

Opinion Forum

Turning Stone into Gold: Some Reflections on My Research about the 1854 Shōin-Perry Encounter

De-min TAO*

When Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎 (1904–1980), a prominent scholar of Kyoto University known for teaching Chinese literature in spoken Mandarin, was writing a critical biography of the Sinologue Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), he commented that Sorai was a linguist when he was young, a literary man in his middle ages, and a philosopher in his later years. After three decades of research, I found the comment to be a great inspiration, reminding me that I should now try to be a bit more philosophical so as to refine and sublimate my scholarship and share my experience with students in an memorable way. In this spirit, I developed the following four-line instruction set that I call “Shihai shibei” 史海拾貝 (Collecting shells from the sea of history), based mainly on my research about the 1854 Shōin-Perry encounter at Yale, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), based in Washington, D.C., and Tokyo. This instruction set incorporates several well-known Chinese and Japanese proverbs:

- (1) 就著碎影拼月亮, 自圓其說。
- (2) 大海撈針何處尋, 巧思引路。
- (3) 兩個兔子輪番追, 有心插柳。
- (4) 問題意識勤磨練, 點石成金。

The following is a brief translation:

- (1) Make your moon whole from partial fragments; justify your claims.
- (2) It is hard to fish a needle out of the ocean; use creative thinking to lead the way.
- (3) Chase two rabbits in turn; plant a willow with purpose.
- (4) Refine your awareness of the question itself; touch a stone and turn it into gold.

* Professor, Kansai University; Founding President of the Society.

For the story I am going to tell today, I will change the sequence to (3), (2), (4), and (1).

1 Taking the Second Rabbit Seriously: Shōin's Petitions kept at Yale

There is a Japanese proverb 二兎を追う者は一兎を得ず, meaning “One who chases two rabbits at the same time catches neither.” But my experience tells me that you should chase two rabbits in turn—the first rabbit being the research topic planned at the outset, and the second rabbit being the interesting materials that you unexpectedly encounter when doing the actual research—so as not to discount the accidental discoveries that you make in pursuing your original topic.

In a sense, my discovery of Shōin's petitions at Yale was accidental. I came to Yale in the spring of 2003 to find the original diary of Luo Sen 羅森 (1821–1899), Chinese assistant to Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884).¹ As you may know, *kanbun* (classical Chinese), the Latin of East Asia, was the language of negotiation in the days of Japan's opening, both for the U. S.-Japan treaty and for Shōin's attempted stowaway.² Although by 1853 Williams had been in Hong Kong and Macau for 20 years and was familiar with the Chinese language, as the first interpreter, he still needed Chinese assistants to help him polish diplomatic documents and copy them into elegant calligraphy. Luo was recruited shortly before Perry's second visit in 1854 and kept a diary during the encounters. He published his *Riben riji* 日本

1 The Asian Center of Kansai University and Sinology Center of Beijing Foreign Studies University cohosted an international conference in Beijing in December 2012 to honor the bicentennial of Samuel Wells William's birth. The proceedings of the conference will be published by Hong Kong University Press.

2 De-min Tao, “Negotiating Language in the Opening of Japan: Luo Sen's Journal of Perry's 1854 Expedition,” *Japan Review*, no. 17 (March 2005). Luo was quite popular in Yokohama, Shimoda, and Hakodate in the Spring of 1854. In response to overwhelming demand from Japanese officers and commoners, he inscribed his extempore verse in elegant calligraphy on hundreds of blank paper fans. Four of Luo's fans survive in the Municipal Museum of Hakodate and the Local Museum of Matsumae in Hokkaido. Williams told his wife in Macau that Luo “takes a lively interest in all our operations and gets on admirably with the natives; he is, indeed, the most learned Chinaman they have ever seen, and their delight in showing off to him their attainments in Chinese is increased when he turns a graceful verse or two for them upon a fan; of these he has written, I should think, more than half a thousand since coming to Japan, and nothing pleases him like being asked to do so” (F. W. Williams, ed., *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, LL.D.: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* [1889], p. 219). See also Tao De-min 陶徳民, “Kurofune no motarashita Kanton-jin senpū: Ra Shin no kyojō to jitsuzō” 黒船のもたらした広東人旋風：羅森の虚像と実像 (The Cantonese Whirlwind Brought by the Black Ships: Luo Sen, Fiction and Fact), in *Image and Identity: Rethinking Japanese Cultural History*, edited by Jeffrey Hanes and Hidetoshi Yamaji (2004).

