Japan and the Indian Ocean at the Time of the Mughal Empire, with Special Reference to Gujarat*

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Japan and India in the Early Days

The ocean aids, rather than hinders interrelation among the peoples that surround it. The Indian Ocean is the third largest in the world, so far as the size is concerned; however, from the cultural and economic point of view, it was the busiest ocean from the ancient times with thickly populated and civilized littoral countries. Though Japan is geographically situated at the western edge of the Pacific Ocean, historically and culturally speaking she had a special relation to the Indian Ocean.

Before the discovery of Europe, Japanese people traditionally thought that the world consisted of three countries, namely, Japan, China, and India. China was known to Japanese people as a neighbouring country, there having been a close relationship between the two countries from antiquity. India was, on the other hand, less known than China, and was thought to be far removed from Japan. As Buddhism became popular among the people of Japan, India came to be known as a country of Lord Buddha, and she was regarded as an idealized country located on the pure far-western land. Many people, especially Buddhist monks, had a longing for this idealized land of Buddha. They wanted to visit India to learn more about Buddhism in its original place. Some of them actually tried to visit India, but with little success.

According to a Chinese literature, a Japanese monk named Kongo Zammai, which means Vajra Samadhi in Sanskrit, entered the mid-land of India in 818. He left us no record himself, so we have no means to ascertain if he really set foot in central India or if he returned from there. Another Buddhist monk Shinnyo, who was formerly Prince Takaoka, the third son of the Emperor Heizei (774–824), also had a keen interest in inquiring into the innermost secrets of Mantric Buddhism. He first visited China in 862 and thence proceeded toward the land of Buddha. Unfortunately, four years later he died in Luoyue, a state which is

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supposed to have been located in the Malay Peninsula. Priest Myoe (1173–1232) perhaps had the strongest desire to visit the land of Buddha. He made up his mind to visit India twice, at the ages of 30 (1202) and 33 (1205), but both times he became physically paralyzed and was unable to leave. He left a rough itinerary from Changan in China to Magadha in India. Calculating the time to be spent on his journey by his daily pedestrian pace, he thought it would take 1,000 days at 8 miles a day, or 1,130 days of 7 miles a day, or 1,600 days at 5 miles a day. Coming to the seashore of Wakayama in central Japan and finding a small beautiful stone, he composed the following short verse on the spot. *Yuisekio araeru mizumo iru umino ishito omoeba mutsumajiki kana.* (Thinking that the water poured upon the sacred remains of Buddha flows into the ocean, I feel specially familiar with this stone found on the seashore.) Priest Myoe regarded the small mountain behind Kosanji, his temple in Kyoto, as Mt. Lankatilaka of south India, and exercised the practice of meditation on that mountain every day.

There is some evidence to suggest that a few Indians paid visits to Japan. A south Indian Brahman called Bodhisena, a Buddhist priest who had come to China by sea, was requested by several Japanese to visit Japan while he was in China. He came to Japan with some disciples in 735. He officiated at the consecration ceremony of the giant statue of Buddha in Nara, as a chief priest in 752, and he remained at the then capital until his death in 760. A Japanese record shows that a drifting man arrived at the Mikawa coast in central Japan and introduced cotton seeds to Japan for the first time in 799. He was called Konron-jin, i.e., "Man from Konron," and was supposed to have been from India. But these cases of Indians visiting Japan were rare. India remained for a long time an extremely remote land, all but inaccessible to the Japanese.

Japanese Activities in the South Seas

The situation changed in the 16th century, when Japanese activities in the South Seas reached their prime. Although India was still regarded as an exceedingly remote country, and though it was very difficult to find either Japanese or Indian navigators arriving at the opposite side, Japanese people began to think of India as not quite so distant as before. Psychologically and economically, India came to be nearer to the Japanese. Japanese seamen could have direct contact and trade with Indian merchants in the Southeast Asian Seas, where Indians had made innumerable voyages from ancient times.

