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**‘Strangers’ in Japan: A Personal History of  
the English Trade with Japan 1613-1623**

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# 'Strangers' in Japan: a Personal History of the English Trade with Japan 1613-1623

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**Abbreviations**

EIC = East India Company

EFJ = A. Farrington, *The English Factory in Japan 1613-1623*, 2 vols. (London, 1991)

**Note**

All italics and ellipsis within quotations in this essay are emphasis added by this author.

## Introduction

In 1613, the English East India Company, a trade corporation established in London in 1600, was allowed access to Japanese trade markets. Through these, they hoped to sell English Broadcloth and to develop trade connections with neighbouring China.<sup>1</sup> They set up a trade factory in Hirado, an island in the south west of the country, and sent seven English merchants to Japan to sell their goods and maintain their privileges. In 1616 English trade was limited to Hirado and Nagasaki, and in 1623 the English decided to leave the country due to economic failure, hostilities with Dutch merchants, and a difficult relationship with the Japanese Emperor.

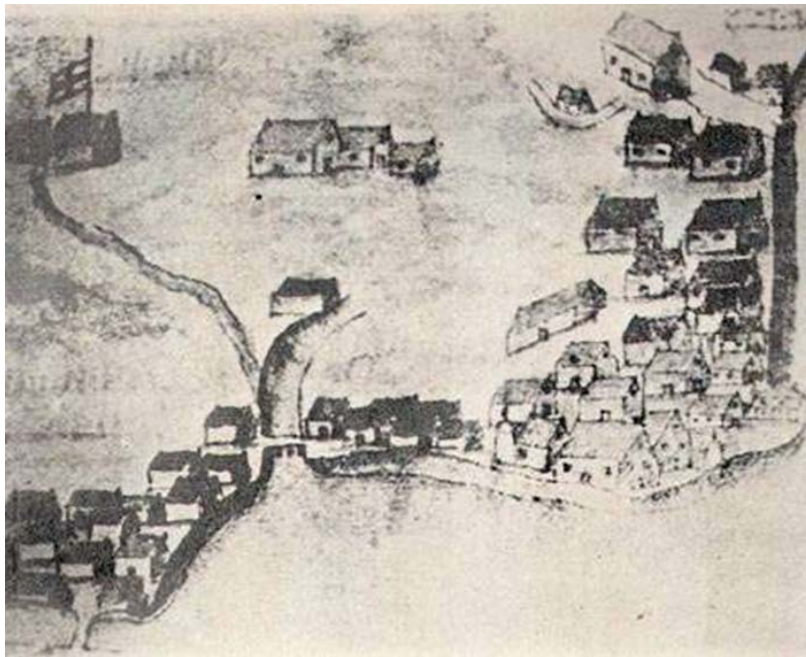


Figure 1. 1621 drawing of the English House in Hirado with St George flag by a Dutch artist, M. Paske-Smith, *A Glympse of The "English House" and English Life at Hirado, 1613-1623* (Nagasaki, 1927), 32

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<sup>1</sup> B. Rajan and E. Sauer, *Imperialisms* (New York, 2004), 55-6.

The traditional focus of the historiography on this subject was on the economic failure of the factory in Japan.<sup>2</sup> In 1903, Wilson argued that the trade relationship was a ‘total failure’, not only because the Englishmen ‘uselessly expended’ £40, 000, while European competitors were more economically successful.<sup>3</sup> Cocks, the factory manager, kept a diary throughout the decade in Japan and this has been read to comprehend his management, both for the purposes of explaining the failure of the trade with Japan and of personalising the historical subject by viewing Cocks as a relatable character.<sup>4</sup> Cooper recognises ‘Cocks’ diary occupies an important place in the mass of contemporary writings about Japan’.<sup>5</sup> Also of interest has been the life of Adams who travelled to Japan prior to the establishment of the trade relationship.<sup>6</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, interest in the subject shifted to ‘World History’: Boxer and Massarella contextualised the trade relationship in seventeenth-century international affairs and used it as a case study for researching international cultural and social exchanges.<sup>7</sup> Only in 2003 and 2005, did Lewis and Kaislaniemi (respectively) look more closely at the lives of the Englishmen in Japan. Lewis looked for indications of cultural exchanges with the Japanese such as language, fashion and food, while Kaislaniemi studied the depth of the Englishmen’s knowledge about Japan.<sup>8</sup>

In 2013, interest in the trade relationship increased as the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of trade links was celebrated in both countries as the start of a ‘remarkable friendship’.<sup>9</sup> *Japan400*

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<sup>2</sup> A. Farrington, ‘Introduction’, in i.EFJ, 8.

<sup>3</sup> B. Willson, *Ledger and Sword*, 2 Vols. (London, 1903), i. 112-3.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Farrington, ‘Biographical and Other Notes, in EFJ, ii.1551; M. Paske-Smith, *Glympse of the “English House” and English Life at Hirado, 1613-1623* (Nagasaki, 1927); L. Reiss, *English Factory at Hirado (1613-1622)* (Tokyo, 1898).

<sup>5</sup> M. Cooper, ‘Review: Diary Kept by the Head of the English Factory in Japan’, *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), 266.

<sup>6</sup> For example, I. Veith, ‘Englishman or Samurai: The Story of Will Adams’, *Far Eastern Quarterly* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Nov., 1945), 5-27.

<sup>7</sup> C. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* (Lisbon, 1993); D. Massarella, *A World Elsewhere* (New Haven, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> S. Kaislaniemi, ‘Needless Lies? Merchant Letters and Knowledge of Japan in Early Seventeenth-Century England’, Masters Thesis (Helsinki, 2005); J. Lewis, ‘“Nifon Catange or Japon Fation”: A Study of Cultural Interaction in the English Factory in Japan, 1613-1623’, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Sheffield, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> *Japan400*, ‘Welcome to Japan 400’, <http://japan400.com/> [08/12/14].

focused on the positive social and cultural impact of the trade relationship, both for the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the present day. Histories researched prominent figures, like Adams and Saris (the ship Captain in 1613).<sup>10</sup> They also looked at items given as gifts or of trade, and shared customs such as tea drinking.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2. Celebratory *Japan400* coin, EIC, '400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Japan-British Relations',

<http://www.eicgold.com/japan400/> [06/10/14]

In the historiography of the trade relationship, the vast body of surviving correspondence between the Englishmen living and working in Japan has been utilised to supplement other sources. In particular, these letters have been used by Reiss and Paske-Smith to comprehend Cocks' thoughts and feelings during the gap of nearly two years in his diary.<sup>12</sup> These 401 letters, however, are a valuable source in their own right. Reviewing their transcription by Farrington in 1991, E. Pratt wrote 'It is hoped that the raw material they provide ... will spur social historians into this much-neglected

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Saturday 14 Sept William Adams Festival, in *Japan400*, 'Some Highlights of Japan400', and 'Saris's trip to Edo and Back', <http://japan400.com/> [08/12/14].

<sup>11</sup> For example, Monday 9 Sept Telescope display and Tuesday 12 Sept Tea ceremony, *Japan400*, 'Some Highlights', <http://japan400.com/> [08/12/14].

<sup>12</sup> Reiss, *English Factory*, 88; Paske-Smith, *Glympse of "English House"*.

area of Japanese history.<sup>13</sup> Though the men wrote regularly out of ‘dutie’ to update one another on business affairs, they included thoughts, feelings and personal anecdotes in these letters.<sup>14</sup> Cooper recognises that ‘a remarkably human and personal depiction of the merchants themselves emerges’.<sup>15</sup> While Lewis and Kaislaniemi appreciated the utility of the source material, neither used the letters to study the way in which the English factory worked in practice and how the Englishmen related to one another. Lewis looked at the Englishmen’s interactions with Japanese people, but, since this was not the main focus of his study, the full character of relationships with the Japanese was not analysed. The way in which the Englishmen *personally related* to Japan as a country has also been overlooked by historians.