日記 in the earliest Chinese journal, the *Xiaer guanzhen* 遐邇貫珍 (Chinese Serial), shortly after returning to Hong Kong, and its English translation, *Journal of a Visit to Japan* by Williams, was included in the second volume of *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan: Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry, United States Navy, by Order of the Government of the United States*, edited by Francis L. Hawks.

Through a close comparison, I found an important difference between the two published versions of the diary. Many Japanese then were wondering why a Chinese man joined the American expedition to Japan. Luo had a long written conversation 筆談 with Hirayama Kenjirō 平山謙二郎, a *metsuke* 目付 (surveillance officer), in which Hirayama shared Confucian knowledge and contemporary concerns with Luo. In this conversation, Luo made it clear that although he had organized a militia group to fight against the British soldiers during the Opium Wars of 1839 to 1842, his efforts were not rewarded afterwards by the Qing government.³ He was so angry about this that he left his hometown in Nanhai county, Guangdong Province, to go to Hong Kong and serve as a Chinese teacher and secretary in the new British colony. But this story, which was included in Williams's translation, was missing in Luo's *Riben riji*, and the reason for this was apparently that Luo would occasionally visit his hometown and relatives there, and was cautious about possible trouble that the Qing government might give him if the Chinese version included the truth, and so he decided to cut it out before submitting the diary to the publisher of *Xiaer guanzhen*.

This discovery made me wonder if there were other differences between the English and Chinese versions, and I tried to find Luo's original handwritten diary or a copy in the S. W. Williams Family Papers at Yale. Although I did not find what I was looking for, I did find Shōin's *kanbun* petitions, "Tōisho" 投夷書 (Letters to Foreigners), including the well-prepared first letter submitted to the American side seeking to stow away (accompanied by a *sōrōbun* 候文 note beginning with the famous sentence "We two want to see the world"), and the second letter written in the Shimoda jail.⁴

3 In March 2016, Kansai University Press will publish a volume that includes Hirayama's collected works in Chinese (held by Hokkaido University Library), the written information he got from Luo, *Manshin kiji* 満清紀事 (held by Kansai University Library), his 1854 diary kept during the investigation of Ezochi 蝦夷地 (Hokkaido) and Sōya Strait 宗谷海峡, and a diary kept by two prison guards who escorted Shōin from Shimoda jail to Edo in 1854 (both part of the materials on the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, held by the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo). I will begin editing and annotating them in the coming summer.

4 I have made a thorough textual examination of the two petitions in the following

(See the appendix of this paper.) The first petition was discovered forty years ago by Yamaguchi Eitetsu 山口栄鉄, a Japanese instructor at Yale, and the second one was discovered by me on my 2003 visit to Yale.⁵ The interesting fact here is that although the petition was carefully pasted on the inside of the back cover of S. W. Williams's journal to keep a record of the unusual incident, the importance of this document was unknown to his son, Yale Professor of East Asian History Frederic Wells Williams, who did not include it in *A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853–1854)* (1889) or in his father's biography, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, LL.D.: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (1910).

According to my examination of their calligraphic and prose styles, the *sōrōbun* note was in Shōin's own handwriting, whereas the two *kanbun* petitions were fair copies made by Luo Sen at Williams's direction, and in this sense, my discovery at Yale was not completely accidental. The second petition was originally written on a wooden board when Shōin and his fellow stowaway Kaneko were confined in the Shimoda jail in a small cage.⁶ Its

articles: “Shimoda mikkō zengo ni okeru Shōin no Seiyō ninshiki: Beikoku ni nokoru ‘Tōisho’ o megutte” 下田密航前後における松陰の西洋認識：米国に残る「投夷書」をめぐる (Shōin's Understanding of the West around the Time of His Stowaway: The ‘Letters to Foreigners’ in the United States), *Kan* 環 13 (May 2003); “Shimoda goku ni okeru daini no ‘Tōisho’ ni tsuite: Shōin no kakugo ni taisuru Perī no kyōkan” 下田獄における第二の「投夷書」について：松陰の覚悟に対するペリーの共感 (The Second ‘Letter to Foreigners’ from the Shimoda Jail: Perry's Sympathy toward Shōin's Determination), *Kan* 環 14 (July 2003); “Ri-Mei jianjiao zhi chuyi zhuang toudu gongan de xin jiedu: Jitian Songyin ‘Touyishu’ zai Yelu Daxue dangangan faxian” 日美建交之初一樁偷渡公案的新解读：吉田松陰〈投夷書〉在耶鲁大学档案馆发现 (A New Interpretation of the First Stowaway Case at the Dawn of Japan-U.S. Relations: The Discovery of Yoshida Shōin's “Letter to Foreigners” in the Yale University Archives), *Dongya Wenming Yanjiu Zhongxin tongxun* (National Taiwan University), no. 6 (January 2005).