Preceding the full development of Japanese overseas activities, there were two maritime movements to note. One was the *wako* pirates, the other the intermediary trade of the Ryukyuan people. The first wave of *wako* pirates occurred in the 14th and early 15th centuries when they made raids mostly along the coast of the Korean Peninsula. The second wave took place in the 16th century, peaking in the 1550's. At this time, the main area of piracy was in the South and East China Seas. Although *wakos* meant "Japanese

pirates," according to the Chinese history book *Ming-shih* the ratio of real Japanese pirates was three out of ten, the rest being mostly Chinese. Another Chinese record tells that most of those *wakos* were Chinese who wanted to make trade with the outer world in defiance of the Ming government's prohibition and that the ratio of Japanese pirates was only one out of ten. The Chinese government under the Ming dynasty had prohibited private trade and communication with foreign countries: the so-called tributary foreign trade had been controlled by the government since it began in the late 14th century. The *wako* pirates' acts can be regarded as forced private trade by the Chinese coastal people with Japanese and other foreign pirates in spite of the Ming government.[1] There is no question that the *wako* pirates gave some stimulation to the Japanese overseas activity and trade in the South Seas.

The Ryukyu archipelagoes are located in the East China Sea, south of the larger Japanese islands, with, in those days, their own government. The Ryukyuan trade with Southeast Asian countries had flourished since the late 14th century. They also engaged in Japanese and Chinese trades, and connected these with their Southeast Asian trade. Their main trade base in Southeast Asia was Malacca, where many Ryukyuans visited annually for trade.[2] According to a Portuguese traveller of the early 16th century, Tomé Pires, the type of their trade was a typical transit one between Japan, China, and Malacca. He says:

> They [Ryukyuans] sail to China and take the merchandise that goes from Malacca to China, and go to Japan, which is an island seven or eight days' sail distant, and take the gold and copper in the said island in exchange for their merchandise.…The Lequjos [Ryukyuans] go to Japan in seven or eight days and take the said merchandise, and trade it for gold and copper. All that comes from the Lequeos is brought by them from Japan. And the Lequeos trade with the People of Japan in cloths, fishing-nets and other merchandise.[3]

It is noteworthy that the chief items of export from Japan by the Ryukyuans were gold and copper, though they exported various other items, too. In exchange, they took a great deal of Bengal cloth from Malacca and re-exported it to China and Japan. In this way the Ryukyuan merchants played an important role as intermediary traders between Japan, China and Southeast Asia, before Japanese overseas activities developed. Even after the Japanese shogunate government initiated a policy of seclusion, they continued as illegal intermediary traders, regularly visiting the southern coast of Kyushu.

1) Ichisada Miyazaki, *Hi izuru kuni to hi kururu tokoro* (*The Land of Sunrise and the Place of Sunset*), Kyoto, 1943, pp. 36–74; Michihiro Ishihara, *Wako*, Tokyo, 1964; Takeo Tanaka, *Wako to kangoboeki*, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 193–197, 209–214.

2) Atsushi Kobata, *Chusei nanto tsuko boekishi no kenkyu* (*Studies in the Trade and Communication with the Southern Islands in Medieval Period*), Tokyo, 1939, pp. 523–537.

3) Armando Cortesao (tr.), *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues*, London, 1944, pp. 130–131.

The *wako* pirates and Ryukyuan merchants no doubt gave impetus to the Japanese maritime activities in the South Seas and foreign trade in the 16th and 17th centuries. Japanese foreign trade then began to take on a global scale. The countries with which Japan had trade were not limited to East Asia, but expanded to Southeast Asia, India, Persia and Europe. The variety and volume of merchandise also increased considerably.

According to Seiichi Iwao, the most important factors explaining this are as follows: (i) suspension of communication with the Chinese empire, (ii) worldwide tendencies toward increased international trade, and (iii) the stabilization of the domestic situation and development of industries in Japan.[4] From the middle of the 15th century there had been continuous civil wars in Japan for about one hundred years. With the breakdown of law and order, the *wako* pirate ships became so active on the central and southern coasts of China that the Ming government excluded all Japanese ships and severed official relations between the two countries. Under these circumstances, Japanese traders began to seek the Chinese merchandise, especially raw silk and silk fabrics, outside of China. Ryukyuan merchants supplied these Chinese goods as mentioned above, but the demand for them and other foreign goods was more than what they could supply. Moreover, Japanese traders wanted to do business themselves. Japanese ships began to call at various ports in Formosa, the Philippines, Vietnam, Champa, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. At these ports Japanese traders obtained not only those Chinese raw silk and silk fabrics which were brought there from China, but also Vietnamese, Bengali, and Persian silks, Indian cotton goods, and other commodities.

