hirado was a 'place where people learnt from the English and the Dutch' and imported goods and techniques such as ship-building, which improved the lives of its people: 'It must be said that Hirado contributed significantly to the culture of our country.'<sup>108</sup> While the language Murakami used reminds us of the intellectual world of Suganuma, the book otherwise differed significantly from the kind of history that Suganuma provided. Murakami introduced numerous foreign-language accounts that had been neither available nor comprehensible to Suganuma, whose 135-page appendix, 'Hirado bōeki-shi' 平戸貿易史 ('A history of Hirado trade'), elaborated in twelve chronological chapters the activities of foreign merchants in the port and discussed the long-term impact of foreign engagement in a final one, based on a careful reading only of Japanese records. Nonetheless, Murakami's overall conclusion of Hirado as a symbol for ancient Japanese engagement with the outside world is similar. In their own words, both authors used the analogy of Hirado's bridging functions – between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, and China and Europe – in the

<sup>106</sup> Any historian working on early modern Japanese interaction with the West – nowadays subsumed under different labels such as 'namban trade', 'exchange in the China seas', 'global integration', 'wakōteki activities', 'maritime expansion', 'history seen from the ocean', or 'Japan in Asia' – is indebted to Murakami Naojirō.

<sup>107</sup> Lydia Liu made this observation for the translation of concepts and ideas in late imperial China. Lydia H. Liu, 'Legislating the universal: the circulation of international law in the nineteenth century', in Lydia Liu, ed., *Tokens of exchange: the problem of translation in global circulations* (Durham, NC, 1999), pp. 127–64, at pp. 129–30.

<sup>108</sup> Murakami Naojirō, *Bōekishijō no Hirado* 貿易史上の平戸 (*The trading history of Hirado*) (Tokyo, 1917), p. 131, my translation.



making of Japan to underscore the maritime dimension of the Japanese expansionism narrative.

Unlike scholars of Japanese national history, who since the late Meiji period had been busy framing the Tokugawa Bakufu as the negative exception to the country's glory, Murakami's scholarship rehabilitated Tokugawa foreign policies. Maritime technological exchange in the early 1600s was one of the most obvious examples of Western–Japanese co-production, in which hybrid vessels and hybrid nautical knowledge became a symbol for the narrative of Japanese early modern expansion in South-east Asia and even across the Pacific.<sup>109</sup> In this narrative of maritime expansion, the example of dynamic relations with Western merchants, with the overseas Chinese network, and with European rulers, as well as colonial representatives, held centre stage. Such labels as 'maritime', 'progressive', 'monopoly', and 'state control' indicated a new age of foreign relations: early modernity. These claims were fleshed out with examples of commercial exchange, an enlightened understanding of the 'other', and ultimately even in territorial terms with references to Japanese settlements in the Philippines or to the powerful settlements in Dutch Batavia and Ayutthaya by Murakami's disciples.<sup>110</sup> These narratives emphasized the private mercantile initiatives of Japanese travelling overseas and their sponsors at home. Their operations abroad ultimately enabled the Tokugawa regime, as representatives of the state, to formalize and eventually monopolize maritime exchange, thus acting as informed early modern rulers.

Although his work reflects how popular discourse and academic history were connected in the early twentieth-century environment of intellectual imperialism, Murakami was no advocate of a southward expansion, nor would he suggest (nor later justify) the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Unlike his compatriots from Kyushu active during the Meiji period, who blended historical facts and geopolitical dreams in their propagandist imagination of Japanese leadership in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>111</sup> Murakami was driven by a different agenda. He was an advocate of historical truth and the authenticity of documents. In this spirit of proto-revisionism, he integrated heroic propaganda material into an internationally accepted (and easily comparable) storyline. What helped him do so was his physical and intellectual access to archival records. At the same time, he failed to acknowledge that these seventeenth-century accounts were produced for future reference and thus potentially (mis-)guided the interpretation of past events and processes in later centuries.

<sup>109</sup> Peter D. Shapinsky, 'Polyvocal portolans: nautical charts and hybrid maritime cultures in early modern East Asia', *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 14 (2006), pp. 4–26, at pp. 23–4.

<sup>110</sup> Iwao, *Nanyō nihonmachi no seisui*.

<sup>111</sup> Caroline S. Hau and Shiraishi Takashi, 'Daydreaming about Rizal and Tetchō: on Asianism as network and fantasy', *Philippine Studies*, 57 (2009), pp. 329–88.