- 5 An Okinawa-born leading scholar in the history of Ryūkyū's foreign relations, Professor Yamaguchi introduced the petition under the title “Nemutteita Shōin no missho” 眠っていた松陰の密書 (Shōin's Sleeping Secret Letter) (*Rekishu to jinbutsu* 1975, no. 10). Recently he supervised the publication of a complete reprint of the 3-volume *Narrative*.
- 6 The petition was considered “a remarkable specimen of philosophical resignation under circumstances which would have tried the stoicism of Cato, [and] deserves a record” (Hawkes, *Narrative*, 1: 422). From the comparison made with Cato Minor (95–46 BCE), the tragic hero who committed suicide in Utica, Africa, rather than falling alive into Caesar's hands, it seems that the Americans were deeply affected by Shōin's “letter on the board” and deeply concerned about his fate. The size of the cage, as Williams measured it, “was about six feet long by three wide and four and a half high, quite large enough to sit and sleep in, and entered by crawling through a low door; it is probably just such a cage as McCoy and his fellows were at last shut up in” (*Journal* 1: 181–182). Isaac McCoy (1784–1846) was a Baptist missionary, surveyor and U.S. Indian agent, and the association by similarity made

English translation by Williams was included in the first volume of the *Narrative*, and there have been seven Japanese translations based on the English without any knowledge of the *kanbun* original, from Tokutomi Sohō's 1908 biography of Shōin to the 2002 Japanese translation of J. Willett Spalding's *Japan Expedition: Japan and around the World*). After discovering the *kanbun* original, I found a critical mistake made by Williams that was inherited by all the Japanese versions.

2 Fishing a Needle Out of the Ocean: The Logbook of Perry's Flagship at NARA

A Chinese proverb 大海撈針 compares the difficulty of a situation by comparing it to fishing a needle out of the ocean. The mistranslation by Williams was in the sentence "In public have we been seized and pinioned and caged for many days." Here the original word 面縛 (*mianfu* in Chinese and *menbaku* in Japanese) is short for 面縛輿櫬 *mianfu yuchen*, meaning "to tie one's hands at the back and cart along one's coffin before the victor" and implying "to submit." Williams translated 面縛 as "in public have we been seized," as if Shōin and his fellow were caught during the daytime.

Shōin's *Kaikoroku* 回顧録 (Memoirs), written in the Noyama jail of the Hagi domain, made it clear, however, that after being sent ashore, Shōin and Hirayama, unable to find the boat they used to access the flagship, which contained some incriminating evidence, decided to turn themselves in to the village head of Kakizaki and were brought to the Shimoda police box shortly after the crack of dawn. The word 面縛 was used exactly in this sense, to turn oneself in.

But one problem still remained unresolved: When did Shōin actually climb aboard Perry's flagship, and how long did he remain on board? Shōin recalled that it was around 4 a.m. ("七つ時"), whereas Williams, who was present at the interview with Shōin, noted "2 a.m." in his journal. When I was traveling to NARA in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 2009 to find Williams's original letter to the Secretary of State suggesting using the surplus of the indemnity paid by the Qing government for the property loss of American citizens in China during the Arrow War to establish an American-Chinese college in China, an idea occurred to me: Why don't I use this chance to take a look at the logbook of Perry's flagship, the USS *Powhatan*, to see if there are any relevant records in it?⁷ Fortunately, I was

by Williams here was apparently a criticism of the inhuman treatment of prisoners in Japan then. On McCoy, see George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

7 Williams's suggestion was aimed at training interpreters, diplomats, and businessmen to foster American-Chinese relations, and it was approved by the State Department

able to find Captain William J. McCluney's brief note, as follows:

Remarks of This 25th Day of April, 1854

Commences at 2:45 two Japanese came on board by a small boat, remained about 3/4 of an hour, on getting aboard their boat got drifted & they were sent ashore by the S' [steamer's] cutter by order of the Commo. [Commodore].⁸

