This is the Pre-Published Version.

Writing-Mediated Interaction Face-to-Face: Sinitic Brushtalk in the Japanese Missions' Transnational Encounters with Foreigners during the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

Drawing on Chinese-Japanese transnational and transcultural interaction in the mid-nineteenth century, this article illustrates how Sinitic brushtalk functioned as an effective modality of communication between Chinese and Japanese literati who did not have a shared spoken language. The illustrations are adapted from personal diary-like travelogues of Japanese travelers to Shanghai on board the *Senzaimaru* in 1862 and participants in the Japanese mission to the United States in 1860. The recollection of the brushtalkers with their Chinese interlocutors whom they met on the way, including those during their return journey from the US while calling at trading ports like Batavia and Hong Kong, provides elaborate details on how writing-mediated improvisation using brush, ink, and paper allowed Japanese travelers with literacy in Sinitic to engage in "silent conversation" with their literate Chinese counterparts. A third historical context where Sinitic brushtalk was put to meaningful use was US–Japanese negotiations during Commodore Perry's naval expedition to Edo Bay in 1854, where Luo Sen, bilingual in Chinese (spoken Cantonese) and English, was hired to perform the role of secretary. Throughout the negotiations, Luo was able to perform his duties admirably in part by impressing the Japanese side with his fine brushtalk improvisations. While misunderstanding and miscommunication could not be entirely avoided, the article concludes that until the early 1900s writing-mediated interaction through Sinitic brushtalk in face-to-face encounters functioned adequately and effectively as a scripta franca between literate Japanese and their Chinese "silent conversation" partners both within and beyond Sinographic East Asia. Such a unique modality of communication remained vibrant until the advent of nationalism and the vernacularization of East Asian national languages at the turn of the century.

Introduction: Sino-Japanese Brushtalk as a Form of Synchronous Written Communication

One of the key distinctions between spoken and written communication has been based in their levels of synchronicity. Before the invention of sound recording, spoken communication had been entirely synchronous, i.e., taking place in real time and eliciting an immediate response from the interlocutor(s); whereas written forms of communication transpired in an almost entirely asynchronous mode, until the arrival of electronically networked environments that allowed parties to the conversation to transmit text messages in real-time, as in, for example, online chat. Historically, since face-to-face interactions normally called for immediate feedback and response from interlocutors, they were conducted orally as a matter of course, eliminating the need for sometimes costly writing tools and getting around the inherent latency of the physical process of writing. Communication over a distance, on the other hand, took place in writing in the form of personal notes and letters with the interlocutors separated in space and

(maybe even more importantly) time, with no expectation that the communication would elicit any immediate response.

In translingual and transcultural communication, if no shared language was available in a given situation, the interaction was conducted orally through interpreters who transformed one spoken language into another in face-to-face settings. Similarly, a piece of writing in one language was converted by translators into another in the context of long-distance communication, such as letters exchanged between diplomats. This practical and commonsensical allocation of speech and writing based on the relationship between distance and synchronicity was not, however, necessarily a given in premodern and early modern East Asia, whose inhabitants, despite their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, shared a common script originating in China—漢字 (Mand.: *Hanzi*, Jap. *kanji*, Kor. *hanja*, Viet. *hán tự*). Following the introduction of Chinese characters, or sinograms, in East Asian societies, they were adapted to allow speakers of Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese to express their own spoken languages in a written form, with individual sinograms for the most part retaining their meanings in the East Asian languages concerned.[1] As a result, whereas the spoken languages of the educated and literate members of the "Sinographic Cultural Sphere" (漢字文化圈) were mutually unintelligible, their face-to-face interactions often took place in *writing* rather than speech thanks to the non-phonographic, logographic nature of the sinogram-based script and their shared knowledge of literary Chinese (Literary Sinitic, or simply Sinitic).

In the wake of the establishment and diffusion of China's textual tradition in neighboring societies, translingual and transcultural communication between members of diplomatic missions in East Asia was carried out through "brushtalk," a unique mode of writing-mediated interaction conducted in Sinitic, synchronously and face-to-face. This "silent conversation" method using brush, ink, and paper was a centuries-old cultural practice among East Asian literati that utilized the shared logographic script which encoded meanings rather than speech sounds, allowing scholar-officials and merchants from different speech communities with a certain level of Sinographic literacy to exchange intellectual thoughts and practical information in a wide array of cross-border encounters without the need to learn their interlocutors' spoken languages (see Li, this volume). When Yi Su-gwang (李睟光, 1563−1628), the Korean envoy to Ming China (1368−1644), met Phùng Khắc Khoan (馮克寬, 1528−1613), his Vietnamese counterpart, in Beijing in 1597, the two men were able to overcome the spoken language barrier and discuss political and administrative affairs using Sinitic brushtalk.[2] In one example of non-diplomatic brushtalk involving a stranded merchant ship—a fairly common occurrence along the region's maritime trade routes which generated a rich body of "drifting" brushtalk (漂流筆談) records—Chinese traders from Zhejiang ran into a storm and were blown off course near the coast of Shikoku island in 1789. They managed to communicate the details of their voyage and secure assistance with repatriation by resorting to Sinitic brushtalk with the Japanese officials.[3] The

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[1] Zev Handel, *Sinography: The Borrowing and Adaptation of the Chinese Script* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

[2] William F. Pore, "The Inquiring Literatus: Yi Su-gwang's 'Brush-Talks' with Phung Khac Khoan in Beijing in 1598," *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society – Korea Branch*, no. 83 (2008): 1–26.

[3] Matsuura Akira 松浦章, *Bunka gonen Tosa hyōchaku Kōnan shōsen Ikuchōhatsu shiryō* 文化五年土佐漂着江南商船郁長発資料—江戸時代漂着唐船資料集四 (Materials Concerning to the Chinese Ship Casted Away on the Coast of Kochi Prefecuture in 1808 [Bunka 5]: Drifting Records of a Chinese Trading Ship in the Edo Period), vol. 4 (Osaka: Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies, Kansai University Press, 1989); Matsuura Akira, *Kinsei higashi ajia kaiiki shokoku no bunka kōshō* 近世東アジア海域諸国の文化交渉 (Cultural Negotiation of East China Sea Maritime Nations in the Early Modern Era) (Osaka: Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies,

forms of written dialogues in the surviving brushtalk records vary significantly depending on the literacy level of the interlocutors, the purpose of communication, and the time period in which they took place; nevertheless, for centuries on countless occasions of cross-border contact within the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, brushtalk was the sole method of face-to-face interaction that enabled East Asians from different speech communities to exchange information and convey an array of interpersonal meanings ranging from the aesthetic and philosophical to the mundane and practical thanks to the affordance of the morphographic nature of writing in Sinitic.

Since their early adaptation in the Japanese archipelago, Chinese characters were readily used by Japanese monks and diplomats in their foreign missions to China. One of the earliest brush conversations held by a Japanese speaker is the ninth century *Nittō guhō junreikōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記, or *The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*. Ennin (円仁, 794−864), a Japanese monk from the Tendai school of Buddhism and the author of the record, joined the parties of Japan's mission to Tang China (618−907). Determined to pursue Buddhism, he finally reached the Chinese coast in 838 CE following two previous attempts that had ended in failure after his vessels were shipwrecked. The course of his third journey saw him setting out from the Gotō islands 五島列島 off the coast of Nagasaki and sailing for a week across the open sea, borne by a northeasterly wind. His ship arrived just north of the Yangtze River, but was subsequently swept off course by high waves and grounded on a shoal. Learning about the unexpected guests showing up near their shore, local Tang officials in charge of the salt trade in the area boarded a small boat and set out to greet the visitors:

> Yuan Xingcun, who is a [Chinese] officer from the salt bureau, took a small boat and came to express sympathy. The envoys talked about the local customs of [their] nation using brushtalk.[4]
> 塩官判官元行存，乗小船来慰問，使等筆言国風。

As indicated in this documented record, brushtalk (筆言) was used by members of the Japanese mission to explain the circumstances of their journey and offer gifts to the Chinese officials. On several occasions in the weeks following the arrival of the Japanese visitors, Ennin held a number of brush conversations with local monks to exchange gifts and learn about the Buddhist doctrine and local customs while waiting for official permission to visit Chang'an, the capital of Tang China. This shows that whereas the Sinitic topolect spoken by the Chinese officials and the Japanese vernacular were most likely mutually incomprehensible, brushtalk proved to be a viable alternative to speech in face-to-face encounters between Japanese and Chinese co-interactants as early as the ninth century (see also Li, this volume).