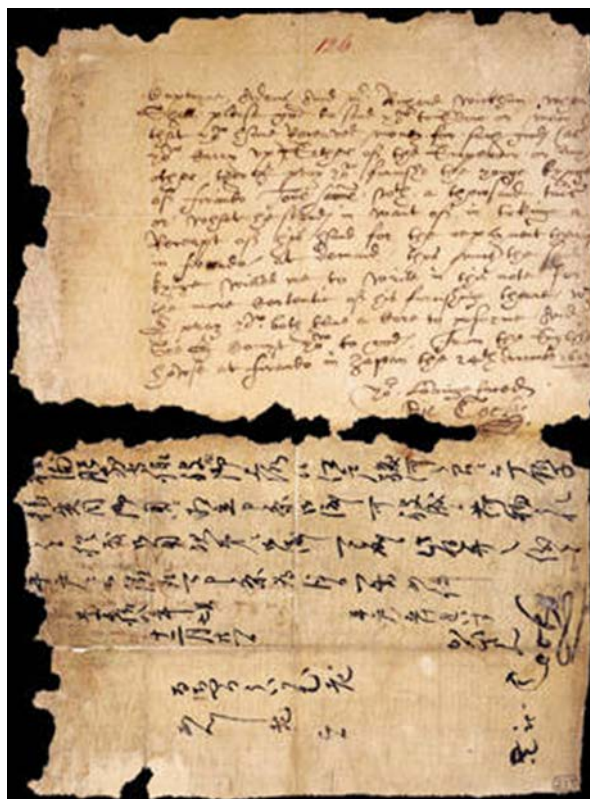


Figure 3. Letter from Cocks to Adams and Wickham, prior to transcription by Farrington 1991. M.

Makepeace, ‘Japan400’, *British Library* (2013).

<sup>13</sup> E. Pratt, ‘Review of *The English Factory in Japan: 1613-1623*, by Farrington’, *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 51, No. 3 (Aug., 1992), 670.

<sup>14</sup> Osterwick to Wickham, EFJ, i.512.

<sup>15</sup> M. Cooper, ‘The Brits in Japan’, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), 267.



A reading of the entirety of the surviving correspondence suggests that day-to-day trade was organised on an individual level, and was not managed by the EIC in London or by Cocks in Japan to any large degree. This highlights the importance of conducting a personal history on the subject. The men cooperated and collaborated with one another and, further from that, formed friendships and an English community which maintained English cultures. The men did not abhor Japanese culture, and in fact forged meaningful relationships with Japanese individuals. Nevertheless, they did consider themselves 'strangers' in Japan and thought that they were serving their nation in international relations.

These conclusions are important because they contribute to our understanding of the EIC, for which personal histories are rare. Historians such as Baladouni, have studied the economics of trade, but Bowen, Lincoln and Rigby recognise that most works on the EIC have focused on Imperial rule in India.<sup>16</sup> Bassett in fact argues that many historians, including Wilson for example, have considered the early EIC merely a precursor to the later Raj.<sup>17</sup> Studies that have given more focus to the early Company, such as the work of Bowen, Lincoln and Rigby, have assessed the actions and interactions of the *central* Company Corporation.<sup>18</sup> They have thus paid less attention to the motives, interactions and lives of individuals.

The surviving letters also offer new material through which to test Edward Said's *Orientalism* thesis. In 1978, Said argued that the Occident has viewed Oriental peoples and societies through a self-

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<sup>16</sup> V. Baladouni, 'Accounting in the Early Years of the East India Company' *Accounting Historians Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall 1983), 63-80; H. Bowen, M. Lincoln and N. Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Suffolk, 2002), xv- xvii.

<sup>17</sup> D. Bassett, 'The Trade of the English East India Company in the Far East, 1623-84', 2 Vols. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Oct. and Apr., 1960), i.33, ii.157; Willson, *Ledger and Sword*.

<sup>18</sup> Bowen, Lincoln and Rigby, *Worlds of the East India Company*, xv.

perpetuating discourse of the 'other'.<sup>19</sup> The Orient is situated as a binary opposite to the Occident, and is thus considered uncivilised and weak.<sup>20</sup> Said paid less attention to Occident-Orient interactions prior to 1775-6 because he thought that they 'expanded enormously' after then.<sup>21</sup> Ogborn therefore questioned whether his conclusions can be applied to earlier periods.<sup>22</sup> Importantly, the correspondence demonstrates that the Englishmen who travelled to Japan did separate themselves from the Japanese through cherishing English culture and considering themselves distinctly English. However, they did learn about Japanese culture through forming friendships with natives, and did not consider Japanese society or culture inferior to European. Scammell, Massarella, and Rajan and Sauer argue that the European perception of the Japanese was unique- the Japanese were viewed with less disdain than other Asians.<sup>23</sup> This study provides material of interest to these scholars but emphasises that such understanding of the locals was highly personal to the Englishmen in Japan, and was not shared by the Company, Crown or English merchants positioned elsewhere. Since *Japan400* called for the renewal of 'the spirit of openness, discovery and fruitful cooperation', it is necessary to comprehend the attitudes, beliefs and understandings held by the men who were able to interact positively with Japan and Japanese people.<sup>24</sup>

This is essential for dispelling current biases against Japanese culture and peoples as scholars, including Sanson, Nagatani and Tanaka, have argued that a 'sheer unfamiliarity' with Japan means

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<sup>19</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), 1-31.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> M. Ogborn, 'Writing Travels: Power, Knowledge and Ritual on the English East India Company's Early Voyages', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2002), 155-6; Said, *Orientalism*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> G. Scammell, 'Review: A World Elsewhere by Massarella', *International History Review*, (1991), 795-6; Rajan and Sauer, *Imperialisms*, 53-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Japan400*, 'Some Highlights of Japan400', <http://japan400.com/> [08/12/14].

that myths about Japanese culture and peoples are widespread in the West.<sup>25</sup> Nagatani and Tanaka describe a 'perception gap', in which westerners consider Japan 'backward'.<sup>26</sup> They point out that there is a tendency to view Japanese culture as static and unchanging.<sup>27</sup> Histories must be conducted across different historical periods for this reason. These scholars also argue that Westerners tend to generalise Japanese culture, and thus ignore subtlety and nuance.<sup>28</sup> In order to grasp difference, micro-histories such as this one must be conducted in addition to macro-ones. As Cortazzi argues then, 'a perusal of the English factory in Hirado could be beneficial to more than the expert historian'.<sup>29</sup>

The nature of the source material has notably influenced the conclusions of this essay. Most of these letters have survived because they were preserved by Wickham in a personal letter collection. However, unlike the Renaissance humanists who have been the main subject of Early Modern correspondence studies, these letters were not written, edited and arranged *for publication* in such a collection.<sup>30</sup> These men did not write with notable literary elegance and Wickham retained letters which presented him in a negative light for hitting his jurebasso (Japanese servant).<sup>31</sup> Like the Early Modern letter writers who Gibson points to, these Englishmen recognised that information could be read by the courier, or others.<sup>32</sup> However, they felt secure in secrecy when employing trustworthy couriers, and when asking the recipient to destroy the letter.<sup>33</sup> The letters, then, reveal reflections of a given moment which were to be sent to a friend, colleague or employer. Clearly not all letters

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<sup>25</sup> G. Sanson, *Japan in World History* (Tokyo, 1951), 1-19; K. Nagatani and A. Tanaka, 'Perception Gaps', in K. Nagatani and D. Edgington (eds.), *Japan and the West* (Aldershot, 1998), 5.

<sup>26</sup> Nagatani and Tanaka, 'Perception Gaps', 5, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> H. Cortazzi, 'Foreward', EFJ, i.xiii

<sup>30</sup> C. Clough, 'Cult of Antiquity: Letters and Letter Collections' in C. Clough (eds.), *Cultural Aspects of the Renaissance* (Manchester, 1976), 34-7; D. Parker, 'The Role of Letters in Biographies of Michelangelo', *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring, 2005), 91-126.

<sup>31</sup> Nealson to Wickham, Farrington, i.131.

<sup>32</sup> J. Gibson, 'Letters', in H. Hattaway (Ed.), *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 2010), i.457.

<sup>33</sup> For example Nealson to Wickham, EFJ, i.132.

written and sent have survived. Nevertheless, since those which have are from certain individuals to a variety of colleagues, the thoughts and beliefs evidenced can be cross-checked against one another. Thus, polite phrases in, and particular motives behind, letters can be checked against more friendly greetings. Though there are some differences in thought between individuals and across time, these are not so distinct as to make conclusions impossible. The most notable change in thought was an increased desire to return home to England.