Vigorous Portuguese and Spanish trade and navigation in the Southeast Asian Seas during the mid-16th century also stimulated Japanese overseas activities. By that time, the civil wars in Japan were coming to an end, and there were movements toward the reunification of the country. Hideyoshi Toyotomi was successful, and established a centralized government in 1590. But the supreme power went into the hands of Ieyasu Tokugawa after he won the battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Three years later he became the shogun and opened his government, the *bakufu*, in Edo. Under Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, contemporaries of Akbar of Mughal India, social order was gradually restored. The demand for daily necessities, including imports, began to increase. Owing to the development of commerce and the growth of towns, there appeared a class of wealthy merchants, some of whom invested their money in the growing foreign trade.

Hideyoshi had tried to hold Japanese overseas traders under his control, but it was Ieyasu who started the *shuinsen* system in 1601. After this, only those who acquired a special, red sealed permit called *shuinjo* from the shogunate government could carry on foreign trade by *shuinsen*, i.e., a ship licensed with a *shuinjo*. One *shuinjo* was valid for only one navigation, so merchants had to acquire another from the government every time they sailed for

4) Seiichi Iwao, Japanese Foreign Trade in the 16th and 17th Centuries, *Acta Asiatica*, No. 30, 1976, pp. 1–18.

foreign ports. This system allowed the shogunate government to easily control Japanese foreign traders.

Those foreign ports where *shuinsen* called were wide spread, the most frequented being in Tonkin, Cochin-China, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Formosa. More than 350 *shuinsen* set sail for those ports during 1604 and 1635. The scale of the ships gradually increased during that period. One which sailed for Cochin-China in 1623 was over 300 tons, with 300 persons on board. Another, sailing for Thailand in 1626, was about 800 tons and carried 397 persons. They usually set out for Southeast Asia in late autumn or the beginning of winter, laden with silver, copper, copper coins, sulfur, camphor, and other sundy goods. Returning in spring or summer of the following year, they brought back raw silk, silk fabrics, cotton textiles, deer skin, shark skin, brazilwood, lead, tin, sugar, and the like.[5]

The Dutch and the English followed the Portuguese and the Spanish in their advance into the East. In 1609 a merchant ship of the Dutch East India Company arrived at Hirado in northwestern Kyushu and was permitted to open a factory for trade with Japan. Four years later, the English East India Company received permission to open their own factory in Hirado. Chinese ships began to call again at some ports of Kyushu in large numbers from 1610 on. Thus, from the middle of the 16th century through the first half of the 17th century, Japanese merchants were actively engaged in foreign trade with the encouragement of the Toyotomi and Tokugawa governments. There was even Japanese colonization in various parts of Southeast Asia.

Gujarati Merchants in the Southeast Asian Ports

In the Mughal empire, Gujarat was the most important trading area, with principal ports such as Surat, Cambay, Gogha, and Diu. Even before the foundation of Mughal dynasty, Gujarat was one of the great trading centres on the Indian Ocean. On the eve of Babur's establishment of the new dynasty in India, Pires noted the vigorous trading by Gujarati merchants on the Indian Ocean, saying "Cambay chiefly stretches out two arms, with her right arm she reaches out towards Aden and with the other towards Malacca, as the most important places to sail to" (*Suma Oriental*, p. 8). Although many studies have been made on the various aspects of Gujarati merchants,[6] due attention has not necessarily been paid to

5) Seiichi Iwao, *Shuinsen to nihonmachi*, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 35–43, 66–68.

6) Some of the remarkable works recently done are as follows: Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Crafts in Gujarat, 16th and 17th Centuries, A Study in the Impact of European Expansion on Precapitalist Economy*, New Delhi, 1975; M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat, The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1976; O. P. Singh, *Surat and its Trade in the Second Half of the 17th Century*, Delhi, 1977; Ann Bos Radwan, *The Dutch in Western India 1601–1632, A Study of Mutual Accommodation*, Calcutta, 1978; B. G. Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century, A Study in Urban History of Pre-Modern India*, Bombay, 1979; Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, C. 1700–1750*, Wiesbaden, 1979; K. S. Mathew, *Studies in Trade and Urbanization in Western India*, Baroda, 1984. Also see Osamu Kondo, Commerce and Industry in Mughal India, with Special Reference to Gujarat, *Acta Asiatica*, No. 48, 1985, pp. 72–96.

their activities in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, i.e., the Southeast Asian Seas.