In both Japan and China, this unique writing-mediated mode of synchronous communication is conventionally known as 筆談 (Chi. *bitan*; Jap. *hitsudan*) and it was in regular

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Departmental Bulletin Paper, Kansai University Press, 2010); Matsuura Akira, Aoyama Reijiro, and David C. S. Li, "Brush Conversation between Maritime Officials and Foreign Seafarers in 'Drifting Brushtalk' Records in 18th and 19th Century East Asia," in *Brush Conversation in the Sinographic Cosmopolis: Interactional Cross-Border Communication in Literary Sinitic in Early Modern East Asia*, ed. David C. S. Li, Reijiro Aoyama, and Tak-Sum Wong (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

[4] Ennin 円仁, *Nittō guhō junreikōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記 (The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law), 1926 [838 CE], Digital Collection of National Diet Library, Japan. https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/987528.

use in face-to-face cross-border interactions well into the early twentieth century.[5] In fact, anecdotes in contemporary travelogues occasionally illustrate instances of brushtalk still taking place to this day, usually during foreign travel. When out and about, Chinese and Japanese tourists sometimes resort to writing down Chinese characters to ask for assistance from strangers once they find out that the limited spoken language that they share (often English) is not good enough to make themselves understood.[6] It has to be noted, however, that as various translation applications become increasingly more accurate and freely available on mobile phones in the last few years, such anecdotal reports of brushtalk seem to have also declined significantly. Having said that, a recent tweet by Japan's former foreign minister highlighted the continued utilization of the shared script for promoting Sino-Japanese cross-cultural interaction. During his official visit to Beijing in 2019, Kōno Tarō 河野太郎, who does not speak Chinese, posted his daily schedule on Twitter using only Chinese characters (i.e., without using any input from the kana syllabaries). The aim of the gesture could be interpreted as the envoy's way of connecting with the Chinese followers, which in some respects hark back to the diplomatic brushtalk tradition of the past:

> Daily schedule of 22 August. Breakfast meeting with accompanying reporters, visit to the Forbidden City's Digital Palace, visit to the Forbidden City's Jingfu Palace, courtesy visit with Prime Minister Li Keqiang, lunch meeting with experts on Chinese diplomacy, packing, and returning home.[7]
> 八月二十二日日程。同行記者朝食懇談会、故宮博物院 Digital 故宮見学、故宮景福宮参観、李克強総理表敬、中国外交有識者昼食懇談会、荷造、帰国。

Written as such, the text matches the lexico-grammatical patterns of neither Chinese nor Japanese, but it is nonetheless comprehensible to the Chinese internet users who could decode the tweet's meaning fairly easily. Furthermore, the text is a good illustration of "fake Chinese" or "pseudo-Chinese" (偽中国語), a form of contemporary internet slang used mainly by Japanese social media users and occasionally adopted for playful Sino-Japanese written communication.[8] With compulsory education curriculums in China and Japan that cover 3,500 and 2,136 sinograms respectively,[9] today's Chinese and Japanese school-leavers continue to be relatively well-equipped to communicate with each other in writing on a broad range of subjects through the strategic use of sinograms thanks to the vast number of graphic loans exchanged historically back and forth between the two countries.[10]

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[5] David C. S. Li, Aoyama Reijiro, and Wong Tak-sum, "Silent Conversation Through Brushtalk (筆談): The Use of Sinitic as a Scripta Franca in Early Modern East Asia," *Global Chinese* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1–24.
[6] Miyazoe Wong Yuko, "The Impact of a Study: Work Programme in Japan on Interactive Competence in Contact Situations," *Japanese Language Education around the Globe*, no. 6 (1996): 83–100.
[7] Kōno Taro, "八月二十二日日程。同行記者朝食懇談会、故宮博物院 Digital 故宮見学、故宮景福宮参観、李克強総理表敬、中国外交有識者昼食懇談会、荷造、帰国," Twitter, August 22, 2019, https://twitter.com/konotarogomame/status/1164408160259432448.
[8] Imazeki Chūma 今関忠馬, "Nihon no netto-jō de 'nise Chūgokugo'" 日本のネット上で「偽中国語」 ("Pseudo-Chinese" on the Japanese Internet), *Livedoor News*, February 22, 2016. https://news.livedoor.com/article/detail/11209487/.
[9] Dilhara D. Premaratne, "Reforming Chinese Characters in the PRC and Japan: New Directions in the Twenty-First Century," *Current Issues in Language Planning* 13, no. 4 (2012): 305–319.
[10] Karen Steffen Chung, "Some Returned Loans: Japanese Loanwords in Taiwan Mandarin," in *Language Change in East Asia*, ed. T. E. McAuley (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), 161–179.

It is important to point out, however, that contemporary brushtalk represents significant qualitative differences compared with the historical brushtalk found before the early twentieth century. Contemporary brushtalkers who have no knowledge of one another's language rely on nationalized conventions of sinogram usage, often resulting in confusion or misunderstanding caused by the orthographic differences in their forms and their divergent meanings as used in their respective languages. Script reformers in both countries deemed the onerous writing system a hindrance to literacy development and modern education, and so various projects were proposed to simplify it on a number of occasions since the late nineteenth century.[11] Subsequent simplifications that took place in both nations followed their own uncoordinated courses, producing multiple graphic and semantically distinct forms of the same sinograms. Accordingly, the compound word consisting of two sinograms, *nizukuri* 荷造 (Jap. *ni* "luggage" + "make" *tsukuri* → "to pack"), in Kōno's tweet cited above led to confusion among the Chinese users of Twitter, for whom the meaning of the character *he* 荷 in modern Chinese is associated with lotus, water lilies, or the Netherlands, which are semantically completely extraneous in this context. For the educated literati of the past, on the other hand, such a misunderstanding would be less marked, owing to the shared knowledge of standard Literary Sinitic, a written language that, while not unchanging, had remained relatively stable until the movements of nationalism and modernization gradually ushered in a shift to vernacular-based written standards.

This article examines the role of Literary Sinitic in the historical context of Japanese missions to China and the US during the 1860s as well as the first formal US–Japanese trade negotiations in the 1850s. During the expedition to the US, members of the Japanese mission who were literate in Sinitic were pleasantly surprised to discover the affordance of Sinitic as a means to exchange practical information in their transcultural chance encounters with the Chinese diasporas through brushtalk, interactively and face-to-face. By outlining some of the historically salient literacy practices that shaped the spoken and written linguistic landscape of Japan, notably the adaptation of the Chinese textual tradition that had a lasting effect of privileging writing over speech, this article explores the factors underpinning the unparalleled viability and currency of brushtalk as a mode of synchronous, face-to face interaction between East Asian literati, notably well-educated elites during the mid-nineteenth century.

Literary Sinitic and *Kundoku* in Japan

Due in part to the Tokugawa shogunate's ad hoc diplomatic responses since the early seventeenth century (e.g., to control trade and restrict the spread of Christianity; cf. *sakoku* 鎖国, "closed country"), but also to the choice of Dutch as the single European language for deep study by Japanese scholars of the time, the numbers of learners and speakers of foreign languages during the mid-nineteenth century were very limited. The Dutch were gradually eclipsed by other naval powers, notably the British at sea; one consequence of this was that Dutch gave way to English as an international diplomatic language. Caught by surprise upon realizing that the European nations they had to deal with spoke principally English, the Japanese diplomats of the mid-nineteenth century were seriously embarrassed as hardly any fluent Japanese speakers of English could be found.[12] Other than a handful of interpreters from Nagasaki, the majority of

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[11] Roar Bökset, *Long Story of Short Forms: The Evolution of Simplified Chinese Characters* (Stockholm: Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University, 2006).
[12] Toyoda Minoru 豐田實, *Nihon Eigakushi no kenkyū* 日本英学史の研究 (A Study of the History of English Studies in Japan) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1941).

members of the Japanese missions to China, United States, and Europe in the 1860s had no ability to communicate with foreigners in speech. Such an ability would have made the task of acquiring much-coveted first-hand knowledge of advanced science and technology infinitely smoother, not to mention engaging diplomats from foreign countries in negotiations and other activities. On the other hand, many delegates of the missions were proficient in written Chinese, having studied the Chinese literary canons since their childhood. This knowledge proved to be invaluable in many foreign destinations, as they were likely to encounter Chinese residents in all of the major cultural and trading hubs they visited. The Sinitic script and lingua-cultural tradition that they shared allowed the Japanese visitors and their Chinese interlocutors to communicate effectively despite little knowledge of conversational routines pertaining to one another's spoken language. Instead, their face-to-face meetings were facilitated by brushtalk, whose functionality, attested by a rich body of historical records, extended from simple commercial transactions to elaborate intellectual give-and-take. What the Japanese travelers lacked in speech, they made up for in writing: without knowing the pronunciation of a single Chinese word, they were able to solicit and make sense of the information as well as grasp the intentions of their Chinese interlocutors, often forging mutually congenial connections and a personal rapport in the process. All this was made possible by the morphographic, meaning-focused nature of sinograms and the centuries-old scripta franca function of 漢字 within the Sinographic Cultural Sphere.[13]