## Chapter One

### 'Englishmen' in Japan: Relating to Each Other<sup>34</sup>

The surviving correspondence illuminates our understanding of the way in which the English factory functioned practically. The letters demonstrate that the factory was organised and run from the Englishmen in Japan. They also show that it relied on collaboration and cooperation between the men. Friendships between the men were necessary both for the carrying out of trade, and for maintaining English cultures in Japan.

The letters illustrate the exact role of the EIC in governing the trade relationship from London. Evidently, it was the role of the Company to employ men, and this could often be a hindrance to the way in which the factory functioned. Cocks for example wrote to the Company complaining of the idle seamen, 'what dangerous fellows som of them were', and asked the Company to replace those men.<sup>35</sup> He also wrote asking them to offer a wage to a Scotsman who had made his way to Japan and had offered assistance to the Company despite not being employed by them.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the English factors, and Cocks in particular, were required to regularly write to the Company with updated business accounts. In one letter, Cocks wrote to the Company to apologise 'for the mischance' of stolen money.<sup>37</sup> In a chain of letters between Ball and Cocks, meanwhile, it becomes evident that the former held the latter's accounts in Bantam for a period of time because he feared they were not complete and so the Company would be displeased with Cocks.<sup>38</sup> It is accordingly highlighted that the Englishmen did not hold complete control over their business in Japan as they

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<sup>34</sup> Cocks to Ball, EFJ, i.687.

<sup>35</sup> Cocks to EIC, EFJ, i.377.

<sup>36</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.908.

<sup>37</sup> Cocks to Saris, EFJ, i.675.

<sup>38</sup> Ball to Cocks, EFJ, i.617-20, Cocks to Ball, EFJ, i.682.

were denied the power or the autonomy over their finances in order to hire and fire men and were accountable to the Company throughout the decade.

Crucially, only in these matters could the Company directly oversee the English merchants. As Hejeebu, and Chaudhuri point out in a *long durée* histories of the EIC, the distance between agents and directors meant that there was a 'common problem of "managing the manager"'.<sup>39</sup> Cocks was appointed head of the English factory and his role in directing the men is evident in the letters. Wickham wrote to Cocks, 'Soe that I know not howe to doe herein until *you* farther *advise me*'.<sup>40</sup> He also wrote 'I pray *advise me* per the first what cours I shall take upon my retorne from Edoe'.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, Wickham blamed Cocks for wasting money sending him around the country, and suggested that the Company was foolish for taking the word of Cocks over other men in Japan.<sup>42</sup> This therefore highlights that the actions of the men were decided in Japan, and that Cocks was both accountable to the Company, and was recognised by the Englishmen as the commander. Wickham, for example, demonstrated deference for Cocks when writing 'you, whom I know can do better than myself' and 'I bode under your command & *authoritie*'.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Cocks held a notable position in the seventeenth century trade relationship, and it is for this reason that historians, such as Pratt and Farrington, have blamed him for economic failures through his 'mismanagement'.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the surviving correspondence demonstrates that Cocks offered autonomy to each man to conduct the trade. Thus, Cocks' role became more nominal than authoritative. Cocks

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<sup>39</sup> S. Hejeebu, 'Contractual Enforcement in the East India Company', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Jun., 2005), 497; K. Chaudhuri, *English East India Company* (London, 1965), 64-86.

<sup>40</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.159.

<sup>41</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.307.

<sup>42</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.448; Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.466.

<sup>43</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EEJ, i.280.

<sup>44</sup> E. Pratt, 'Review of *English Factory*', 670; A. Farrington, 'The Japan Letter Book of Richard Wickham, 1614-1617', *India Office Library and Records Report 1979* (London, 1979), 45.

informed his colleagues that they had liberty to sell their cloth as cheaply as they needed.<sup>45</sup> He also asked Wickham to act through his own initiative, 'I pray *yow enforme Mr Eaton* what he is to doe'.<sup>46</sup> The autonomy over decisions and actions for each man is highlighted in a letter from Wickham to Cocks in which *he* advised the latter what he would do next, '*I wil send the p'ticulers of such goodes as are vendible there*'.<sup>47</sup> Since the men were dispersed around Japan acting as they saw fit, this letter also demonstrates the necessity of their communication with one another. In another letter, Wickham wrote to Eaton 'Of late I have no sales for anythinge here, for ... *you sould your allejas ... so cheape*'.<sup>48</sup> Importantly, these men interacted with one another without the mediation of Cocks. Such communication is additionally evidenced in letters in which Wickham wrote to Nealson to ask for selling advice, and Eaton wrote to Wickham that he had given Nealson 'a scoling carde' and that Nealson 'hath promised me to be verey obedient unto you'.<sup>49</sup> When goods did not weigh as they should, it was Wickham and Osterwick who corresponded. The men realised that it was they, and not Cocks, who was to blame.<sup>50</sup> Further than this, the personal authority of Cocks can be questioned as it was Wickham who passed on the news of the Emperor's death in 1616 to Cocks.<sup>51</sup> Wickham also saw fit to write to Cocks 'conceave well of *me* to assist & adviz *you*'.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, through demonstrating the collective nature of the English factory in Japan, Richard Cocks can be partly absolved of the blame for trade failures, and criticism for poor account keeping can instead be shared amongst the men.

Since the Englishmen in Japan relied heavily on one another to conduct their trade and they all lived in the same house in Hirado after 1616, personal bonds between them were necessary. Wickham

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<sup>45</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.155.

<sup>46</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.358.

<sup>47</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.307.

<sup>48</sup> Wickham to Eaton, EFJ, i.185.

<sup>49</sup> Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.165; Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.401.

<sup>50</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.440.

<sup>51</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.430.

<sup>52</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.280; Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.307.

thought it necessary to write to Cocks in 1616 to dispel myths that he had given 'envious speeches' against Cocks and to persuade Cocks that 'I have ever loved & honoured you'.<sup>53</sup> He noted that if they could not get along with one another, their position in Japan would be difficult, 'Japon will be tow hot for us'.<sup>54</sup> Jourdain and Cocks also recognised the necessity of good relations between the men. Jourdain suggested that Wickham and Cocks 'ought to be a comfort the one to the other', while Cocks acted as a mediator between Wickham and Adams.<sup>55</sup> Cocks wrote to Wickham 'I p'ceve per the wordes of Capt' Adames that he is sory'.<sup>56</sup> He also wrote 'He tells me yow & he are very good frendes and drank together this mornynge. *I am heartely glad* it is soe, & hope it will contynew'.<sup>57</sup> Thus, these sources support Ogborn's assertion that EIC 'relations ... were to be *governed by* mutual respect, obedience to superiors, and "love and kindnes" on all sides'.<sup>58</sup> The boundaries between personal life and Company employment were blurred, and so Englishmen in Japan understood that they needed to think positively of one another.

More than that, though, the Englishmen formed *friendships* and acted as a support network for one another. Firstly, the men trusted each other with secrets. Nealson, for example, wrote to Wickham with news of Cocks' personal affairs and trusted him to 'be not a blab'.<sup>59</sup> Cocks also wrote personal secrets to Wickham, trusting him to 'be no blab'.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, some men inconvenienced themselves in order to help each other. Eaton visited Wickham's sick daughter and passed on two 'cattaberas' to her, while Nealson desposed of 'certayne thinges' from Wickham's chamber to do Wickham's Japanese wife 'no hurt in her sicknes'.<sup>61</sup> In another letter, Wilmot persuaded Faire to lend Cocks a

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<sup>53</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.448.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Jourdain to Wickham EFJ, i.421.

<sup>56</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.267.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> M. Ogborn, 'Writing Travels', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (2002), 165.

<sup>59</sup> Nealson to Wickham, EFJ, i.132.

<sup>60</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.140.