The Malay-Indonesian archipelago is on the peripheries of the opposing wind systems of the Indian Ocean and the Chinese Seas. Since all shipping was forced to wait for favourable winds, a staple market and meeting place developed for merchants from all parts of Asia.[7] Indian ships from the Coromandel coast, Bengal, and Gujarat frequented the Southeast Asian ports, exchanging commodities with other Asian ships. Malacca was the most important among these, the Gujaratis in particular going there in large numbers. Pires tells of the close dependence of Gujarati merchants on Malacca:

> The Cambay merchants make Malacca their chief trading centre. There used to be a thousand Gujarat merchants in Malacca, besides four or five thousand Gujarat seamen, who came and went. Malacca cannot live without Cambay, nor Cambay without Malacca, if they are to be very rich and very prosperous. All the clothes and things from Gujarat have trading value in Malacca and in the kingdoms which trade with Malacca (*Suma Oriental*, p. 45).

They used to visit Java for trade before Malacca became the principal market. About this, Pires mentions:

> Before the channel of Malacca was discovered they [the Gujaratis] used to trade with Java round the south of the island of Sumatra. They used to go in between Sunda and the point of Sumatra island and sail to Grisee (Agraci) whence they took the products of the Moluccas, Timor and Banda, and came back very rich men. It is not a hundred years since they gave up this route (*Suma Oriental*, pp. 45–46).

But after Malacca was occupied by the Portuguese in 1511, Gujarati merchants had to give up their position of influence. Again, Pires:

> It was upon the Gujaratis that it weighed most heavily when Malacca came into Your Highness' possession, and it was they who were responsible for the betrayal of Diogo Lopes de Sequeira; and today they sing in the market-places of Malacca of how the town has had to pay for what the Malayans did on the advice of the Gujaratis (*Suma Oriental*, p. 47).

After the Gujaratis yielded Malacca, they shifted their trade base to Achin, on the northern tip of Sumatra. They also frequented the ports of Priaman, Tiku, and Baros of Minangkabau, on the western coast of Sumatra. About a hundred years after Pires, English seamen called at Achin and other ports, and there found many Gujarati merchants and their ships. Sir James Lancaster called at Achin in 1602 and found sixteen or eighteen ships of divers nations including the Gujarati.[8] When Sir Henry Middleton visited Ternate

7) M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz, Trade and Islam in the Malay–Indonesian Archipelago prior to the Arrival of the Europeans, in *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, ed. by D. S. Richards, Oxford, 1970, p. 138.

8) *The Voyage of Sir James Lancaster in Brazil and the East Indies 1591–1603*, ed. by William Foster, London, 1940, p. 90.

on Molucca Island in 1605, he noticed that the Gujarati merchants made agreements with the Dutch people in setting the prices of every sort of wares brought there.[9] Thomas Best, when he visited Achin in 1613, stated that Gujarati merchants were allowed to conduct trade only in Achin but not in Tiku, Priaman or other places which had recently come under the rule of the king of Achin:

> Our goods boughtte in Suratte are generallie improper for this place; noughtte beinge heere vendible butt fine whitte callicoes of Baroche [Broach], from 30 to 70 mamuthes [mass] per peece, and fine blewes, from 12 to 30 mamuthes. This place is nowe glutted, by reason all trade upon this iland is by the Kinge prohibited to the Guzeratts, save onelie att Achin. 4 of their shippes are nowe heere; whereof 2 wee found heere.[10]

When the English East India Company's merchants began to come to Achin for trade, their business counterparts were usually Gujarati merchants who had settled there subordinate to the King of Achin, though quite wealthy and worthy in their own rights.[11] The English had to concede that the Gujarati merchants in Achin were their great rivals in trade, saying "these Gussarats were great enemies unto us in our business and especially for our settling at Achen, a place which heretofore hath been very profitable unto them."[12] But the Gujarati merchants could not avoid being gradually deprived of their profitable position in Achin as the English and the Dutch expanded their influence there. Additionally, the Portuguese greatly impeded the Gujarati merchants by forcing the Indian ships to obtain Portuguese passes before sailing.