Unravelling the challenges and benefits to the societies that adopted Chinese script and its long-established textual tradition, Kornicki delineates how the historical sociolinguistic situation of East Asia informed the relationship between the written and spoken languages in the region's different locales.[14] In contrast to vernaculars at the peripheries, literary Chinese enjoyed the unwavering status of the language of learning up until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, an area which roughly corresponds with today's China, the two Koreas, Japan, and Vietnam. In Japan, the earliest contact with Chinese characters was facilitated by the arrival of Chinese ink stones, coins, and bronze mirrors carrying short inscriptions in Chinese, which circulated as gifts of ritualistic import. Such artifacts have been found in tombs from as early as the first century BCE. The reception of sinograms in the Japanese archipelago in the Yayoi 弥生 (300 BCE–250 CE) and Kofun 古墳 (250 CE–538 CE) periods has been a major source of scholarly debate centered on the linguistic and non-linguistic significance of inscribed objects to their early users in a non-literate society which, technically, had little understanding of the concept of writing and reading.[15] In the fifth century, residents of the archipelago began inscribing Chinese characters on swords; reading and learning of the Chinese classics, which marked the beginning of literacy in Japan, was also introduced around the same time via Chinese and Korean immigrants and the settler communities formed by their descendants, who became the main talent pool for the specialized occupation of scribes.

Gradually a growing number of Japanese scholar-aristocrats also started reading and writing literary Chinese for official and business purposes, but also to study classical canons on Confucianism and Buddhism, to better appreciate poetry and literary works, as well as to

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[13] Wiebke Denecke, "Worlds without Translation: Premodern East Asia and the Power of Character Scripts," in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 204–216; Li, Aoyama, and Wong, "Silent Conversation."
[14] Peter Francis Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts in East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
[15] David Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

understand practical guide books on the symptoms of diseases and medical interventions. In China, the center of the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, Literary Sinitic continued to be the language of administration and diplomacy even after the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) gave way to the Qing (1644–1911). Instead of replacing Chinese with their own script, the Manchus retained it in order to make a better claim to the Mandate of Heaven to reign over the multi-ethnic empire. Meanwhile in Japan, at the periphery of the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, Literary Sinitic continued to be perceived by the powerful elites as the most prestigious, sacred, and cosmopolitan language, essential for all kinds of intellectual activities and superior to the various forms of vernacular writing[16]—a status it enjoyed since its arrival in ancient times up until the late nineteenth century. The sustained prestige of sinogram-based writing served to bind the East Asian literati together into a single *written* language community—the Sinographic cosmopolis[17]—through the shared practice of memorizing sinograms and composing literary Chinese texts. This practice was fostered nation-wide by the grooming and selection of literary talents through a civil service examination in China, Korea, and Vietnam and other educational institutions in Japan.[18]

Ever since the inception of literacy in Japan, Japanese scholars negotiated typological differences between their language and Chinese, and developed techniques for reading Chinese texts in their own vernacular. These techniques, traditionally known as *kundoku* 訓讀, refer to the linguistic practice of translating Chinese literary texts into Japanese vernacular texts with the visual aid of *kunten* 訓點 glosses, the morphosyntactic annotations that guide the reader to rearrange the word order from verb-medial to verb-final and to add grammatical markers necessitated by agglutinating Japanese morphology. Other than the visual aid of *kunten*, Japanese readers also assign their vernacular pronunciation to Chinese characters and read them according to Japanese phonology.[19] *Kundoku* is thus an integrated act of translating Chinese text into Japanese while preserving the original Chinese text with inserted glosses.[20] Crucially, the linguistic techniques of *kundoku* and *kunten* not only allowed Japan's educated class to absorb the knowledge and information stored in literary Chinese texts, but also enabled them to develop a system, based in the same textual tradition that came to be known as *kanbun* 漢文 (Chinese writing), which could be used to write down their own indigenous ideas. As a result, Japanese literati were able to *write* and produce new texts legible not only to domestic readers but also to a wider cosmopolitan readership elsewhere in the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, even as they had little or no idea how to actually *speak* Chinese.

In fact, only a limited segment of educated elites in pre-modern Japan acquired the ability to converse in any form of spoken Chinese, especially after the court had stopped requiring its

[16] For the purpose of this article this includes Japanese texts written in *kanbun* or Chinese writing, though many such texts would not pass as Chinese to readers outside the Japanese archipelago.
[17] Koh Chong-sŏk and Ross King, *Infected Korean Language, Purity versus Hybridity: From the Sinographic Cosmopolis to Japanese Colonialism to Global English* (New York: Cambria Press, 2014).
[18] Rebekah Clements, "Brush Talk as the 'Lingua Franca' of Diplomacy in Japanese–Korean Encounters, c.1600–1868," *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 2 (2019): 289–309; Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts*; Daniel Trambaiolo, "Diplomatic Journeys and Medical Brush Talks: Eighteenth-Century Dialogues between Korean and Japanese Medicine," in *Motion and Knowledge in the Changing Early Modern World: Orbits, Routes and Vessels*, ed. Ofer Gal and Yi Zheng (Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2014), 93–113.
[19] Handel, *Sinography*.
[20] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*; Matthew Fraleigh, "Rearranging the Figures on the Tapestry: What Japanese Direct Translation of European Texts Can Tell Us about *Kanbun Kundoku*," *Japan Forum* 31, no. 1 (2019): 4–32.

officials to learn Chinese pronunciation as early as the ninth century.[21] Around that time, Japanese literati gradually shifted their way of pronouncing Chinese characters from imitating Chinese speech sounds to indigenizing Sino-Japanese sounds that conformed to the local Japanese phonology, thereby making them unintelligible to Chinese and other non-Japanese speakers in the Sinographic Cultural Sphere.[22]

Spoken Chinese during the Edo Period

The singular focus on writing in the Japanese adoption of Chinese literary culture and the attendant disregard for oral communication that instituted itself in the Edo period were driven by converging influences from the centuries-old tradition of text-based knowledge transfer and the direction of political development established by the Tokugawa shogunate's leadership at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The shogunate's decision not to accept the status of a tributary under the Ming and Qing dynasties and to cut off official diplomatic relations with China impeded direct trade between the two countries and limited Japanese people's chances of encountering speakers of Chinese. The shogunate's policy to restrict contacts with the outside world led to decreased inflows of new Chinese immigrants, resulting in the Chinese immigrants' gradual assimilation into Japanese society and their loss of ability to speak Chinese in the seventeenth century. Prior to Commodore Matthew C. Perry's (1794–1884) arrival in Edo (Tokyo) Bay in the 1850s on a mission to open up Japanese ports to trade and the 1862 Japanese maiden voyage to Shanghai onboard the *Senzaimaru* 千歳丸, which marked the shogunate's intention of re-establishing relationship with China, the residents of the Japanese archipelago had little or no interaction with any form of spoken Chinese.

During the Tokugawa's isolationist project, which spanned more than two hundred years from 1630s to 1854, the shogunate was committed to shielding its citizenry from coming into contact with foreigners by implementing draconian restrictions on foreign trade, external relations, and the outbound and inbound movement of individuals. The general direction had been set with a ban on Christianity in 1613, and by 1640 the shogunate had issued a series of edicts prohibiting its subjects from travelling to and from abroad, while commercial trade was to be exclusively conducted with the representatives of the Dutch East India Company and Chinese merchants in the port of Nagasaki, Ryukyu embassies in Satsuma (today's Kagoshima) domain, and Korean embassies in Tsushima domain. Recent studies suggest that the *sakoku* regime should be viewed as a dynamic process of the shogunate actively manipulating foreign partners by leveraging access to the much-coveted Japanese market and silver supplies while gradually

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[21] Yoneda Yūsuke 米田雄介, ed., *Ruijyu sandaikaku sōsakuin* 類聚三代格総索引 (Administrative Law of Heian Japan) (Tokyo: Takashina Shoten, 1991); Mizuguchi Motoki 水口幹記, *Nihon kodai kanseki juyō no shiteki kenkyū* 日本古代漢籍受容の史的研究 (A Historical Study on the Acceptance of Ancient Chinese Books in Japan) (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2005); Mizuguchi Motoki 水口幹記, *Kodai Nihon to Nhūgoku bunka: Juyō to sentaku* 古代日本と中国文化：受容と選択 (Ancient Japan and Chinese Culture: Acceptance and Choice) (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 2014).