<sup>61</sup> Eaton to Wickham EFJ, i.438; Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.323.



book by emphasising that Cocks was 'a most faythfull, honest man'.<sup>62</sup> Most notably, though, Cocks permitted Nealson to pause his trade in order to stay with Eaton in 1616 when he was imprisoned and 'soruowfull'.<sup>63</sup> Nealson offered company to Eaton and was concerned about the treatment of Eaton by the Bongew (Japanese doctor).<sup>64</sup> Thirdly, the men demonstrated affection to one another in their correspondence. Wickham defended Jourdain to Cocks, describing his 'generous disposition'.<sup>65</sup> Osterwick meanwhile wrote to Jourdain with the *sole purpose* of remembering 'my love and service unto you'.<sup>66</sup> He did not include any information 'concerning the Compa' business' in this letter.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Coppendale wrote to Wickham to request of his friend- who was not merely a colleague- 'that we may make merry before dep'ture'.<sup>68</sup> Just as Najemy read friendship in letters between fifteenth-century Italian merchants and humanists, these letters reveal genuine affection between these men.<sup>69</sup>

A factor which no doubt aided these friendships was the country bond the men felt. Adams, though considered a naturalised Japanese man, wrote to Wickham expressly stating 'pray sallut me to all my ... counttrimen'.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Cocks wrote to reminded Ball of Eaton 'I esteme him as much *your* countryman as myne, for *wee are all* Englishmen'.<sup>71</sup> For these men, establishing these relationships with one another was just one way in which they were able to maintain their distinct English culture. Despite living the 'ferthest p'tes of the world from [England]', the men retained a strong English identity.<sup>72</sup> Even after having lived in Japan for seven years, Cocks made reference to English

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<sup>62</sup> Wilmot to Faire, EFJ, i.538.

<sup>63</sup> Nealson to Cocks, EFJ, i.423.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.449.

<sup>66</sup> Wickham to Eaton, EFJ, i.495.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Coppendale to Wickham, EFJ, i.338.

<sup>69</sup> J. Najemy, *Between Friends* (Princeton, 1993), 47.

<sup>70</sup> Veith, 'Englishman or Samurai', 13; Adams to Wickham, EFJ, i.640.

<sup>71</sup> Cocks to Ball, EFJ, i.687.

<sup>72</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.541.

festivities. He for example wrote to Wilson using the time frame 'before Christmas'.<sup>73</sup> In addition, as a gift, Ball sent Cocks a chronicle of England 'wherin you maye see the shire, hundred & parish where you ware borne, & conceit som of your frinds macking frolicke with apells & alle'.<sup>74</sup> The men further maintained their links with home through sending and receiving letters from England. Eaton, for example, passed on news to Wickham that Saris had married in Whitechapel.<sup>75</sup> Cocks wrote to his friend Wilson, meanwhile, to ask for help in securing a job for his brother in London.<sup>76</sup> The importance of these connections with individuals at home is demonstrated in a letter from Sayers to Wickham, in which he *specifically* asked for letters 'ore aneythinge ellce' that happened to be 'out of *England*' to be sent or brought to him.<sup>77</sup> In addition, Wickham was upset by the 'unkind forgettfullnes of my frendes, whom *I have continually written*'.<sup>78</sup> This analysis thus supports Veith's suggestion that the English merchants remained English in character, while challenging Lewis' argument that the men became 'immersed' into Japanese culture.<sup>79</sup> It also hints to similarities between these Englishmen and later Company factors as Furber argued that cohorts in Batavia enjoyed European cultures.<sup>80</sup>

Importantly, the finding that Englishmen in Japan interacted both on a professional and personal level contributes to existing historiographical debates surrounding the subject matter and methodology. While Chaudhuri and Hejeebu have noted decentralisation of EIC control to factory managers, this chapter has shown that these factors collaboratively managed the factory. It has also found that these English factors retained their native culture in the new land. Furthermore, this

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<sup>73</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.779.

<sup>74</sup> Ball to Cocks, EFJ, i.619.

<sup>75</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.438.

<sup>76</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.545.

<sup>77</sup> Sayers to Wickham, EFJ, i.720.

<sup>78</sup> Wickham to his Aunt, EFJ, i.615.

<sup>79</sup> Veith, 'Englishman or Samurai', 26; Lewis, "Nifon Catange or Japon Fation", 197.

<sup>80</sup> H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade In the Orient, 1600-1800*, 2 Vols. (London, 1976), ii.302.

chapter has highlighted the possibility of studying hierarchy and friendship using the contents of correspondence.

## Chapter Two

### 'Frend of Myne': Relating to the 'Japaners'<sup>81</sup>

Though they maintained their English culture and formed an English community, these Englishmen did look positively upon Japanese culture and Japanese peoples. They interacted with them through necessity, but held genuine affections for individuals, and considered the Japanese more trustworthy than other 'strangers'.<sup>82</sup>

The Englishmen in Japan, unlike both James I and the EIC, did not consider the Japanese people the 'oriental other'. While James I refused to accept truth in the letters sent from Cocks to Wilson in London detailing the splendour of the Japanese court, nobility and cities, the Englishmen were complementary of it.<sup>83</sup> Cocks, for example, referred to the Japanese governance as the 'greatest an most powerful'.<sup>84</sup> He described the Emperor's palace as 'beautefull' and 'glorios'.<sup>85</sup> He *likened Japan to England*, in particular 'a cittie as bigg as London' and 'far bigger than the cittie of York'.<sup>86</sup> He also referred to 'many ... greate townes' in Japan and, further from that, 'one of the greatestes citties in the world'.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, unlike James I, later Imperialists and even the EIC factors who worked in Batavia but not Japan, the Englishmen in Japan did not view Asian *culture* as barbaric and uncivilised.<sup>88</sup> Not only were the Englishmen accepting of Japanese culture, as Lewis argued they were, but they thought highly of it.<sup>89</sup> Adams, for example, detailed 'The people of the lande *goods* of

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<sup>81</sup> Wickham to Osterwick, EFJ, i.476; Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.162.

<sup>82</sup> Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.256.

<sup>83</sup> Wilson to James I, EFJ, ii.857.

<sup>84</sup> Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.259.

<sup>85</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.542.

<sup>86</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.263; Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.542.

<sup>87</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.542.

<sup>88</sup> For example, the Japanese were described as 'warlike people', Batavia Factors to EIC, EFJ, ii.969.

<sup>89</sup> Lewis, "Nifon Catange or Japon Fation", 101.

nature, *courteous* out of measure, and *valliant* in warres'.<sup>90</sup> He also argued that the people were 'governed in great civility'.<sup>91</sup> He suggested that there was 'not a lande better governed in the worlde by civil policy', and only pointed to Japanese religion as being 'superstitious'.<sup>92</sup> The Englishmen also recognised fairness in the Japanese legal system: Cocks for example wrote to Eaton to remind him that 'it is impossible the Emperour will condemne us w'thout hearing'.<sup>93</sup> He reassured him that the Japanese would not arbitrarily kill another Englishman because 'I think they rather the otheralyve againe'.<sup>94</sup> Though the Englishmen quarrelled with some Japanese men, they recognised that, in these instances, the individual and not Japanese culture was to blame. This is most clearly highlighted in a letter from Cocks to the other English factors, in which he charged them to treat Japanese individuals well and to just cast aside those they did not like, and to instead make friends with others.<sup>95</sup>

The Englishmen interacted with Japanese individuals due to necessity in their work. While the British Empire made use of Asian coolie labour and emphasised differing racial work ethics, the EIC in 1615 exclaimed 'it is found that the Chineses and Japoneses are very industrious people & excellent workmen'.<sup>96</sup> They therefore suggested using these Asians as labourers.<sup>97</sup> In letters between Wickham and Osterwick, mention of Asian workers who weighed the English merchandise shows that they were employed by the Company and consequently that Englishmen worked with Japanese individuals.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Adams to 'unknown friends', EFJ, i.73.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Cocks to Eaton or Neelson, EFJ, i.428.

<sup>94</sup> Cocks to Eaton or Neelson, EFJ, i.426.

<sup>95</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.124.

<sup>96</sup> Court Minutes of EIC, EFJ, i.288.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Wickham to Osterwick, EFJ, i.504.