Shōin's attempt at stowaway was thus identified with a specific duration of time: forty-five minutes on board the flagship. His self-submission and asking for punishment can thus be reasonably explained as occurring in this sequence of time. Some may discount the importance of discoveries of this kind. Isn't this merely a trivial pursuit of Shōin's time on board? However, imagine the huge difference in time systems between Japan and West then. Thus, since Shōin had no way to make an appointment with the American officers due to the difference, he even wrote in another *sōrōbun* note, "Please come to rescue us when you see the fire we light as a sign at midnight tomorrow." Such drama gives one a better sense of the turbulence of the times when the West came into contact with the East. Salvaging an important lost historical record conveys the feeling of real history to today's digitized generation and helps us relive some exciting events that happened in the past.

Line (2) thus acknowledges the difficulty that researchers may encounter when trying to sift through a sea of information to find the most useful pieces of evidence, but at the same time, it gives hope that improving one's linguistic abilities, one's ability to use sources, and one's creative imagination will help to break through this formidable barrier.

3 Turning Stone into Gold: Humanitarian Concerns Mattered in the Age of Gunboat Diplomacy

The Chinese proverb 點石成金 means "To touch a stone and turn it into gold." If we look back at the history of research in certain areas or fields, we find that a major change in perspective can bring about a totally different view of the same historic figure, incident, or time period.

In two articles I published in Hong Kong and Tokyo, in 2003 and 2009

and President Lincoln, but was denied by Congress.

8 Tao De-min 陶徳民, "Perī no kikan ni nobotta Shōin no 'jikan' ni semaru: Pouhatan-gō no kōkai nisshi ni mita Shimoda mikkō kanren kiji ni tsuite" ペリーの旗艦に登った松陰の「時間」に迫る：ポウハタン号の航海日誌に見た下田密航関連記事について (Closing in on Shōin's Time on Board Perry's Flagship: An Entry in the Logbook of the *Powhatan* Related to the Shimoda Stowaway), *Higashi Ajia bunka kōshō kenkyū* (Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies, Kansai University), no.3 (March 2010).

respectively, marking the 150th anniversary of Perry's first visit to Japan and the opening of Yokohama as a treaty port, I tried to break with existing nationalistic thinking and interpretations of the first U.S.-Japan encounter, as revealed in the alleged white-flag 白旗 incident and the view of the petition as a ruse for attack. Supposedly, Perry, in anticipation of possible hostilities, passed two white flags to the Japanese side for them to surrender with. He thus, insultingly, sought to teach the Japanese to act in a civilized manner. In the view of the petition as a ruse for attack 墨夷膺懲, Shōin's alleged real purpose in pretending to be a stowaway was to kill Perry and punish the Americans. Shōin is here portrayed as a patriotic terrorist.⁹

But what I found, on the contrary, was a story that exemplified the fact that humanitarian concerns did matter in the age of imperialism and nationalism. The evidence for this view can be found in three interrelated documents.

- In the *kanbun* version of the first petition copied by Luo, I found a Confucian term 仁厚愛物之意, meaning “kindness, generosity, and love of other beings,” which could be compared to the concepts of humanism and tolerance in modern Western thought. The term appeared twice, first in the sentence “We are fully assured of *the kindness and liberality of your excellencies, and your regard for others,*” and later in the sentence “If this matter should become known, we should uselessly see ourselves pursued and brought back for immediate execution without fail, and such a result would greatly grieve *the deep humanity and kindness you all bear towards others.*”
- Shōin was then a twenty-five-year-old young man, and his petition had been polished by his mentor Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山 (1811–1864), a leading scholar of Chinese and Dutch learning who strongly encouraged Shōin to go abroad to study advanced Western military technology. It seemed that the appeal to the humanity of Perry and his team was both strategic and effective. When Perry got to know the miserable situation of Shōin and his companion in the cage, he sent his Flag Lieutenant Silas Bent and

9 Tao De-min 陶德民, “Shijiu shiji zhongye Meiguo dui Riren quanwaijiao de qishi: Xie zai Mei-Ri jianjiao 150 zhou nian zhi ji” 十九世紀中葉美國對日人權外交的啟示：寫在美日建交150周年之際 (Mid-Nineteenth-Century U.S. Human-Rights Diplomacy towards Japan: On the 150th Anniversary of the Dawn of U.S.-Japan Relations), *Ershiyi shiji* (Chinese University of Hong Kong), no. 82 (April 2004). De-min Tao, “The Stowaway’s Dilemma: Yoshida Shōin’s Encounter with Commodore Perry,” in *Japan and Its Worlds: Marius B. Jansen and the Internationalization of Japanese Studies*, edited by Martin Collcutt, Katō Mikio, and Ronald Toby (Tokyo: International House Press, 2007).