[22] Numoto Katsuaki 沼本克明, *Nihon kanjion no rekishiteki kenkyū: Taikei to hyōki o megutte* 日本漢字音の歴史的研究 :體系と表記をめぐって (Historical study of Japanese Kanji sound) (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1997); Sasaki Isamu 佐々木勇 ,*Kodai kanjion no juyō to tenkai* 古代漢字音の受容と展開 (Acceptance and Development of Ancient Kanji Sounds) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006), 299–317; Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of the Japanese Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

withdrawing from foreign trade amid the rise of domestic production.[23] Whether the *sakoku* policies derived from the shogunate's xenophobic worldview—especially towards the potential threat from the growing spread of Christianity—or from a calculated domestic strategy to bolster political authority over competing feudal lords by trumpeting national sovereignty remains a matter of debate. What is clear is that the shogunate proved rather successful at regulating and effectively curtailing interactions between its subjects and all kinds of foreigners including Chinese. No formal diplomatic relations were established with China at any point during the entire Edo period, while the movements of the small number of Chinese visitors and immigrants were restricted mostly to the *tōjin yashiki* 唐人屋敷 ("Chinese quarter"), an enclosed trading base a few hundred meters from the better-known fan-shaped trading post of Dejima 出嶋.

Before the start of Tokugawa rule from the early seventeenth century on, Japanese ports handled large numbers of Chinese merchants attracted by massive amounts of silver from the newly discovered deposits; some of the traders subsequently married and formed settlers' communities in Japan. In 1633, the first series of *sakoku* edicts banned foreign ships from staying in the port of Nagasaki beyond fifty days, denying access to all new foreign immigrants, including those from China.[24] This was followed by gradual efforts to control the movements of the Chinese residents in the archipelago. No longer allowed to depart Japan in 1634, the Chinese were forced to negotiate with the authorities and requested permission to repatriate to China, which was granted in 1639 on condition that they could only re-enter the port of Nagasaki as visitors and would no longer be able to reside in Japan. In theory, this restrictive policy divided Chinese communities into visiting traders confined to the port of Nagasaki on short stays and *jutaku tōjin* 受託唐人—resident Chinese who were regarded as Japanese subjects and prohibited from leaving Japan, at least from the perspective of the authorities. In practice, however, the line between traders and residents was sometimes blurred. For example, as late as 1672 it was possible for powerful Chinese traders such as Wei Zhiyan 魏之琰 (1618–1689) to obtain permission to stay in Nagasaki for longer than one year and gain permanent residency by cultivating close personal connections with the Nagasaki authorities through Chinese residents and to accrue personal wealth from the lucrative trade between China and Japan.[25]

Up until 1688, Chinese traders conducting business with Japanese parties were allowed to stay in Japanese-owned private accommodations.[26] After the Qing court lifted the ban on human settlement in coastal areas of China (the "Great Clearance") in 1684, thousands of Chinese merchants flooded the port of Nagasaki (whose population at the time was 30,000–40,000) each year, seeking lucrative business opportunities trading Chinese silk for Japanese silver.[27] To better capture profits from foreign trade and limit the number of Chinese traders, the shogunate further

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[23] Xing Hang, "The Shogun's Chinese Partners: The Alliance between Tokugawa Japan and the Zheng Family in Seventeenth-Century Maritime East Asia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 111–136; Michael S. Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2011); Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); Kären Wigen, *The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750–1920*, vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[24] Iioka Naoko, "Wei Zhiyan and the Subversion of the *Sakoku*," in *Offshore Asia: Maritime Interactions in East Asia before Steamships*, ed. Fujita Kayoko, Momoki Shiro, and Anthony Reid (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), 237.

[25] Iioka, "Wei Zhiyan," 248–251.

[26] Matsuura, *Kinsei higashi*, 36.

[27] Matsuura, *Kinsei higashi*.

strengthened the regulation restricting the merchants' entry to Nagasaki, confining them to *tōjin yashiki*. This change significantly reduced ordinary Japanese people's opportunities for face-to-face contact with Chinese traders and their exposure to spoken Chinese.[28] The interactions with Chinese traders were thus mainly restricted to the appointed officials called *tōtsūji* 唐通事, or Japanese interpreters of Chinese. Established in 1604 under the Nagasaki magistrate, the office of *tōtsūji* served as the go-between communicating the shogunate's orders to the Chinese traders and relayed their requests back to the authorities.[29]

From its establishment until the end of the shogunate's control of the city in 1867, a total of 826 interpreters were officially appointed to the hereditary positions as skilled professionals to issue permits to and conduct trade agreements with Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.[30] In the early seventeenth century, *tōtsūji* who spoke Chinese as their first language and Japanese as their second were recruited from the Chinese diaspora. After the ban on outbound travel, the Chinese community, including the first generation of *tōtsūji*, gradually assimilated into Japanese society through marriages with local women. While the second and third generations of *tōtsūji* born to Japanese mothers could still learn spoken Chinese from their male elders at home, later generations did not have as many opportunities to use the language in daily life and viewed spoken Chinese as a professional skill acquired through systematic education with teaching materials geared towards meeting the requirements of the hereditary interpreter position.[31] The future *tōtsūji* usually began practicing Chinese pronunciation around the age of seven or eight by reading aloud the classics such as *The Analects* (*Lunyu*) or *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*) and memorizing colloquial expressions that would be useful in daily conversations. Equipped with basic speaking skills, they would learn professional translation and interpreting from textbooks passed down for generations in the family.

In addition, aspiring *tōtsūji* would read vernacular literature such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義) and *The Water Margin* (*Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳) to

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[28] While the shogunate severely restricted the movement of Chinese traders, Chinese monks of Obaku Buddhism enjoyed relative freedom of movement and traveled to temples across the country under the guardianship of the shogun and high-ranking officials. The inflow of Obaku monks of the Chinese origin ended in 1723, with Japanese monks entirely replacing the Chinese pool after the last Chinese abbot of Manpukuji (Dacheng Zhaohan 大成照漢), died in 1784. See Rebekah Clements, "Speaking in Tongues? Daimyo, Zen Monks, and Spoken Chinese in Japan, 1661–1711," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 3 (2017): 603–626; Zhou Yun 周耘, "Yūkyūnaru furusato no hibiki: Ōbaku seimei no Chūgokuteki yōso" 悠久なる故郷の響き——黄檗声明の中国的要素 (The Sound of Eternal Hometown: The Chinese Element of Ōbaku Buddhism), in *Seikai no Nihon kenkyū* 世界の日本研究 (Japanese Studies around the World) 2019, 109–118.

[29] Charles Ralph Boxer, *Dutch Merchants and Mariners in Asia, 1602–1795* (London: Variorum, 1988); Xu Haihua, 許海華, "Bakumatsu ni okeru Nagasaki" 幕末における長崎唐通事の体制 (The Structure of the Nagasaki *Tōtsūji* Bureau during the Bakumatsu Period), *Journal of East Asian Cultural Interaction Studies*, no. 5 (2012): 267–280.

[30] Although a total of 1,644 names are recorded with reference to positions under the *tōtsūji* designation, the real number of people engaged as interpreters was 826, as the same person could be listed multiple times if he held different positions. A total of 24 positions are hierarchically graded including *dai tsūji* 大通事 (senior interpreter), *kotsūji* 小通事 (junior interpreter), *keiko tsūji* 稽古通事 (apprentice), and so on. The higher-ranking positions could only be inherited by Chinese descendants. See Xu, "Bakumatsu ni okeru Nagasaki"; Kitada Kunihiko 喜多田久仁彦, "Tōtsūji no Chūgokugo ni tsuite" 唐通事の中国語について (Chinese Language Ability of *Tōtsūji*), *Bulletin of the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies*, no. 87 (2016): 9–20; Matsuoka Yuta 松岡雄太, *Nagasaki tōtsūji no Manshū gogaku* 長崎唐通事の満洲語学 (Manchurian Language Learning of Nagasaki *Tōtsūji*) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2019).

[31] Kitada, "Tōtsūji no Chūgokugo ni tsuite."

advance their knowledge of everyday vocabulary and colloquial expressions. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a sizable commercial market for vernacular-based Chinese novels,[32] printed vernacular Chinese dictionaries, textbooks, and glossaries,[33] suggesting broad interest in Japanese society and a huge readership in consuming vernacular-based books imported from China. The learning of Chinese classics by reading vernacular-based texts was hailed by the celebrated scholar Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) as the "Nagasaki method."[34] There were even societies where enthusiastic members could gather to practice spoken Chinese.[35]

The Japanese Mission to Shanghai (1862)

Modern Sino-Japanese relations began officially with the Japanese missions of 1862, in which the shogunate dispatched a contingent of samurai and merchants to Shanghai onboard the *Senzaimaru*, a commercial vessel acquired from the British. The mission's multifold aims ranged from watching the rules and practices of international trade to examining the social upheaval inflicted by the Taiping Rebellion and from selling Japanese seafood to Chinese merchants to purchasing military hardware from European manufacturers.[36] Under the command of a British captain and manned by his crew, the *Senzaimaru* sailed from Nagasaki to Shanghai with fifty-one Japanese passengers including four interpreters of the Chinese language and two interpreters of Dutch.[37] Although diplomatic negotiations were mainly conducted through a mixture of formal written communication and oral interpretation, the samurai, who did not know any spoken Chinese, often resorted to brushtalk in their informal encounters with locals and found this method of communication much more suited to impromptu exchanges and conducive to building friendships with their interlocutors.