Furthermore, the Englishmen befriended Japanese individuals specifically *for* the benefit of their trade. In 1605, Adams described *seeking* friendships for this reason.<sup>99</sup> Cocks expressly told the English factors to ‘make much of [Japanese] frends’ because ‘allwais good will com thereof’.<sup>100</sup> In saying this, then, Cocks suggested that there was utility in forming friendships with the Japanese. In fact, Wickham expressed preference for Japanese individuals who could help the factors in their trade when describing those ‘whoe are most commonly merchantes for our comodyties’ as ‘the better sort’ of ‘Japaners’.<sup>101</sup> The benefit of friendships, acquaintances and relationships is pointed to in a letter from Neelson to Cocks in which he explained that he was staying with ‘a man by report very honest & *fitter to helpe us to effec our busines* than the other’.<sup>102</sup> In addition, Cocks wrote to Johnson and Pitt that the Dutchman Lamb was ‘a very fayre conditioned man and one that thath *used hymselfe very sercomspectly towards our English nation*’.<sup>103</sup> The close connection between friendship and business relationships is highlighted further by Wickham when he persuaded Osterwick to employ ‘a frend’ not involved in the English trade, ‘make use of his barke before another’.<sup>104</sup> In another instance, the Englishmen described a Japanese man as ‘deceiving’ because, although he offered ‘faire words’ and told the men he would become Christian, he was of no use to the Factory because he had no money with which to buy English goods.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the Englishmen related to the ‘other’ who aided the English trade.

However, in the instances that the Englishmen did interact with the Japanese, they formed some very meaningful relationships. Adams explained that it was through trade relationships that he was able to form ‘friendships’.<sup>106</sup> Wickham evidently trusted his host in Edo as he described him as ‘a

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<sup>99</sup> Adams to wife in England, EFJ, i.51.

<sup>100</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.124.

<sup>101</sup> Wickham to Neelson, EFJ, i.162.

<sup>102</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.442.

<sup>103</sup> Cocks to Johnson and Pitt, EFJ, i.643.

<sup>104</sup> Wickham to Osterwick, EFJ, i.476.

<sup>105</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.485.

<sup>106</sup> Adams to ‘Unknown Friends’, EFJ, i.66-7.

man of good wealth & credit & is well reported of' and left his goods in this man's hands.<sup>107</sup> Wickham also described '*kinde* entertainment' from his jurebasso Simy Dono.<sup>108</sup> Further than this, Eaton displayed what appears to be a genuine concern for his jurebasso who 'would have [been] bound ... [and] put ... to death'.<sup>109</sup> Instead of focusing on his jurebasso's role in killing the Japanese man who Eaton admits to harming, Eaton suggested that this punishment was merely 'for taking of a pece of cord'.<sup>110</sup> Eaton therefore appears have held a desire to clear his servant's name as he supported his jurebasso by exaggerating the extent to which his punishment was disproportionate. Furthermore, in his letter to Cocks, Eaton mentioned his jurebasso and the situation facing the man before he did himself and his own condition.<sup>111</sup> This is despite the fact that Cocks would have been more interested to learn about the condition of his factor, Eaton. Notably, the Englishmen were encouraged to form such relationships with these individuals. James I informed the Japanese Emperor that 'Wee have given in chardge to our people to demeane themselves with all respects of courtesie & friendship towards your people'.<sup>112</sup> Cocks wrote to the English factors persuading them that 'these cuntrey people are not to be used nether w'th bad wordes nor blowes'.<sup>113</sup> Although he encouraged them not to gamble, he recognised that 'the admonition of a [Japanese] frend is not to be rejected'.<sup>114</sup> He thus pushed the Englishmen to spend time with the Japanese.

The EIC Factory records include several letters from Japanese individuals to the Englishmen. These importantly show that the relationships were reciprocal: Japanese individuals felt able to relate to the Englishmen. For example, a Japanese Inn owner Amanoya Kurobe wrote to Cocks in 1618 to say

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<sup>107</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.159.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Cocks to Eaton or Nealson, EFJ, i.426.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> James I to 'King' of Japan, EFJ, i.62.

<sup>113</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.124.

<sup>114</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.125.

'I was greatly *delighted* to have the various ideas which you gave me'.<sup>115</sup> Kurobe also informed him 'I am *extremely* sorry that I could not offer you much entertainment at that time. I am *always at your service*'.<sup>116</sup> Konomi Seikichiro, a Japanese interpreter for the Englishmen, also wrote to Osterwick to '*heartily* thank you for your kind entertainment'.<sup>117</sup> In using such strong statements, Kurobe and Konomi appear to have considered Cocks and Osterwick a pleasure to be in the company of. At news of the Englishmen's leaving, meanwhile, Haya wrote to Osterwick to explain that 'I feel very unhappy'.<sup>118</sup> Cocks' manservant Oto also wrote to his former master to express 'my heartfelt thanks' for Cocks' 'kindness'.<sup>119</sup> Accordingly, it seems that the Englishmen did form some genuine friendships with some Japanese peoples. This evidence supports the finding of Reiss that many Hirado townspeople wept at the departure of their English 'friends'.<sup>120</sup> It also challenges Cooper's suggestion that it was *only* 'talented individuals', like Adams, who were able to engage with locals.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to friendships for trade, the Englishmen related mostly to Japanese women. These women became mistresses, wives and 'language tutor[s]'.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, these relationships, like those with Japanese men, were formed for necessity and utility. Nevertheless, from these relationships also, genuine bonds were formed. As Lewis argues, the Englishmen cared for their Japanese women.<sup>123</sup> Wickham demonstrated concern for his Japanese wife Femeja when writing 'I hope she is by this time well recovered'.<sup>124</sup> Eaton, meanwhile, evidently trusted what he was told by his woman. In a letter to Wickham, he wrote 'My woman doth lickwise tell mee as much'.<sup>125</sup> In

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<sup>115</sup> Kurobe to Cocks, EFJ, i.738.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Seikichiro to Osterwick, EFJ, i.719.

<sup>118</sup> Haya to Osterwick, EFJ, ii.954.

<sup>119</sup> Oto to Cocks, EFJ, ii.955.

<sup>120</sup> Reiss, *English Factory*, 108.

<sup>121</sup> Cooper, 'Brits in Japan', 272.

<sup>122</sup> Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.164.

<sup>123</sup> Lewis, "'Nifon Catange or Japon Fation'", 197.

<sup>124</sup> Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.323.

<sup>125</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.370.



addition, the men repeatedly bought gifts for their Japanese women, despite continually complaining about their low wages.<sup>126</sup> In addition, the Japanese women themselves wrote to the Englishmen, and in doing so demonstrated the strength of these relationships. Ksmezo, Eaton's woman, wrote to Cocks after the Englishmen had left Japan to both thank him for his 'kindness' and to ask him to remain on good terms with Eaton.<sup>127</sup> In this way, she demonstrated care and concern for Eaton. Mathia, meanwhile wrote to Sayers to enquire about their journey home.<sup>128</sup> In asking questions and not saying a final goodbye as other women, including Tagano (a female dancer who had entertained Cocks) did, Mathia expected a reply.<sup>129</sup> Her letter subsequently implies that the strength of the bonds would continue even when the men had returned to England. To further demonstrate the importance of these bonds for the men, it is notable that, aside from business accounts, the men wrote to each other most about their relations with Japanese women.<sup>130</sup> This demonstrates that the relations with Japanese women were of significant importance to the Englishmen.

The interaction between the Englishmen regarding their Japanese women also illustrates the way in which Japanese individuals became part of the English factory collective. Firstly, the Englishmen sent personal gifts to each other's women. For example, Wickham sent girdles to Cocks' wife Mattinga, and a 'paire of tabys' to Nealsen's woman.<sup>131</sup> Factory funds were also spent on the women. Osterwick, who was in charge of the factory's finances, wrote to Wickham with anger that Nealsen had given his own personal money to Femeja and to Eaton's woman's mother because the women should have approached Osterwick.<sup>132</sup> Osterwick explained that he then 'paide mr nealsen for the

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<sup>126</sup> Peacock to EIC, EFJ, i.118; Jourdain to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.284; Wickham to Jourdain, EFJ, i.371.

<sup>127</sup> Kamezo to Cocks, EFJ, ii.956.

<sup>128</sup> Mathias to Sayers, EFJ, ii.957.