Williams the following morning, only to find that the two had just been transferred to a jail in Edo. Out of serious concern over the possible beheading that Shōin had warned him of in the first petition, Perry decided to exert his influence. The *Narrative* describes his intervention as follows. “The fate of the poor fellows was never ascertained, but it is hoped that the authorities were more merciful than to have awarded the severest penalty, which was the loss of their heads, for what appears to us only liberal and a highly commendable curiosity, however great the crime according to the eccentric and sanguinary code of Japanese law. It is a comfort to be able to add, that the Commodore received an assurance from the authorities, upon questioning them, that he need not apprehend a serious termination.”¹⁰ The assurance was apparently a relief to Perry, who faced a difficult choice between national interest and human rights.

- According to *Bokui ōsetsu roku* 墨夷應接録 (Record of Negotiations with the Americans), compiled by the Bakufu’s diplomatic team, Perry proudly boasted that respect for and rescuing the lives of people had been the major concern and policy of the American government.¹¹ He severely criticized the Bakufu for its inhumane treatment of American shipwrecked whalers and Japanese sailors who drifted abroad owing to storms. (In the 1840s and 1850s there were hundreds of American whalers operating in Japanese waters. Once a whaler was shipwrecked, the surviving castaways would be brought by the current to southern Ezochi. From there they were escorted by foot to Nagasaki, where they awaited ships of the Dutch East India Company, arriving on the monsoon current, to transport them to Batavia [present-day Jakarta]. There they would be picked up by American rescue ships. Also, surprisingly, Japanese sailors who drifted abroad because of storms were denied rights of repatriation to prevent any possible Christian influence.¹²)

10 Hawkes, *Narrative*, 1: 423.

11 Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku Bunka Daigaku Shiryō Hensan-gakari 東京帝國大學文科大學史料編纂掛. *Bakumatsu gaikoku kankei monjo* 幕末外國關係文書 (Sources of Late Tokugawa Foreign Diplomacy), appendix 1. In *Dai Nihon komonjo* 大日本古文書. Tokyo: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku, 1913.

12 During the eighteenth century, there developed a system of mutual aid between Tokugawa Japan, Qing China, Yi Korea, and Vietnam, in which each country agreed to help shipwrecked fishermen repair their boats, to provide them with food and other necessities, and to send them home. However, this arrangement did not apply to Westerners. In 1837 Williams and several other American missionaries headed to Japan from Canton on the American merchant ship *Morrison* in an attempt to repatriate seven Japanese shipwrecked sailors. However, they were driven away by cannon fire, first at Uruga Bay, and later at Kagoshima Bay, in accordance with the Edict to Repel Foreign Vessels 無二念打拂令 of 1825.

When I was investigating these sources, I was surprised to find stones that could be turned to gold, that is, important lines and critical facts, overlooked by scholars, that could be evaluated in the new light of humanitarianism. Line (4) thus recognizes the importance of refining one's awareness of the question itself by approaching the object from different angles and perspectives.

4 Make Your Moon Whole by Making Sense of the Rays and Shadows

To sum up, as the Chinese proverb 自圓其說 implies, the task of a researcher is to discern a path from all the possible sources of information and shape it into some sort of argument. This task is similar to piecing together the fragmented light that shines through the leaves to re-create a full moon, much like solving a jigsaw puzzle. Line 1 thus points out our limited capabilities in the face of the grandness of nature and the universe. Yet it also fully recognizes the possibility that we can deepen our understanding of both the external and internal worlds.