Hibino Teruhiro 日比野輝寛 (1838–1912), then twenty-four years old, compiled two volumes of *Senzaimaru* brushtalk records, entitled *Botsubi hitsugo* 沒鼻筆語 (No Cause

[32] Ōba Osamu 大庭脩, *Edo jidai niokeru Tōsen mochiwatashi sho no kenkyū* 江戸時代における唐船持渡書の研究 (Research on Books Traded by Chinese Vessels during the Edo Period) (Osaka: Kansai University Press, 1981); Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武, *Nihon kinsei shōsetsu to Chūgoku shōsetsu* 日本近世小説と中国小説 (Recent Japanese Novels and Chinese Novels) (Tokyo: Seishōdō Shoten, 1987); Emanuel Pastreich, *The Observable Mundane: Vernacular Chinese and the Emergence of a Literary Discourse on Popular Narrative in Edo Japan* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2011).

[33] Rebekah Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[34] Emanuel Pastreich, "Grappling with Chinese Writing as a Material Language: Ogyū Sorai's *Yakubunsentei*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2001): 119–70.

[35] Clements, *Cultural History of Translation*; Clements, "Speaking in Tongues?"; on exchanges between Japanese and Chinese literati during the Tokugawa period, see also Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武, *Kinsei Nitchūbunjin kōryūshi no kenkyū* 近世日中文人交流史の研究 (Study of Exchanges between Japanese and Chinese Literati in the Early Modern Period (Tokyo: Kenbun Shuppan, 2004).

[36] Joshua A. Fogel, "Japanese Travelers to Shanghai in the 1860s," in *Historiography and Japanese Consciousness of Values and Norms*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel and James C. Baxter (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2002), 79–99.

[37] Notomi Kajiro 納富介次郎, *Shanhai zakki* 上海雑記 (Notes on Shanghai), in *Bakumatsu Meiji Chūgoku kenbunroku shūsei* 幕末明治中国見聞録集成第 (Collection of Travel Accounts of China from the Late Edo and Meiji Periods), ed. Shinji Kojima, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yumani Shobo, 1997), 24. Originally published in 1862.

Brushtalk)[38] and *Zeiyūroku* 贅肬録 (Boredom Notes),[39] documenting his brush conversations with twelve Chinese interlocutors in Shanghai. Hibino was born in Takasu domain 高須 of Mino 美濃 (currently Gifu 岐阜 prefecture) and studied *kangaku* 漢學 (Chinese learning) in Nagoya and Edo prior to joining the Shanghai mission. During the two-month visit to the city, he scrupulously recorded his daily activities and observations, naming his diary *A Record of Warts and Lumps* in an allusion to his humble background from a small-scale domain.[40] Despite its self-deprecating title, however, Hibino's diary proves to be a keenly observed, meticulous account of Shanghai's sociocultural conditions and political situation based on the author's extensive exploration and passionate interactions with the Chinese people, which in all likelihood were carried out using brush, ink and paper. Suffering from cholera at one point, Hibino was forced to take a break from his trips into the city and recuperate at the hotel. This prompted quite a few Chinese intellectuals eager to seize the cultural exchange opportunity to visit him at his lodging. They came with books and various art objects such as paintings, calligraphy, and fans inscribed with poetry, effectively turning his room into an intellectual salon. The occupations and expertise of Hibino's Chinese visitors varied from painter to poet and from bookshop owner to army commander, while their birthplaces ranged from Jiangxi to Jiangsu. Even though the participants represented such a diverse mix of backgrounds, their brush conversations seemed to flow quite seamlessly despite intellectually challenging topics such as comparisons of political administration systems and educational institutions in China and Japan, opinions toward military operations taking place in the outskirts of Shanghai, but also aesthetically appealing compositions of poetry in Sinitic exchanged as gifts. Brushtalk, in other words, seemed to play a fairly extensive role as a method or modality of communication in cross-border encounters featuring "speakers" educated in Literary Sinitic; even so, Joshua Fogel draws attention to Hibino's excitement upon his discovery of brushtalk's utility as follows:[41]

> When I went to a market, I could not communicate orally there. Replacing the tongue with the brush, though, enabled rapid communication. Let me give a few examples. If I wrote [in Kanbun], "How much is this ink?" [the proprietor] might respond, "One yuan." If I wrote, "You're overcharging me," he might respond, "That's the genuine, true price" or "That's the real price, none other." Suppose I wrote, "I don't like the color of the ink,

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[38] Hibino Teruhiro 日比野輝寛, *Botsubi hitsugo* 沒鼻筆語 (No Cause Brushtalk), in *Bakumatsu Meiji Chūgoku*, ed. Shinji Kojima, vol. 1. Originally published in 1862.

[39] Hibino Teruhiro, *Zeiyūroku* 贅肬録 (Boredom Notes), in *Bakumatsu Meiji Chūgoku*, ed. Shinji Kojima, vol. 1. Originally published in 1862.

[40] Fujita Yoshihisa 藤田佳久, "Bakumatsuki ni Nihonjin ga otozune kirokushita Shanhai zō" 幕末期に日本人が訪れ記録した上海像 (The Image of Shanghai that Japanese People Visited and Recorded in the Late Edo Period), *Annual Reports of Toa Dobun Shoin Memorial Center*, no. 23 (2015): 91–114.

[41] Joshua A. Fogel, "The Voyage of the Senzaimaru to Shanghai: Early Sino-Japanese Contacts in the Modern Era," in *The Cultural Dimension of Sino-Japanese Relations: Essays on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 79–94. See also David C. S. Li and Reijiro Aoyama, "Senzaimaru's Maiden Voyage to Shanghai in 1862: Brush Conversations between Japanese Travelers and Qing Chinese People," in *Brush Conversation in the Sinographic Cosmopolis: Interactional Cross-Border Communication in Literary Sinitic in Early Modern East Asia*, ed. David C. S. Li, Reijiro Aoyama, and Tak-Sum Wong.

and it has no aroma. I think it was produced recently." He might respond, "All of these goods are aged, and the aroma is within."[42]
蓋シ市肆至ルトコロ言語通ゼズ。筆舌ヲ假リ相語ルニ、速カニ辨ジ又趣アリ。ソノ一二ヲ挙ゲン。「此墨價若干」ト書スレバ、「一元」ト答フ。「虛價」ト書スレバ、「眞正實價」、或ハ「實價不二」ト答フ。「墨色不好。且不香。想近製」ト書スレバ、「都是陳貨。香在內」ト答フ。少シク價ヲ減ズレバ、「遵命」ト答フ。[43]

Having come face-to-face with Chinese merchants and intellectuals in a range of informal situations, Japanese members of the 1862 *Senzaimaru* mission soon became aware of the practical functionality of brushtalk in all sorts of interactions from commercial transactions to more artistically or intellectually oriented exchanges. Another passenger, Nakura Nobuatsu 名倉信敦 (1822–1901), clearly impressed with brushtalk's potential as a communication tool, even began "chatting up" random passersby in the streets with his brush and paper. During his two-month stay in Shanghai he interacted with more than thirty Chinese people and compiled two volumes of brushtalk records entitled *Kojō Hitsuwa* 滬城筆話 (Shanghai Brushtalk) and *Kojō Hitsuwa Shūyi* 滬城筆話拾遺 (Shanghai Brushtalk Gleanings) based on the original paper records of his brushtalk encounters in the city.[44] Utilizing brushtalk to affirm the shared cultural bond, Nakura succeeded in making a close friend with Wang Genfu 王亘甫, who expressed his sadness at Nakura's departure and desire to visit Japan for a future reunion. The get-together never happened, even though Nakura considered stopping by Shanghai on his way to and back from France as a member of the Second Japanese Embassy to Europe in 1864. On his way to France, however, he learned from Wang's father that Wang had moved to Zhejiang and, on his way back, that Wang was bedbound from a serious illness, which prevented him from paying Wang a visit. When Nakura finally made it to Wang's home in Shanghai in 1868, he learned that Wang had already passed away. Although altogether he visited Shanghai five times in the 1860s,[45] he never put much store in oral communication:

Sinograms in Japanese and Chinese are semantically identical [but] are pronounced very differently, hence not mutually intelligible in speech, something that [some interlocutors] found very strange. Sometimes I was invited to read what I had written in brushtalk and read the sinograms aloud in Japanese. They found it very strange and laughed; some of