<sup>129</sup> Tagano to Cocks, EFJ, i.739.

<sup>130</sup> For example, Nealsen to Wickham, EFJ, i.132.

<sup>131</sup> Wickham to Sayers, EFJ, i.332; Wickham to Nealsen, EFJ, i.164.

<sup>132</sup> Osterwick to Wickham, EFJ, i.455.

whole'.<sup>133</sup> This suggests that the factory considered it their role to support the women. The Englishmen also made their own and each other's personal affairs the business of the English factory. For example Eaton wrote to warn Wickham of 'comen report' that Femeja had gambled.<sup>134</sup> He later informed him that it was 'untrue' and 'onley a pece of knavere'.<sup>135</sup> On the same matter, Osterwick informed Wickham that Femeja 'denieth utterly to have wronged you in the kynde'.<sup>136</sup> The involvement of the English factory in the men's relationships is further pointed to when Eaton wrote to Wickham that 'Mr Osterwicke & myselfe have thought good to *send awaye your woman ...* having soe good opportunitie of a barke'.<sup>137</sup> This is also shown when Wickham asked Cocks to 'speake to Mr Osterwicke & Mr Eaton' to ask permission for Femeja to stay in the English House 'before the beg'inge of July'.<sup>138</sup> The English Factory were evidently concerned about their colleagues' relationships due to friendship, for purposes of gossip, and because the use of prostitutes could bring 'greate shame' for the English nation while Japanese wives could be useful in trade at times.<sup>139</sup> Osterwick for example sought Wickham's pardon for sending a letter to him *via* Femeja.<sup>140</sup> However, Cocks referred to the women as 'shee frends', thereby suggesting that the men genuinely cared about their friend's partners.<sup>141</sup>

Crucially, the Englishmen trusted the Japanese 'other' more than they did European 'strangers', who Cocks described as 'enemies'.<sup>142</sup> Soon after their arrival in Japan, Cocks informed the English factors that 'to live under the rooffe of a natural Japan is better than to be in the house of any stranger'.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Osterwick to Wickham, EFJ, i.456.

<sup>134</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.364.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*; Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.366.

<sup>136</sup> Osterwick to Wickham, FEJ, i.489.

<sup>137</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.435.

<sup>138</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.407.

<sup>139</sup> Watts to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.843.

<sup>140</sup> Osterwick to Wickham, EFJ, i.455.

<sup>141</sup> Cocks to Sayers and Osterwick, EFJ, i.726.

<sup>142</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.858.

<sup>143</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.124.

He notably pointed out that the Englishmen should treat the Dutch, Spaniards and Portuguese kindly, but 'make them not p'takers of your secrets or pretenses'.<sup>144</sup> In particular, Cocks warned that Spanish and Portuguese Papists were untruthful and thus untrustworthy: he notably wrote to Wickham with concern for Adams who was then staying with a Papist.<sup>145</sup> Wickham wrote to Ball in Bantam to 'advise you not to give any credit unto the Spaniard'.<sup>146</sup> Johnson and Pitt argued that the Dutch were 'liing scandolls' and made particular reference to one 'drounke' man who 'maketh us ashamed that a Christane and a manne of his ranke should degenerate from humanety soe much'.<sup>147</sup> With a sense of disgust, Wickham also criticised individual European 'strangers'; he wrote to Cocks about the 'most dangerous' 'Ould' Portuguese man who preyed on 't[e]nder' young girls.<sup>148</sup> Farrington implies that the nationality of this old man did not matter to Wickham, but the fact that Wickham specifically mentioned the man's citizenship challenges this assertion.<sup>149</sup> In certain instances of necessity, associations with the European 'other' became more amicable. Cocks for example informed Wickham that he had 'secretly sould these goods to the Spaniards'.<sup>150</sup> On the whole, though, the Englishmen were less trusting of the Europeans despite their more similar culture. Importantly, this understanding of the Europeans was in line with that held by the EIC, who degraded the Dutch through reference to their 'baseness and poverty'.<sup>151</sup>

Despite a desperation to enter the Chinese markets, the Englishmen in Japan also revered the Japanese more than they did the Chinese. Ball wrote to Cocks in 1617 to inform him that in Bantam, he was 'unable to find an honest Chinese'.<sup>152</sup> He described the race as 'faithless and fraudulent', and

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<sup>144</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.125.

<sup>145</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.143.

<sup>146</sup> Wickham to Ball, EFJ, i.315.

<sup>147</sup> Johnson and Pitt to Browne, EFJ, i.605.

<sup>148</sup> Wickham to Cocks, EFJ, i.190.

<sup>149</sup> Farrington, 'Japan Letter Book, 43.

<sup>150</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.443-4.

<sup>151</sup> Cocks to EIC, EFJ, i.377.

<sup>152</sup> Ball to Cocks, EFJ, i.618.

willed Cocks to cease trusting Captain Dittis.<sup>153</sup> Though Cocks defended the Chinese in Japan as ‘the better sort’ and willed the Englishmen to ‘use all chinas kindly’, he emphasised this *because* he feared Chinese ‘spies’ could prevent England from entering the Chinese trade market.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the other Englishmen in Japan were less forgiving of the Chinese nation. Wickham was quick to blame Chinese employees for weight differences in goods sent to him. He described them as ‘very roges’ who ‘hath cusored me’.<sup>155</sup> For Wickham it was important that these men were Chinese rogues rather than Japanese ones as it exempted them from his punishment.

Therefore, the Englishmen in Japan perceived foreigners differently to those Said discusses. Though they formed relationships only due to necessity, the Englishmen did not consider Japanese culture abhorrent and in fact formed some meaningful relationships with Japanese individuals. The conclusions drawn support Scammell, Massarella, and Boxer’s understanding that the Japanese were viewed positively, even at a time when other Asian cultures were not.<sup>156</sup> They agree more, though, with Scammell than with Massarella, Rajan and Sauer, when arguing that these positive relations were pragmatic and held by the Englishmen in Japan but not by those in England more generally.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Cocks to Browne, EFJ, i.530.

<sup>155</sup> Wickham to Osterwick, EFJ, i.504.

<sup>156</sup> Scammell ‘Review: World Elsewhere’, 795-6; Boxer, *Christian Century*, 80.

<sup>157</sup> Scammell, ‘Review: World Elsewhere’, 795-6; Rajan and Sauer, *Imperialisms*, 55.

## Chapter Three

### 'Strangers' in Japan: Relating to the Country<sup>158</sup>

The Englishmen in Japan related to the country as foreigners and continued to think of England as their homeland. For example, Cocks explained how the Spaniards 'came to me ... to crave my assistance', but that 'I told them I was a *stranger* as they were'.<sup>159</sup> Importantly, then, the Englishmen considered *themselves* the 'other' in Japan. They were loyal both to their role serving the Company as merchants and serving the English nation as mediators of international affairs. They also considered their service temporary.

The men were positioned in Japan as foreigners, to carry out English trade. They demonstrated a strong loyalty to the EIC and the job they were employed to carry out, and this obligation to employment was stronger than any personal connection they developed to the country of Japan. This is firstly evident through the respect and honour afforded to the company throughout the decade. When writing to the EIC, both Cocks and Adams described themselves as an 'unworthy brother of that your Right Wo[rshipfull Companie]'.<sup>160</sup> Osterwick, meanwhile, wrote to the Company to thank them for their employment.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, Wickham described to his superior, Jourdain, how he was 'bindeth' by the 'duty' he 'owe[d]' the Company.<sup>162</sup> Thus, unlike the Seventeenth Century Englishmen in Java described by Bassett, who 'sometimes showed real resentment to their directors', these men honoured their role in Japan.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.256.

<sup>159</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.272.

<sup>160</sup> Cocks to Merchant Adventurers, EFJ, i.250; Adams to Smyth, EFJ, i.568.

<sup>161</sup> Osterwick to EIC, EFJ, i.588.

<sup>162</sup> Wickham to Jourdain, EFJ, i.372.

<sup>163</sup> D. Bassett, 'Review: The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760 by Chaudhuri', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1981), 191-2.