Gujarati merchants continued their trade with Southeast Asian ports, notwithstanding these difficulties. This is confirmed by the description of Johan van Twist who was in charge of the Dutch factories at Ahmadabad, Cambay, Baroda, and Broach. He left a work called '*A General Description of India*,' completed in 1638 or a little earlier. In it, he describes the sea trade of the Muslims of Gujarat:

> Some ships of from 100 to 300 tons sail annually to Achin and Kedah, taking as cargo opium, cotton, and various Gujarat clothes; they bring back sulphur, benzoin, camphor, porcelain, tin, and as much pepper and other spices as they can get. These ships sail in May, because the Portuguese give passports to carry pepper or spices from any places only to their own towns, on pain [of] death and forfeiture of the goods: to avoid this difficulty, these Moslem ships wait until the Portuguese armada and foists···are laid up in their harbours for the winter. And they make the next voyage in the beginning of October, before the Portuguese forces are again at sea.[13]

9) *The Voyage of Sir Henry Middleton to the Moluccas 1604–1606*, ed. by William Foster, London, 1943, pp. 31–32.
10) *The Voyage of Thomas Best to the East Indies 1612–14*, ed. by William Foster, London, 1934, p. 256.
11) *Letters Received by the East India Company from the Servants in the East*, Vol. I: 1602–1613, ed. by F. C. Danvers, London, 1896, p. 254; Vol. III: 1615, ed. by William Foster, London, 1899, pp. 226–228.
12) *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 228.
13) W.H. Moreland, Johan van Twist's Description of India, *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XVI, 1937, p. 75.

J. Albert de Mandelslo, a contemporary of van Twist's, travelled in the East Indies in 1638–1640. In his itinerary, he wrote that "the greatest Voyages they [the Gujarati] make are those of Java and Sumatra, East-ward; and to Aden and Mecca upon the Red-Sea."[14] He mentions the items of export and import by Gujarati merchants from Southeast Asia, as well as methods used to avoid Portuguese surveillance in almost identical language to van Twist's. It is probable that some of those goods were exported from Japan to Southeast Asia and transshipped there for Gujarat.

Japan and India during the Mughal Period

The Portuguese, after occupying Goa and Malacca, soon expanded their sphere of activity to East Asia, making Macao, in China, their trading base. One of their ships drifted to Tanegashima Island off the southern tip of Kyushu in 1543. Five years after that three Japanese Christians visited Goa, the first Japanese to visit India by sea. In the following year they came back to Japan, accompanying the famous Jesuit leader, Francis Xavier. Portuguese ships began to call at several ports in western Japan after that, and played a leading role in the first stage of European commercial activities around Japan, trading between Macao and Nagasaki after the latter port was opened in 1570. It is quite remarkable that from 1574 to 1585 the Society of Jesus in Japan acquired three villages near Bassein, appropriating the revenue from them for the Jesuit mission in Japan.[15] However, Hideyoshi gave an order prohibiting Christian missionary activities in Japan in 1587, wanting to eliminate undesirable elements in his drive to unify and rule the whole country. In the following year his government controlled the port of Nagasaki in order to watch Portuguese activities and reap the profits of foreign trade.

The dominant characteristic of Portuguese trade with Japan at that time was the exportation of silver from Japan and the importation of Chinese raw silk and silk fabrics to Japan. The output of silver in Japan increased in the late sixteenth century and showed a further increase after the turn of the century, making Japan as the world's second largest producer of silver in the 17th century. The Dutch and the English, both of whom came to Japan after the Portuguese, also exported silver and imported silk in their earliest trade with Japan, simultaneously supplying Japan with Indian cotton goods and others. In the diary of Richard Cocks, the first Chief Factor of the English Factory in Japan, there is mention of various Indian cloths, such as Gozerat cloth, Ahmedabad cloth, Cambaia cloth, bafta, chintz, and so on. He wrote on 18 October 1615 that he opened all the packs of

14) *The Voyages and Travels of J. Albert de Mandelslo into the East-Indies,* Eng. tr. by John Davies, London, 1662, p. 87.