[42] Fogel, "Voyage of the Senzaimaru," 81; Notomi Kajirō 納富介次郎 and Hibino Teruhiro 日比野輝寛, *Bunkyū Ninen Shanhai Nikki* 文久二年上海日記 (1862 Shanhai Nikki) (Ōsaka: Zenkoku Shobō, 1946), 65; also cited in Satō Saburō 佐藤三郎, "Bunkyū ninen ni okerue" 文久二年における (On 1862), in *Kindai Nitchū kōshōshi no kenkyū* 近代日中交渉史の研究 (A Study on the History of Sino-Japanese Interaction at Modern Times) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1984), 91.
[43] Hibino, *Zeiyūroku*, 75.
[44] Morita Yoshihiko 森田吉彦, "Heigakusha Nagura Nobuatsu no Bakumatsu kaigai kenbun" 兵学者名倉信敦の幕末海外見聞 (Bakumatsu Overseas Tour of the Military Scholar Nagura Nobuatsu), *Japanese Cultural Studies of Teikyō University*, no. 40 (2009): 45–81.
[45] Haruna Tōru 春名徹, "Katoki no ichi chishikihito ni okeru ibunka sesshoku no imi: Nagaura Anato no baai" 過渡期の一知識人における異文化接触の意味: 名倉予何人の場合 (The Meaning of Cross-Cultural Contact of Intellectuals in the Transitional Time: The Case of Nagura Anato), *Chōfu Japanese Culture*, no. 11 (2001): 35–61.

> them clapped in admiration.[46]
> 和漢ノ字義同フテ音訓殊二言語不通深クアヤシムモノアリ或ハ余ニ請フテ筆語ノ文字ヲ讀マレム余ノ乃チ邦讀従テ朗カ二讀起セバ渠ノ且ツ怪シミ且ツ笑テ掌ヲ撫スルモノアリ 。(名倉予何人 Nakura 1862/1997: 208)

Nakura's use of brushtalk was not limited to Shanghai. His diary reports that he enjoyed brush conversations with Chinese people in Paris and Singapore on the way back from France.[47] Although Nakura studied "Dutch learning" in Edo in the 1850s, Haruna Tōru contends that brushtalk was his main, if not sole, method of communicating with foreigners.[48] In fact, it was not just members of the Chinese mission(s) but also those headed to the West who were frequent users of Sinitic brushtalk whenever they encountered locals of Chinese descent. In various locations all around the globe, from Hawaii to San Francisco and from Batavia to Hong Kong, the Japanese samurai would bring out brush and paper to negotiate commercial deals and talk politics in Sinitic writing with their Chinese partners.

The Japanese Mission to the United States (1860)

The *Senzaimaru* voyage to Shanghai was not the earliest official gesture marking Japan's opening to the world. Two years earlier, in 1860, the shogunate sent the first formal Japanese embassy to the United States to ratify the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which was signed by the two countries in 1858 committing the shogunate to abandoning its long-held seclusion policy. The members of the historic mission were tasked with absorbing as much advanced technology and science of the West as they could. The trip's itinerary included the arrival in Washington via California and a return journey to Japan across the Pacific Ocean with stops in Batavia and Hong Kong. While the samurai did their best observing the American society and meticulously recording their experiences throughout the trip, their linguistic abilities were quite limited. All official talks and negotiations were conducted in Dutch owing to inadequate skills of the Japanese interpreters of English. Miyoshi Masao, for example, exposed the poor writing skills of the English interpreter Nakahama Manjirō 中濱万次郎 (1827−1898) in his analysis of Nakahama's English letter written during the mission, concluding that Nakahama lacked adequate competence as a professional interpreter.[49] The historian furthermore cast doubt on the Dutch linguistic skills of the Japanese team, citing the criticism of the interpreter Moriyama Takichirō 森山多吉郎 (1820–1871) made by his Dutch counterpart. Miyoshi questioned whether Moriyama was sufficiently familiar with Dutch grammar and complex legal terms, even though he was considered the best interpreter among his Japanese colleagues. In contrast to the Japanese mission's struggle with Western languages, even among the presumed experts in the field, interaction in written Sinitic with the Chinese people on board the ship and at the ports

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[46] Nakura Anato 名倉予何人, "Shina kenbunroku" 支那見聞録 (Travel Observations in China), in *Bakumatsu Meiji Chūgoku Kenbunroku Shūsei*, ed. Shinji Kojima, vol. 11, 208. Originally published in 1862.

[47] Matsuzawa Hiroaki 松沢弘陽, "Bakumatsu seiyōgyō to Chūgoku kenbun" 幕末西洋行と中国見聞 (The Japanese Missions' Encounter with China on Their Way to the West, 1862–1871), pt. 2, *The Hokkaido Law Review* 43, no. 2 (1992): 231; Morita, "Heigakusha Nagura Nobuatsu no Bakumatsu kaigai kenbun," 78.

[48] Haruna, "Katoki no ichi chishikihito ni okeru ibunka sesshoku no imi: Nagaura Anato no baai," 49; see also Li and Aoyama, "Senzaimaru's Maiden Voyage."

[49] Miyoshi Masao, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States (1860)* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), 10–13.

along the journey posed much less difficulty, in that brushtalk allowed even ordinary samurai to communicate with the Chinese interlocutors fluently.[50] It should be noted that these samurai were not professionally trained in direct communication with foreigners; rather, they manifestly acquired knowledge of Literary Sinitic by virtue of an education that started in childhood following the mainstream curriculum characterized by close adherence to the Chinese literary tradition. Similar to the members of the subsequent *Senzaimaru* mission, it was only after they left Japan that the envoys discovered how useful and effective written communication in Sinitic could be. The semiotic potential and communicative affordance of Sinitic brushtalk was clearly evidenced in "silent conversations" they engaged in with sundry strangers along the way, from Chinese shopkeepers in Hawaii to curious Chinese onlookers in the bustling streets of Hong Kong.

In February 1860, the Japanese envoys left Yokohama on board the Powhatan and stopped over at Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) for supplies before heading to San Francisco. One of the members of the embassy, Tamamushi Sadayu 玉蟲左太夫, a retainer of Sendai domain, compiled a diary of the voyage *Kōbei Nichiroku* 航米日録 (Diary of the Journey to United States) detailing his daily activities and observations. Excited to land on the foreign soil for the first time in his life, Tamamushi took full advantage of the five-day stay on the island and frequently ventured out to town near the waterfront exploring anything that caught his eye. One day, he left his hotel to buy shoes and started a brush conversation with the Chinese shop owner:

> I went out one afternoon to buy shoes. I found a shoe shop run by Chinese people about 200 meters from our hotel. I asked about the price. [The Chinese shop owner] said it cost one and a half large round silver. I tried to use Japanese square silver. He took a brush and wrote down "This country does not use square silver." I took the brush next and wrote "All I brought with me is the square silver." He nodded, took the brush again and wrote "[One and a half large round silver] is equivalent to four square silver."[51]
> 午後靴ヲ求ント市街二出テ旅館ヨリ二丁許行キ支那店アリ靴ヲ商キノフ其価ヲ問フ大円銀一個半ト云予国の方銀ヲ以テ買ント ス彼筆ヲトリ此國不用方銀ト書ス予亦筆ヲ取リ予所携唯方銀而已如何ト書ス彼首肯又筆ヲ取リ四個方銀可以兌換ト書ス。

The procedure of using brushtalk to procure shoes from a Chinese shopkeeper is reminiscent of Hibino Teruhiro's purchase of ink in Shanghai cited above, except that the transaction took place thousands of miles away, in a location we would not normally expect to see Sinitic brushtalk in action. The following day, Tamamushi decided to visit a bookshop. He asked locals for directions but neither speech nor gestures—arranging his hands in the shape of a book and flipping through imaginary pages—worked to convey his meaning and he was mistakenly taken to a laundry shop and a photo studio instead. Similar communication problems plagued him throughout the entire trip. As for the language written with the alphabet, he confessed his deep disappointment when he only found tens of thousands of books written in "crab-walking script" 蟹行字 at the bookshop in Hawaii, since he did not have any ability to decipher it.[52] It was thus

[50] Matsuzawa Hiroaki 松沢弘陽, "Seiyou tansaku to Chūgoku" 西洋「探索」と中国 (The Japanese Envoys' Encounter with China on Their Missions to the West, 1862–1868), pt. 1, *Hokudai hōgaku ronshū* 29, nos. 3–4 (1979): 481–514.
[51] Tamamushi Yoshishige 玉虫誼茂. *Kōbei nichiroku* 航米日録 (Diary of the Journey to United States), 27. Waseda University Library, 1860. https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ka05/ka05_04223/index.html.
[52] Tamamushi, *Kōbei nichiroku*, 29.

the Sinitic script that Tamamushi and other members of the Japanese mission quickly found to operate as the de facto and most reliable means of communication throughout their journey, even though the Sinographic Cultural Sphere was thousands of miles away.