Many proverbs, taken literally, invite pessimism. But it is important to maintain a positive attitude toward what is admittedly a difficult field. For example, 二兎を追う者は一兎を得ず (One who chases two rabbits at the same time catches neither) instills a negative lesson, but in line (3) I change this negative lesson into a positive suggestion: 兩個兔子輪番追 (Chase two rabbits in turn). The line ends with 有心插柳 (Plant a willow with purpose). This derives from the Chinese proverb 有意栽花, 花不开; 无心插柳, 柳成蔭 (A watched flower never blooms, but an untended willow thrives). Here too I made a positive change to remind scholars of the importance of always being attentive in their research, as the second rabbit they encounter might be a decisive clue that helps them develop their second or third areas of interest. A scholar needs three or more areas of expertise to establish scholarly credentials and research style, as suggested by the Chinese proverb 三足鼎立 (The Chinese cauldron stands on three legs).

Appendixes

The First Petition (translated by S. W. Williams)

Two scholars from Yedo, in Japan, present this letter for the inspection of the “high officers and those who manage affairs.” Our attainments are few and trifling, as we ourselves are small and unimportant, so that we are abashed in coming before you; we are neither skilled in the use of arms, nor are we able to discourse upon the rules of strategy and military discipline; in trifling pursuits and idle pastimes our years and months have slipped away. We have,

however, read in [Chinese] books, and learned a little by hearsay, what are the customs and education in Europe and America, and we have been for many years desirous of going over the “five great continents,” but the laws of our country in all maritime points are very strict; for foreigners to come into the country, and for natives to go abroad, are both immutably forbidden. Our wish to visit other regions has consequently only “gone to and fro in our own breasts in continual agitation,” like one’s breathing being impeded or his walking cramped. Happily, the arrival of so many of your ships in these waters, and stay for so many days, which has given us opportunity to make a pleasing acquaintance and careful examination, so that we are fully assured of the kindness and liberality of your excellencies, and your regard for others, has also revived the thoughts of many years, and they are urgent for an exit.

This, then, is the time to carry the plan into execution, and we now secretly send you this private request, that you will take us on board your ships as they go out to sea; we can thus visit around in the five great continents, even if we do in this, slight the prohibitions of our own country. Lest those who have the management of affairs may feel some chagrin at this, in order to effect our desire, we are willing to serve in any way we can on board of the ships, and obey the orders given us. For doubtless it is, that when a lame man sees others walking he wishes to walk too; but how shall the pedestrian gratify his desires when he sees another one riding? We have all our lives been going hither to you, unable to get more than thirty degrees east and west, or twenty-five degrees north and south; but now when we see how you sail on the tempests and cleave the huge billows, going lightning speed thousands and myriads of miles, skirting along the five great continents, can it not be likened to the lame finding a plan for walking, and the pedestrian seeing a mode by which he can ride? If you who manage affairs will give our request your consideration, we will retain the sense of the favor; but the prohibitions of our country are still existent, and if this matter should become known we should uselessly see ourselves pursued and brought back for immediate execution without fail, and such a result would greatly grieve the deep humanity and kindness you all bear towards others. If you are willing to accede to this request, keep “wrapped in silence our error in making it” until you are about to leave, in order to avoid all risk of such serious danger to life; for when, bye-and-bye, we come back, our countrymen will never think it worthwhile to investigate bygone doings. Although our words have only loosely let our thoughts leak out, yet truly they are sincere; and if your excellencies are pleased to regard them kindly, do not doubt them nor oppose our wishes. We together pay our respects in handing this in. April 11 [1854]. (Hawkes, *Narrative*, 1: 420.)

The *sōrōbun* note (translated by the author)

We two want to see the world. Please allow us to board your ship in secrecy. Going to foreign countries, however, is strictly prohibited in Japan. We would be in deep trouble if you tell the Japanese officers about this. If your admiral were to consent to our intention, we hope that you will send a barge at midnight tomorrow to the shore of Kakizaki village to meet us. April 19 [1854]. Ichigi Kōda, Kwanouchi Manji

The Second Petition (translated by S. W. Williams)

When a hero fails in his purpose, his acts are then regarded as those of a villain and robber. In public have we been seized and pinioned and caged for many days. The village elders and head men treat us disdainfully, their oppressions being grievous indeed. Therefore, looking up while yet we have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves, it must now be seen whether a hero will prove himself to be one indeed. Regarding the liberty of going through the sixty States [of Japan] as not enough for our desires, we wished to make the circuit of the five great continents. This was our hearts' wish for a long time. Suddenly our plans are defeated, and we find ourselves in a half sized house, where eating, resting, sitting, and sleeping are difficult; how can we find our exit from this place? Weeping, we seem as fools; laughing, as rogues. Alas! for us; silent we can only be. (Hawkes, *Narrative*, 1: 422ff.)