15) Koichiro Takase, Kirishitan jidai Indo ni okeru Nihon Iezusukai no shisan (Assets of the Japanese Society of Jesus in India during the Early Christian Missionary Days), *Shigaku,* Vol. XLVI, Nos. 1, 2, 1974.

"cloth Cambaia" and found most of the baftas spotted and rotten.[16] On 6 October 1617, he wrote that he ordered all the Coast cloth [Coromandel Coast cloth] and Cambaia cloth be brought to Edo.[17] In his letter to Cocks from Meaco [Miako, i.e., Kyoto], dated 28 September 1615, R. Wickham wrote that the Indian cloth could be sold there.[18]

Of the Japanese silver exported by the English East India Company, much was sent to India. For instance, in 1623, 30,000 rials of Japanese silver was sent to Muslipatam from Batavia with other goods.[19] Japanese camphor and porcelain were also exported, and Japanese copper began to be sold in great quantities in Surat and Masulipatam.[20] Though the English Factory in Hirado was closed at the end of 1623, the English still eported Japanese silver and other goods mentioned above to Indian markets by transshipment from foreign ships at Bantam and other ports of Southeast Asia. Dutch ships often carried Japanese goods to India and Indian goods to Japan after the English withdrew from Japan. Two Dutch ships brought 200 chests of silver to Surat in 1639;[21] three Dutch ships brought to Surat a quantity of Japanese silver along with some gold and other commodities amounting to 500,000 rupees in all in 1641;[22] and two Dutch vessels arrived at Swally near Surat in 1643 and landed 103 boxes of Japanese silver, together with a great quantity of tutenag.[23] The Dutch also brought vast quantities of Japanese copper to India anually, where copper was in great demand.[24] It may be proper here to think of the remarks made by a French traveller in India, François Bernier, who wrote:

> And in regard to the gold and silver which the Dutch drew from Japan, where there are mines, a part is, sooner or later, introduced into Hindoustan;…I am aware it may be said, that Hindoustan is in want of copper, cloves, nutmegs, cinnamon, elephants, and other things, with which she is supplied by the Dutch from Japan, the Moluccas, Ceylon, and Europe.[25]

The Dutch brought back to Japan such Indian goods as Gujarati and Coromandel cloths and Bengali silk. A letter of English Factors in Hugli addressed to Surat, dated 4 October 1664, states:

16) *Diary Kept by the Head of the English Factory in Japan: Diary of Richard Cocks, 1615–1622*, ed. by the Historiographical Institute, the University of Tokyo, 3 vols., Tokyo, 1978–1980, Vol. I, p. 112.
17) *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 181.
18) India Office Library and Records, *Factory Records, China and Japan*, G/12/15, p. 17, Letter No. XXIII.
19) *The English Factories in India*, ed. by William Foster, 13 vols., Oxford, 1906–1927, 1622/1623, p. 221.
20) *Ibid.*, 1622/1623, p. 248; 1624/1629, pp. 26, 181.
21) *Ibid.*, 1637/1641, pp. 215–216.
22) *Ibid.*, 1637/1641, p. 299.
23) *Ibid.*, 1642/1645, p. 100.
24) *Ibid.*, 1661/1664, p. 110.
25) François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, AD 1656–1668*, ed. by A. Constable, London, 1891, reprint, New Delhi, 1968, p. 203.

> We conceive no abuse will occasion their [the Datch] deserting of these parts [the Bay regions] in that Japan etc. depends on the commerce or commodities which they carry from hence.[26]

Chinese ships, too, carried Japanese silver, copper, and other goods no less than the Dutch, some quantities of which were brought to the Southeast Asian ports from whence a portion was further transmitted to the Indian markets.