Brushtalk not only assisted Tamamushi during commercial transactions and practical exchanges, but it also left him an unforgettable imprint of a Chinese pharmacist called Pan Libang 潘麗邦, who had been a resident of Hawaii for seven or eight years. Tamamushi portrayed Pan as a respectable person with valuable cultural and political ideas, an impression he formed solely on the basis of their brushtalk interaction. Utilizing the cultural and intellectual resources of the mutually shared realm of Confucian learning and Chinese literary tradition, the two conducted an elaborate silent conversation "speaking" their minds in considerable detail about their respective backgrounds, debating Confucian thoughts and lamenting the threat posed by the Western powers to their respective countries, while infusing their interaction with the spirit of profound mutual respect. Tamamushi was not alone in finding Pan an interesting personality; a few other members of the embassy who also visited the pharmacist made notes of their memorable brushtalk interactions with him in their own diaries.

When the mission arrived in San Francisco, the members learned that the city was home to a large Chinese immigrant community, which they soon confirmed with a visit to a Chinese theater and a meal of tofu. The discovery prompted them to proactively seek out Chinese conversation partners to learn about life in the United States through the Chinese eyes, a perspective the Japanese considered valuable and informative given the cultural proximity between China and Japan. In one instance, for example, Tamamushi received a piece of advice from his Chinese interlocutor warning the Japanese against falling into the American trap, which was suggestive of nationalistic sentiments among the Chinese diaspora while reflecting their marginalized position in American society.[53] For the samurai, with no spoken language skills in either English or Chinese, brushtalk functioned as virtually the only semiotic resource that facilitated the give-and-take of information and opinions during their trip effectively. What is more, thanks to their interactions with the Chinese diaspora, who had arrived in the western US about a decade earlier, the Japanese mission gained an insider's perspective of the Chinese diaspora in North America, which was one crucial factor that shaped their views toward the social relations in the US.

While most brushtalk was no doubt deployed by members of the Japanese mission acting in their private capacity in the sort of informal interactions analyzed above, brush and ink were sometimes also utilized during official meetings. On Powhatan's return journey to Japan, the ambassadors stopped in Batavia, then the capital of the Dutch East Indies (and present-day Jakarta). After a courtesy visit to the Dutch governor, the Japanese envoys received a formal delegation of leaders from the city's Chinese community.[54] The communication means during the meeting was no doubt brushtalk, a method both sides would feel comfortable using for the purpose of improvising elaborate, sometimes eloquent messages. The Chinese were reportedly just as enthusiastic about communicating in writing as the Japanese upon encountering foreigners from the Far East who understood written Chinese (China) and Literary Sinitic (elsewhere in Sinographic East Asia). Describing an overwhelmingly positive response to the Japanese presence, one mission member who found himself surrounded by a crowd in Hong Kong, wrote in his diary:

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[53] Matsuzawa, "Seiyou tansaku to Chūgoku," pt. 1.
[54] Matsuzawa, "Seiyou tansaku to Chūgoku," pt. 1.

> When we walked into town, many Chinese people gathered and walked with us as we moved. They wanted to "talk" with us through brushtalk, so they would get in our way to stop us.[55]
> 我徒ノ者市中ヲ徘徊ナセハ支那人群ヲ為前後ニ従行シ筆談ヲ以テ言語ヲ通セントシテ我徒ヲ遮リ団ム。

The excerpt clearly conveys a sense of curiosity of the local Chinese towards the Japanese visitors and their keen interest in using brushtalk as a means to communicate with the foreigners, not infrequently making comments on the shared cultural features such as similarities in language and attire. On one occasion, when the Japanese visitor was generously invited to a local home, his Chinese host served tea and pointed to the long sleeves worn by the guest, remarking that they reminded him of the traditional Chinese clothing style. He reminisced about China's lost traditions while praising Japan for preserving elements of the traditional lifestyle and expressed fascination with the extraordinary reality of the lingua-cultural bond between the two countries made possible by a shared script and adherence to the teaching of Confucius, even though they could hardly communicate in speech.[56]

Negotiations between the United States and Japan (1853–1854)

As discussed in the previous two sections, Sinitic brushtalk played an essential role in face-to-face interactions between the Japanese and Chinese interlocutors during Japan's diplomatic missions to China and the US, facilitating meaningful conversations on common issues of cultural identity and national interests during a tumultuous time in which both countries were forced into confrontation with increasingly assertive Western powers. Brushtalk's influence as a medium of transnational and transcultural communication, however, extended not only to Sino-Japanese interactions; it was also instrumental in the negotiations leading to the signing of the first official treaty between Japan and the US in 1854.[57] The treaty, known as the Convention of Kanagawa, signed after a campaign of naval intimidation by Commodore Matthew C. Perry carried out over two visits in 1853 and 1854, opened Japanese ports to American trade and set in motion steps that would lead to Japan's eventual modernization.

In terms of the means of communication during the actual interactions between the two parties during Perry's first expedition in 1853, English and Japanese were not available as workable options since neither side had interpreters that were sufficiently competent in the two languages. Instead, the negotiators had to resort to third languages: Dutch for oral communication and Chinese for documentation and face-to-face written communication.[58] As far as English was concerned, Japanese interpreters' knowledge of the language was extremely limited. The shogunal interpreter Hori Tatsunosuke 堀達之助 (1823−1892) had learned some English from the castaway Ranald MacDonald before he was tasked with assisting in the negotiations with the Americans in 1853. When Perry, onboard Susquehanna, reached Uraga at

[55] Matsuzawa, "Seiyou tansaku to Chūgoku," pt. 1, 502.
[56] Matsuzawa, "Seiyou tansaku to Chūgoku," pt. 1, 503.
[57] De-min Tao, "Negotiating Language in the Opening of Japan: Luo Sen's Journal of Perry's 1854 Expedition," *Japan Review*, no. 17 (2005): 91–119.
[58] Tao, "Negotiating Language," 93.

the entrance to Edo Bay, Hori rowed up to the ship and hollered "I can speak Dutch."[59] That was the extent to which English was used by the Japanese side throughout the entire intercourse of the Perry expedition.[60] A few returned castaways were also present, as well as the interpreter Nakahama Manjirō who was mentioned in an earlier section, but they had neither the ability nor authority to perform the delicate and vital duty of translating official English documents into Japanese during unprecedented formal diplomatic talks between Japan and the US.

On the US side, Perry brought along several Japanese castaways who knew some English as unofficial interpreters. That notwithstanding, he was aware that it would be virtually impossible to use English-to-Japanese translation directly in bilateral communications considering the linguistic limitations of both sides. As a result, he had no choice but to engage interpreters familiar with Dutch or Chinese. In advance of his expedition, Perry extensively studied books about Japan and consulted Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), a German doctor and former Dutch military serviceman who had expertise in Japan as he had served as physician and botanist in Dejima from 1823 to 1826. In addition to this, Siebold had prior diplomatic experience negotiating with the Japanese during the Russian attempt to open trade relations with Japan in 1852.

Had Perry decided to employ Siebold as his chief interpreter, the language of negotiations of the American side would have been solely Dutch. However, Perry decided to depart from the conventional Dutch way of restrained and humble diplomacy and, instead, strategically forced Japan to open its ports with the aid of conspicuous displays of force in the form of heavily-armed steamers that were strongly suggestive of warfare, a foreign policy tactic later termed gunboat diplomacy. Subsequently, he passed up Siebold and hired his fellow American missionary, Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), as his chief interpreter and entrusted him with the task of documenting the negotiations and translating official communications including the letter from US President Millard Fillmore (1800–1874) to the Japanese emperor.

Williams was an expert of Chinese language and culture who published numerous books about China and for almost two decades edited *Chinese Repository*, a periodical on Chinese topics, while managing the printing press of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Guangdong province. To advance his mission of spreading Christianity to China, Williams developed a high level of communicative competence in Chinese and comprehensive understanding of Chinese customs and beliefs. While oral communication during the first encounter with the Japanese officials was to be conducted mainly in Dutch, the official letter from President Millard Fillmore presented to the Japanese side was to be translated into both Dutch and Chinese. Although Williams read Chinese quite well and had a good command of spoken Mandarin and Cantonese, Chinese composition, which necessitated the ability to use erudite expressions and elegant calligraphy, was not his strength. During the first expedition,

[59] Matthew Calbraith Perry, *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* (New York: D. Appleton, 1856), 234.