Illustrations



(1) Yoshida Shōin in Shimoda



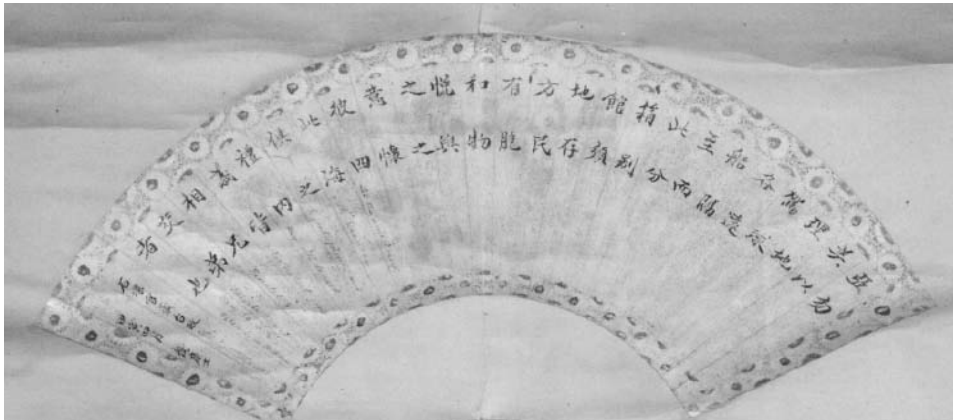
(2) First Interpreter
S. W. Williams



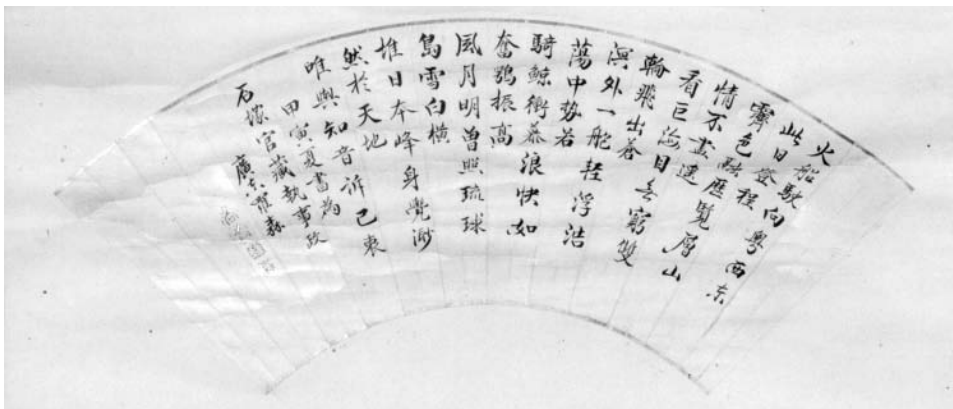
(3) Luo Sen



(4) Hirayama Kenjirō



(5) A fan inscribed with friendly words including Confucian world view by Luo Sen and S. W. Williams



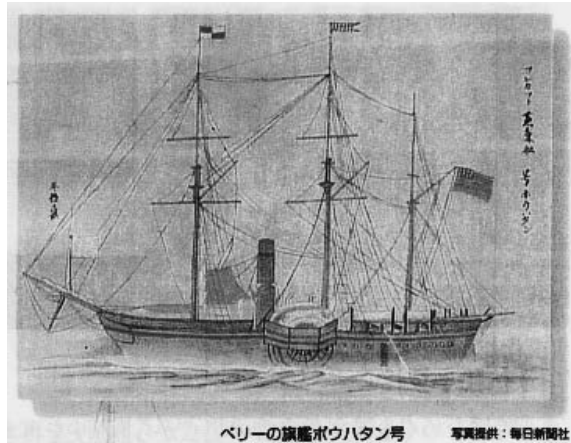
(6) Luo Sen's poem describes the powerful black ships and the beautiful landscape of Ryūkyū and Japan.