While the Tokugawa shogunate had a keen interest in foreign trade because of its great profits, they were concerned that the Christians' activities might cause troubles with their rule and unification of the country. They enforced and further tightened Hideyoshi's policy of controlled foreign trade and the prohibition of Catholic missionary activities. In 1635 the government restricted all foreign ships to Nagasaki, and prohibited any Japanese from going abroad. By this means, all the Japanese foreign traders and seamen were compelled to cease the trade which had been so brisk before. In the following year Portuguese merchants were transferred to the artificial islet of Deshima in Nagasaki's harbour; three years later, in July 1639, all Portuguese were expelled from Japan. When visiting Edo to pay their respects in May, 1638, the President and members of the Dutch Factory at Hirado had secretly been informed beforehand of the intended expulsion of Portuguese by high officials in the shogunate. The Japanese high officials were greatly concerned whether the Dutch were certain to bring those commodities which had hitherto been brought by the Portuguese, should the Portuguese be deported from Japan. The President of the Dutch Factory satisfied them in this matter with assurances that they could.[27] This indicates how much interest the Tokugawa government took in securing the maintenance of foreign trades, notwithstanding their policy of isolation.

In April 1641 the Tokugawa government transferred the Dutch Factory from Hirado to Deshima in Nagasaki. In the same year Malacca, which had been the largest base of the Portuguese sea power in Southeast Asia, was besieged by the combined forces of Holland and Achin, and the Portuguese sea route between Goa and Macao was cut off. The *sakoku*, or national isolation policy of Japan was complete. The process of reinforcing the isolation policy was at the same time the process of establishing the Dutch as the only European people privileged to trade with Japan, albeit in only one port of Nagasaki and under close surveillance. It can safely be said that the Dutch took over the trade network of Japanese *shuinsen* system in the East and Southeast Asian Seas, just as the Portuguese took over a pre-existing trade network of Muslim merchants, especially Gujarati merchants in the

26) *English Factories in India*, 1661/1664, p. 400.

27) *Diaries Kept by the Heads of the Dutch Factory in Japan*, ed. by the Historiographical Institute, the University of Tokyo, Vol. III: Dagregister gehouden door Nicolaes Couckebacker, August 9, 1637–February 3, 1639, Tokyo, 1977, pp. 149–154; *Japanese Translation*, by the Historiographical Institute, the University of Tokyo, Vol. III, Part 1, Tokyo, 1977, pp. 199–205.

Indian Ocean at the earlier stage.[28]

As is mentioned above, the main item of export from Japan was silver and the major import, silk. In 1636 silver ingots accounted for 85.8 percent of the total value of exports at the Dutch Factory at Hirado, copper accounting for 9.2 percent. Raw silk accounted for 59.4 percent of the total value of imports in the same year. Combined, raw silk and silk fabrics totalled 80.4 percent of the imports.[29] Trade with Japan became paramount to the Dutch Company in Asia, and the stream of silver from Japan was vital to the Company's Asian trade. Much of the silver then brought to Batavia by Dutch ships was re-exported to India, especially to the Coromandel Coast.[30]

In 1668, however, the Tokugawa government issued a decree prohibiting exportation of silver, apprehending further exportation of silver would cause economic confusion in Japan. Four years later, only Chinese ships were permitted to export Japanese silver, and in far less quantity than before. Some silver was brought by Chinese ships to the Southeast Asian markets and then sent to India. A letter of the English Company's agent in Bantam, dated 5 October 1674, indicates that gold, silver, and copper continued to be brought from Japan.[31]

The Dutch Company directed their attention to the gold coins, the *kobans*, to export from Japan instead of silver. An export boom in Japanese gold developed in about 1670. The Coromandel Coast was again the main region in India to import the gold. But the Japanese gold boom faded away soon afterwards, as the Japanese not only raised the price of *kobans* considerably but also debased them.[32]

Copper was also an important item of Japanese export. The demand for copper expanded in 17th century India, due to the need for coins, arms, and the construction of ships and others. Concurrent with a lessening of production in Northern India, there was an increased production of copper for export throughout the 17th century in Japan. The Dutch Company tried to export Japanese copper from the 1620's on, concentrating on this metal especially after the exportation of silver from Japan was banned in 1668 and gold export decreased in the 1670's. In 1698, the Dutch Company's export of Japanese copper peaked at 3,480,000 Dutch lbs. Only 14 percent of that was imported or sold in Europe, the rest in Asian countries, particularly India. At that time, Japan's annual domestic consumption of copper was about 600,000 Dutch lbs., roughly one-sixth of the exports. A total of 14,290,755 Dutch lbs. in copper bars from Japan were sold in Surat during the years 1645–84, and 6,967,917 lbs. during the years 1701–24. Summed, Japanese copper then sold annually at

28) Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I, Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1974, p. 328.