This deference to the Company also manifested itself in the thought and actions of the men. A genuine concern for EIC trade in Japan is evident in Cocks' letter to Nealson and Osterwick in 1617.<sup>164</sup> This is due to the level of detail in the letter; Cocks explained that he was 'sick [with nerves] to see their proceedings, & cannot eate a bit of meate that doth me good but cast it up as sowne as I have eaten it'.<sup>165</sup> It seems that this anxiety was not for personal gain in Japan or for a personal desire to stay in that country. In a letter from Cocks to Westby, he talked not of the 'paynes & charges' to himself in response to the 'greate trowbles & wars in Japon', but instead to the trade as they 'put us to much paynes & charges in sending up & downe *to save our goods*'.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Eaton expressed that he wished 'with *all my hart* that all we have heare in this cuntrey were sould'.<sup>167</sup> When writing to the EIC, Cocks' also suggested that his '*greatest sorrow*' was in the economic failure of trade with Japan.<sup>168</sup> Cocks displayed keenness to leave Japan due to this reason, yet also permitted himself to stay in the economic hope of trade with China, for the 'benefit' of the EIC.<sup>169</sup> Thus, he put his commitment to the success of the EIC before his own personal preference for place of living. Crucially, Cocks wrote such sentiments not only to his employers in London, but also to Browne in 1616.<sup>170</sup> In a similar way to Cocks, Wickham suggested to Nealson that he acted 'not for my benefit ... but for the sole good of the Honorabell Company.'<sup>171</sup> In fact, in 1615 the EIC recognised that the Englishmen in Japan had used their own funds to offer gifts to the Japanese Emperor.<sup>172</sup> They

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<sup>164</sup> Cocks to Nealson and Osterwick, EFJ, i.626.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Cocks to Westby, EFJ, i.387.

<sup>167</sup> Eaton to Wickham, EFJ, i.157.

<sup>168</sup> Cocks to EIC, EFJ, i.564.

<sup>169</sup> Cocks to Browne, EFJ, i.530; Cocks to EIC, EFJ, i.564.

<sup>170</sup> Cocks to Browne, EFJ, i.530.

<sup>171</sup> Wickham to Nealson, EFJ, i.466.

<sup>172</sup> EIC Court Minutes, EFJ, i.288.

suggested that the men did so for the 'grace of this companie'.<sup>173</sup> They also realised that the men were motivated by 'the honnor of his countrie.'<sup>174</sup>

The Englishness of the men was emphasised in setting up trade relations, and as was the role of the English crown and state. Hence, the role of the Englishmen was thought to surpass that of merchant, they were also to be mediators of news and of international relations. In letters to the Japanese Emperor in 1612, James I referred to the merchants as '*our people*', i.e. representatives of England, and requested that the countries establish a '*friendship*' *through* these men.<sup>175</sup> Since the Englishmen were to play this role, James I also asked the emperor to offer them royal protection.<sup>176</sup> It is further evident that the men did consider themselves as servants of the English *nation*. Writing to Salisbury in 1614, Cocks cited Jesuit complaints of the '*arrival of our English nation in these parts*'.<sup>177</sup> Cocks' use of the word '*our*' situates himself in the grouping and thereby implies that Cocks approved of this categorisation of the merchants as agents of England. In fact, in letters to the EIC *and* to other Company servants, both Cocks and Wickham referred to trade privileges in Japan as being '*for the benefit or good of our nation*' or for '*our nation*'.<sup>178</sup> Cocks believed that any mistreatment of Englishmen, such as the shooting experienced by '*our cullers*' on '*an iland*', was an '*abuse offred to our nation*'.<sup>179</sup> Wickham emphasised that individual Englishmen who committed '*disordes & wrongs*' in Japan were doing so to the '*dishones of our nation*' i.e. they were committing a disservice to England.<sup>180</sup> Importantly, other Englishmen in Japan agreed on this matter, Watts referred to '*our great shame*' caused by Englishmen who had grown careless and '*will rather turne to the emenye*'

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> James I to 'Emperor' of Japan, EFJ, i.63 and i.75.

<sup>176</sup> James I to 'Emperor' of Japan, EFJ, i.63.

<sup>177</sup> Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.256.

<sup>178</sup> Cocks to Gourney, EFJ, i.348; Cocks to Jourdain, EFJ, i.355; Wickham to Smyth, EFJ, i.328; Wickham to EIC, EFJ, i.576; Wickham to EIC, EFJ, i.612.

<sup>179</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.667.

<sup>180</sup> Wickham to EIC, EFJ, i.612.

than defend the English nation.<sup>181</sup> Similarly, Eaton pointed to 'negligent servants' as 'traytors and villaines to theare prince and cuntrie'.<sup>182</sup> Cocks, too, suggested that Mr Peacocke's behaviour made 'th' English nation worse thought of.'<sup>183</sup> The fact that the Englishmen considered their role in Japan as also an honour and service for their country is further demonstrated by Harod's letter to the EIC in 1620, in which he detailed his decision to once again serve the English factory in Hirado for 'conscience & love of his *countrie*'.<sup>184</sup>

The Englishmen displayed a sense of concern for the position of England abroad, and were conscious that they were mediators of the international affairs of England with both Japan and the Dutch. Cocks, for example, compared the regard given to the English in Japan to that for the Dutch, when writing 'our nation is esteemed before the Hollanders' to Smyth.<sup>185</sup> Cocks also wrote to inform the Cloth Workers of London that the English had been 'wronged by Hollanders' in trade, but that 'God preserved us from them, the Japoneses, our neighb'rs, taking our partes'.<sup>186</sup> Crucially, since the relations reported between the English and Dutch factory in Hirado mirrored those between the two countries, the Englishmen seem to have considered themselves arbitrators of country relations as well as representatives of Company trade. Cocks wrote to Wilson in 1620 to explain that war had been declared on the English by the Dutch, and that the Dutch had fired at the English yet killed a Japanese man.<sup>187</sup> Cocks actually suggested sending some idle Englishmen from the Hirado factory to travel to Java or Sumatra to 'fight ... the Hollander'.<sup>188</sup> These writings suggest the men recognised that state and trade affairs were intrinsically linked as trade privileges were granted by and to the crown. Cocks for example pointed out that he had intentionally 'byn over tedious' so that Company

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<sup>181</sup> Watts to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.843.

<sup>182</sup> Eaton to Fursland, EFJ, ii.877.

<sup>183</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.669.

<sup>184</sup> Harod to EIC, EFJ, ii.827.

<sup>185</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.828.

<sup>186</sup> Cocks to Clothworkers, EFJ, i.775-6.

<sup>187</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.777.

<sup>188</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.787.



‘should have true notis how the state of matters stand in these p’tes of the world’.<sup>189</sup> The letters also suggest, though, that the Englishmen thought they were required to serve the English nation in international affairs, as well as the EIC. This finding consequently helps to partly explain Gaastra’s argument that the Dutch East India Company and the English EIC competed with one another most violently when the two nations were at war.<sup>190</sup>

When recounting Japanese news, the Englishmen positioned themselves as separate outsiders. In a letter to his friend Wilson in England, Cocks talked of a ‘miracle’ and ‘wissardes’ and said ‘I pray yow p’don me for writing such fopperies w’ch I doe to the entent to have yow laugh a littell’.<sup>191</sup> In this way, Cocks was able to remain light-hearted when reporting Japanese news. This suggests he felt personally distant from the negative effects of Japanese affairs. Further from this, in a letter to Saris in 1614, Cocks reported on a tempest and the ruin it caused to ‘the noblemen’s houses, which you know were beautifull and faire.’<sup>192</sup> He thus emphasised the devastation of beauty more than he did of people’s lives or livelihoods, or of the city as a whole. This implies a personal detachment from the place and the people. In fact, Cocks dwelled more on the role of the Emperor and on country affairs, such as the abolition of Christianity, than he did either on the effect of high political matters on the people, or on local news.<sup>193</sup> In so doing, Cocks indicated a distance from his neighbours and immediate environment, despite the high level of regional differentiation in seventeenth century Japan.<sup>194</sup> In this way, he appears an outsider viewing Japanese politics, more so than an individual living in and experiencing life in Japan. Hence Cocks creates an image of the merchants as

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<sup>189</sup> Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.260.