(7) Yoshida Shōin



(8) Commodore M. C. Perry



(9) Perry's flagship, the USS Powhatan

Log of United States Ship Powhatan, Commanded by Capt. M. C. Perry

Date	Action	Course	Wind		Current		Remarks
			Direction	Force	Set	Rate	
			S.W.	3	4		<p>HERALD OF THE 21ST DAY OF APRIL 1854</p> <p>Commenced on Sat. the 20th of April came on board in a small boat & remained about 1/2 an hour, on getting aboard they went for camp & they were sent ashore in the boat by order of the Commr.</p> <p>At 10th of April from 10 to 11, sent the 2nd Mate & Coxswain for Capt. Commodore Perry & returned</p> <p>From 11 to 12, sent the 2nd Mate & Coxswain for Capt. Commodore Perry & returned</p> <p>From 12 to 13, sent the 2nd Mate & Coxswain for Capt. Commodore Perry & returned</p>

times per Log
 made, D. E.
 made, D. R.
 date observed
 made

(10) Record of Shōin's time onboard in the logbook of the Powhatan

日本國江戶府書生 萬二南丸公大呈書
 貴大臣各將官執事、生等賦稟薄弱、船艙舞小、同自取列
 士籍、未能精刀槍刺擊之技、未能諳兵馬鬪爭之法、況
 況然、悠玩愒歲月、及續支那書、稍聞知、既已未、理駕
 風教、乃欲周遊五大洲、然而吾國海禁甚嚴、外國人入
 內地、與內地人到外國、皆在不貸之典、是以周遊之念、而
 然、往來於心胸、而呻吟、阻蓋、亦有年矣、幸
 貴國大軍艦運糧、未泊吾港口、為日已久、生等熟觀、秘察、
 深悉
 貴大臣各將官仁厚愛物之意、平生之念、又復觸發、今則斷
 然決策、將深密請、能假坐貴船中、潛出海外、以周遊五
 大洲、不復顧國禁也、願執事、辱察、郵來、令得、成此事、
 生等所能為、百般使役、惟命是聽、夫、設變者、先行之者、
 行之者、先騎乘者、其竟之、敬、如何、耶、况、生等、終
 身、奔走、不能出、東西、二十度、南北、二十五度、之外、以是
 視、夫、駕、長、風、凌、巨、瀾、電、走、千、萬、里、隔、交、五、大、洲、者、豈
 特、設、變、之、典、行、之、行、之、之、與、騎、乘、之、可、譬、哉、
 執事、幸、察、明、察、許、諾、所、情、何、息、尚、之、惟、吾、國、海、禁、未、除、
 以、事、若、或、稍、播、則、生、等、不、徒、見、違、捕、召、回、創、新、立、列、無
 疑、也、事、或、至、此、則、傷、貴、大、臣、各、將、官、仁、厚、愛、物、之、意、亦
 大、矣、執事、願、許、所、情、又、宜、為、生、等、委、曲、色、色、隱、匿、於、閣、帷、
 時、以、令、得、免、創、新、之、慘、若、至、他、日、自、歸、則、國、人、亦、不、必、追
 窮、任、事、也、生、等、言、雖、疎、瀆、意、實、誠、確、執事、願、察、其、情、
 憐、其、意、勿、為、疑、勿、為、拒、萬、二、公、太、全、拜、呈、
 日本嘉永七年甲寅三月八日

(11) The First Petition

然吾身去界遠見物及力皆生物物內與
 茶心是凡此亦異國海禁身不自身之六禁
 有以身去日介之入、由、故、亦、不、可、不、云、
 當、察、仁、心
 在、報、由、大、約、方、而、以、之、中、以、以、晚、夜、際、
 有、事、不、可、不、云、
 柘、村、村、濱、邊、他、馬、身、重、轡、車、亦、不、可、不、云、
 十、月、廿、五、日、
 甲、寅、三、月、廿、三、日
 有、水、公、太
 瓜、津、菊、二

(12) The sōrōbun note

英雄失意比跡盜賊面縛就捕幽囚累日
 村長里正倍教相待其厄亦甚矣雖然
 俯仰無愧可以見英雄之為英雄也
 以周遊六十國為未足欲適歷五大洲
 是吾傷懷心事也今一旦失計陷於半
 間之室食息坐卧不得少出範圍阻
 則近茹笑則近黠嗚呼點一而已矣

(13) The Second Petition

Note: The paper was given at “Treasures from Japan: An International Conference on Pre-modern Books and Manuscripts in the Yale University Library,” on March 5–6, 2015, sponsored by the Council on East Asian Studies, the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and the East Asian Library, in cooperation with the Historiographical Institute (University of Tokyo) and the National Institutes for the Humanities (Japan).

Illustrations (5) & (6): Courtesy of Hakodate City Museum.