29) Eiichi Kato, The Japanese–Dutch Trade in the Formative Period of the Seclusion Policy, Particularly on the Raw Silk Trade by the Dutch Factory at Hirado 1620–1640, *Acta Asiatica*, No. 30, 1976, pp. 34–84.

30) Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740*, Copenhagen–The Hague, 1958, pp. 57–59.

31) India Office Library and Records, *Factory Records, China and Japan*, G/12/13, Japan, p. 292.

32) Glamann, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–68; Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605–1690, A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies*, The Hague, 1962, p. 191.

the Indian factories of the Dutch Company in Surat, Bengal, Coromandel, Malabar, and Ceylon approximates three-fourths or more than that exported from Nagasaki by the Dutch ships. The prices of copper in India used to be double or more than the original cost in Japan. Thus, the Indian markets consumed quite a large amount of Japanese copper at the time of the Mughal empire, and the Dutch Company carried on a roaring business in Japanese copper at the Indian markets.[33]

The English Company wanted to take part in this lucrative trade between Japan and India and actually sent their ship *Return* to Japan in 1674 to re-open the direct trade; however, they were not admitted.[34] Even after this incident, the Company's servants at Madras recommended, in a private account dated 11 September 1689, further efforts to renew trade with Japan.[35]

The numbers of Dutch ships which came to Nagasaki differed from year to year. Ten vessels or more arrived annually in the 1660's, dwindling to four or five after 1701. By 1716, two came yearly to Japan, finally decreasing to only one ship each year after 1790. From 1641 on, the Dutch captain of each vessel was requested, whenever his ship called at Nagasaki, to present to the Japanese government a current report, or "World News" called *fusetsugaki*. Written in Dutch and immediately translated into Japanese, this *fusetsugaki* was prone to contain remours heard by the captain at each port on his way to Nagasaki, though sometimes they informed of contemporary world affairs quite accurately. For instance, the "World News" presented in 1681 reported the outbreak of the revolt of Prince Akbar against Aurangzeb which took place in January of the same year.[36] Another, in 1708, told about the battles between the Princes for the throne after the death of Aurangzeb in the previous year.[37] These reports played a significant role, informing the Japanese of the contemporary world, though their circulation was limited to the small ruling circle.

K. N. Chaudhuri says in his recent book that the whole Indian Ocean had a structural unity created by the periodic rhythm of the monsoon winds and by economic interdependence between one region and another before the arrival of the English and the Dutch.[38] One of the main changes brought on by the arrival of European maritime powers to the Indian Ocean was enlargement of this structural unity beyond the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean: economic interdependence increased between the littoral countries and others situated in a great distance from them.

33) Glamann, *ibid.*, pp. 167–182; do., The Dutch East India Company's Trade in Japanese Copper, 1645–1736, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1953, pp. 41–79.

34) *Factory Records, China and Japan*, G/12/13, p. 288.

35) *Factory Records, China and Japan*, G/12/9, p. 667.

36) *Oranda fusetsugaki shusei, A Collection of the "World News" Presented Annually by the Dutch Factory at Deshima to the Tokugawa Shogunate, 1641–1858*, ed. by Hosei Rangaku Kenkyu-kai under the supervision of Seiichi Iwao, 2 vols., Tokyo, 1977–79, Vol. I, pp. 107, 109, Vol. II, p. 324.

37) *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 225.

38) K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean, An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 83.

Japanese maritime activities prospered in the 16th and early 17th centuries, and Japanese traders began to have direct and indirect connections with Gujarati and other Indian merchants in the Southeast Asian Seas. But the duration of these activities was exceedingly short compared with that of the Europeans. The Tokugawa shogunate government changed its policy, and discouraged Japanese overseas trade by limiting foreign contact to Nagasaki, and there only with Dutch and Chinese ships. As we have seen, however, there existed a close economic relationship between Japan under the Tokugawas and India under the Mughals, specifically through the Dutch East India Company. The English East India Company also played an intermediary role. Japan had much more intimate relationship with the outer world, especially India and other countries bordering the Indian Ocean, than what we imagine in present days, notwithstanding the long isolation of the Tokugawa government.