<sup>190</sup> F. Gaastra, ‘War, Competition and Collaboration’, in Bowen, Lincoln and Rigby (eds.), *Worlds of the East India Company*, 51.

<sup>191</sup> Cocks to Wilson, EFJ, i.780.

<sup>192</sup> Cocks to Saris, EFJ, i.252.

<sup>193</sup> For example Cocks to Salisbury, EFJ, i.256.

<sup>194</sup> D. Massarella, ‘Envoys and Illusions: The Japanese Embassy to Europe, 1582-90’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Nov., 2005), 332.

Englishmen who mediated news from Japan and, in doing so, remained 'English' in character: they did not fully immerse themselves.

Only in instances directly influencing them, did the Englishmen display more emotion when reporting news. For example, Cocks expressed hope that the Papists be forced to leave Japan when saying 'but I doubt the news is *to good* to be true'.<sup>195</sup> In another letter discussing the state of Christianity in Japan, Cocks wrote 'God He knoweth what our affares in these partes will com to in the end'.<sup>196</sup> Unlike other news of Japanese affairs, this would directly affect the Englishmen because their form of Christianity was important to them.<sup>197</sup> The fact that they did not have similarly strong responses to other news reports in Japan implies that they felt isolated from it. To challenge Massarella, then, Cocks did not remain 'reasonably objective'.<sup>198</sup>

The men evidently continued to think of England as home, and had a strong desire to return there. Wickham, Pitt, Cocks, and Hudson all individually wrote to the EIC to seek leave of Japan in order to return to 'my country'.<sup>199</sup> In fact, some men expressed desperation to leave Japan. Eaton wrote to Fursland that he was 'detained here by force against my will ... I should be very loth to stay here any longer tyme'.<sup>200</sup> These men cited the unprofitability and difficulty of their time in Japan as a reason. For example, Hudson wrote 'I have tasted of nothing butt labour and paines'.<sup>201</sup> The men also, though, considered their stay in Japan temporary, and so thought it time to return to their friends and family. Notably, they increasingly desired to return home through the decade. Wickham wrote

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<sup>195</sup> Cocks to Wickham, EFJ, i.134.

<sup>196</sup> Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, ii.859.

<sup>197</sup> For example Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.794.

<sup>198</sup> D. Massarella, 'James I and Japan', *Momenta Nipponica*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter, 1983), 377.

<sup>199</sup> Pitt to Cocks, EFJ, i.709; Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.662; Hudson to Fursland, EFJ, ii.880.; Wickham to Smyth, EFJ, i.608; Eaton to Fursland, EFJ, ii.878.

<sup>200</sup> Eaton to Fursland, EFJ, ii.920.

<sup>201</sup> Hudson to Fursland, EFJ, ii.880.

to his mother in England in 1617 'I hope ere longe to see you with the rest of my loving frendes & kindred in England'.<sup>202</sup> Cocks, meanwhile, noted that 'I have binn neare upon 12 yeares out of England, w'ch is a lounge time', and wrote 'p'mit me life to see my native cuntrey of England'.<sup>203</sup> Hudson, too, pointed out that it shall accompt myself happie if ... once againe I should see my frends'.<sup>204</sup>

This analysis therefore contributes to our understanding of the interaction between the Crown and the Company. Massarella concluded that James I played a crucial role in establishing the trade relationship, and Ogborn argued that the Company tended to *present* their 'private profit seeking as a work of the nation as a whole'.<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, these letters demonstrate that the Crown and country were integral to the trade relationship because the patriotic Englishmen *thought* they were labouring *for* their homeland.

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<sup>202</sup> Wickham to mother, EFJ, i.613.

<sup>203</sup> Eaton to Fursland, EFJ, ii.878; Cocks to Smyth and EIC, EFJ, i.662.

<sup>204</sup> Hudson to Fursland, EFJ, ii.880.

<sup>205</sup> Massarella, 'James I and Japan', 377-86; Ogborn, 'Writing Travels', 160.

## Conclusion

This study has therefore shown that the trade relationship was a highly personal matter: it was mostly controlled and managed by the individual Englishmen in Japan. Those English merchants formed a distinctly English community in which they upheld English cultural practices and believed both that they were serving their homeland through their presence in Japan and that they would return to England. Thus, unlike Adams who has been described as a 'naturalised Japanner', the English merchants retained a distinct English identity.<sup>206</sup>

These conclusions are relevant firstly because they contribute to existing historiographical debates. In showing that the English factory relied on collaboration and cooperation between the men in Japan, the focus on Cocks personally as the perpetrator of the failed trade can be lifted. Said's 'Oriental Other' thesis is shown to be relevant for the period and attitudes about Japan, but not for individual Englishmen who travelled to Japan and conducted business there. Added to this, the relationship of 'partial dependence and mutual distrust' between the Country and Company is shown to be less complicated for the early English merchants who carried out the trade abroad: they believed that they were honouring both.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, these conclusions may aid a scholar conducting a long *durée* or comparative study, such as that of Furber which argued that interactions between Asians and Europeans changed over the course of the EIC.<sup>208</sup>

The conclusions point to ways in which Anglo-Japanese relations can improve, as *Japan400* suggests they must.<sup>209</sup> In showing that the Englishmen did not consider Japan barbaric and uncivilised, current schemas and myths that such is the character of Japanese society are challenged. This study

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<sup>206</sup> Veith, 'Englishman or Samurai', 13.

<sup>207</sup> Ogborn, 'Writing Travels', 160.

<sup>208</sup> Furber, *Rival Empires*, ii.314-20.

<sup>209</sup> *Japan400*, 'Legacy', <http://japan400.com/> [08/12/14].

has highlighted that Japanese and English individuals have been able to form meaningful friendships in the past, and consequently that Japanese strangers are relatable and should not be viewed with ‘suspicion ... hostility, fear’.<sup>210</sup> It has shown that individuals *are able* to view ‘the other’ without such a bias, and it demonstrates that it *was not* these men who created and held the stereotype of Japanese otherness. This subsequently points to new research questions regarding when, why and from whom, such perceptions of Japan begun.

Cortazzi notes that these records ‘only provide one side of the picture’.<sup>211</sup> Though some letters point to reciprocal relations, further research could look at the way in which *individual* Japanese people thought about English culture, English trade and the Englishmen. A multi-lingual researcher could also research the way in which the trade relationship has been recalled in Japan: have individual merchants been largely ignored by Japanese writers? In 1927, a monument celebrating the trade relationship was erected in Hirado. As this included the names of all the English merchants and was constructed in the town in which they settled, it is possible that the Japanese memory of the trade relationship has differed from the English one.

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<sup>210</sup> Nagatani and Tanaka, ‘Perception Gaps’, 3.

<sup>211</sup> Cortazzi, ‘Forward’, EFJ, i. xii.

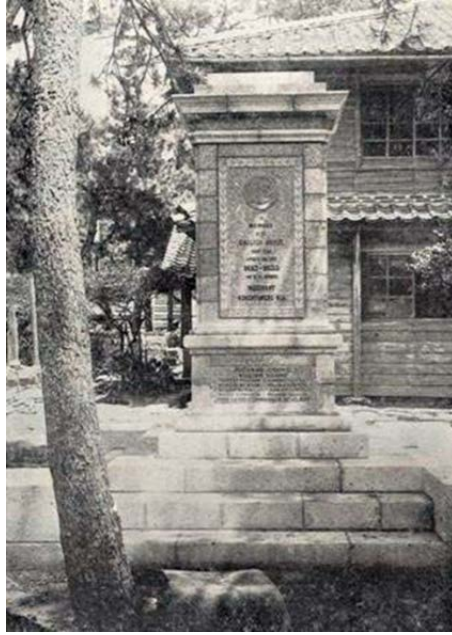


Figure 4. Memorial built in Hirado 1927, Paske-Smith, *Glympse of "English House", 2.*

Added to this, there is scope to utilise this source material to further explore Early Modern friendship and the methodology of studying correspondence. The character of the friendships that emerge could be compared to those of Renaissance humanists and Italian merchants. Did the societal organisation differ for these men who lived and worked in a different culture and environment? This is a necessary enquiry as it will aid our comprehension of the way in which people have interacted with one another in the past.

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