[60] This is reminiscent of young Fukuzawa Yukichi's (福澤諭吉 1835–1901) utter disappointment at Yokohama where the first Western traders were allowed to live and do business: "I had been striving with all my powers for many years to learn the Dutch language. And now when I had reason to believe myself one of the best in the country, I found that I could not even read the signs of merchants who had come to trade with us from foreign lands. It was a bitter disappointment but I knew it was no time to be downhearted"; Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉, *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, trans. Eiichi Kiyooka (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 98; cited in Mizumura Minae 水村美苗, *The Fall of Language in the Age of English*, trans. Mari Yoshihara and Juliet Winters Carpenter (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 131.

therefore, he employed a Chinese teacher named Sieh to help him further his knowledge of the language and work on the translation project; Sieh, however, died of Opium addiction a month before the Kurihama 久里浜 meeting in 1853. The situation required Williams to act fast and find a suitable replacement for the second mission in 1854. This is how Luo Sen 羅森, a Cantonese-speaking businessman, came onto the stage, being recruited by Williams in Shanghai to assist the American side with the Japanese trade talks. Luo Sen's unconventional decision to join the expedition rather than seeking advancement of his career through the more standard means of pursuing a civil service career may be traced back to his discontent with the Qing court, which failed to acknowledge his contribution in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion.[61]

The working relationship between the two, which turned out to be friendly and fruitful, involved Luo performing a variety of secretarial tasks such as translating documents and taking dictated notes from Williams. This was not, however, the full extent of Luo's input in the advancement of US–Japanese negotiations. Perhaps more important was his ability to communicate with the Japanese officials via brushtalk, which went a long way towards helping to allay the deep-rooted Japanese suspicion of the Americans, fired up by the provocative naval intimidation tactics deployed by Perry at Edo Bay. Since the Dutch-speaking interpreters from the Japanese side were not always available to participate in the meetings, the Chinese language came to be used instead as an official medium of communication, giving Luo Sen an opportunity to impress and gain the trust of his Japanese interlocutors. His intimate familiarity with the cultural and intellectual resources steeped in the Chinese literary canons enabled him to use Sinitic with much greater freedom than would have ever been available to Williams to express and play with various meanings accessible to the Japanese who shared much of the lingua-cultural knowledge. As reported by Williams in his diary, Luo Sen "gets on admirably with the natives; he is indeed the most learned Chinaman they have ever seen."[62]

In a diplomatically charged situation in which the negotiating parties had no recourse to a common spoken language, writing-mediated conversation could still take place using brush, ink and paper, facilitated by the morphographic nature of Sinitic and the brushtalkers' erudite knowledge of the Chinese classics. In addition to that, with brushtalk being much more than just a linguistic tool, the resulting communication served not only the purpose of conveying legible messages, but it also allowed the interlocutors to reach a profound mutual understanding grounded in a similar worldview and rooted in co-membership in the same cultural sphere. Luo Sen's ability to compose elegant phrases when engaged in brushtalk with the Japanese officials, therefore, helped not only to overcome the language barrier but also to transcend the cultural and political apprehensions that had accrued between the Chinese and Japanese as a result of their lack of direct contact for over two hundred years.[63]

For example, it was very common for well-educated literati of Sinitic to use brushtalk to improvise and exchange poetic verses, a practice that Luo Sen followed so often during his interactions with the Japanese officials. Recounting a meeting in Yokohama, he writes:

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[61] Tao, "Negotiating Language."

[62] S. Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, LL. D.: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1889), 219.

[63] Tao, "Negotiating Language." See also Reijiro Aoyama, "Sociocultural Functions of Sinograms and Sinitic Writing in the Sinographic Cultural Sphere: Transnational Brushtalk Encounters in Mid-19th and Early 20th Century Japan," in *Brush Conversation in the Sinographic Cosmopolis*, ed. Li, Aoyama, and Wong.

> There was one gentleman, a Mr. Hop-yuen-choo, who conversed with me on this occasion, and gave me a case for pencils, along with these lines:
>
> The rain is gone; the nightingale
> Sings loud among the trees;
> Its notes to the foreign vessels
> Are borne upon the breeze.
> Ah! silly bird, thou knowest not
> Their sails they soon will turn,
> The yellow hats and lace of gold
> Go and leave us to mourn.[64]
>
> 合原猪三郎，其於臨別贈予墨盒一詩一曰:
>
> 樹外雨收鶯語流
> 聲聲啼近旅人舟
> 不知黄帽金衣客
> 似解轉蓬飄絮愁[65]

Nature and landscape being quintessential themes of classical poetry, the poem's references to birds, trees, and rain attest to the author and Luo's mutual understanding and shared appreciation of classical Chinese literature.[66] Luo Sen's literary flair while brushtalking helped to earn good will from the Japanese side and did much to extenuate some of the tensions that inevitably afflicted the initial diplomatic talks between the mistrustful parties. Sinitic writing was thus instrumental in helping the negotiators to instantly grasp one another's intentions and clarify misunderstandings, not least because it aided in creating a relaxed atmosphere during the talks while fostering personal rapport between Luo and his Japanese hosts.[67]

Conclusion

In contrast with contemporary written communication facilitated by the shared Sinitic script, as in the case of somewhat enigmatic tweet by Japan's former foreign minister cited above, the Japanese and Chinese literati of the mid-nineteenth century were in general better equipped to accurately deliver their meanings and correctly apprehend the intentions of their interlocutors thanks to a shared knowledge of Literary Sinitic. Just like any form of transnational communication, however, brushtalk too was not entirely free from the pitfalls of misunderstanding, particularly among interlocutors who brought their own lingua-cultural baggage to bear on the context of brushtalk interaction with little or no knowledge of their "silent conversation" partners.

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[64] Luo Sen 羅森 [A Native of China, pseud.], *Journal of the Second Visit of Commodore Perry to Japan* (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1856), 401–402. https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=OD08AQAAIAAJ.
[65] Luo Sen, "Riben riji" 日本日記 (Journal of a Visit to Japan), *Xia'er guanzhen* 遐邇貫珍 (Chinese Serial), Nov. 1854–Jan. 1855 (three issues), 590 (129).
[66] Cf. Douglas R. Howland, *Borders of Chinese Civilization: Geography and History at Empire's End* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).
[67] For more details, see Tao, "Negotiating Language."

For example, the *Senzaimaru* passenger Nakura Nobuatsu 名倉信敦 gave up on telling his Chinese interlocutors that his family name was the two-character compound 名倉 after experiencing several failed attempts at doing so, and instead began introducing himself as 倉.[68] Since the meaning of the first sinogram of his Japanese family name is, coincidentally, "name," in their brushtalk conversations his Chinese interlocutors often assumed that the morpheme was used in its generic definition and that his proper name started with the sinogram 倉. As a result, in most Chinese documents he was known and referred to as 倉信敦 instead of 名倉信敦, not least because 倉 conformed to the one-character family name format so common in China.

Luo Sen, too, encountered a number of vexing problems while interpreting for the Americans. Whereas his extensive use of brushtalk enabled him to successfully mediate cultural differences between the negotiating parties, it was not always without difficulty or misunderstanding. He writes, for example:

> When the emperor heard of the arrival of the Expedition, he sent commissioners to negotiate with the visitors, the chief commissioner being the surname of Lin. I do not give the name of others, because I really never could distinguish on their cards what was surname and name, what was office and what was place.[69]

This excerpt highlights an inherent feature of brushtalk interaction in scenarios involving Japanese interlocutors: a possibility of misunderstanding arising from the differences between Japanese and Chinese variants of Sinitic writing. Luo Sen rightly surmised that a particular sinogram indicated the family name of the commissioner, yet he could not figure out which sinograms indicated family names, given names, and administrative positions in the case of other cards. Phrases containing the idiosyncratic use of sinograms and Japanese proper names were thus likely to pose a challenge to Chinese brushtalkers. Along with *jun kanbun* 純漢文, orthodox Chinese writing that would pass as Chinese in China, until the early decades of the twentieth century Japanese also used *hentai kanbun* 変体漢文, a naturalized, indigenized variant of Chinese writing.[70] Even when *hentai kanbun* texts were written entirely in sinograms, they often contained a good deal of admixtures of Japanese words and locutions, in addition to the intrusion of Japanese syntactic patterns. Because of such lexico-grammatical elements, texts written in *hentai kanbun* were a frequent source of misunderstanding or confusion to Chinese literati who had no prior knowledge of Japanese vocabulary and syntax. Well-educated Japanese were usually aware of the problem and they would avoid using the variants when communicating with the Chinese directly, but some Japanese writers were not as clear as to which elements of the language were Chinese and which Japanese as the two were closely intertwined.

On 9 June 1854, a misunderstanding developed between the Americans and Japanese over the limits of the area in which Americans could ramble freely in the region of Shimoda. When the American mariners ventured further than what the Japanese felt comfortable with, local officials accused Williams of misinterpreting their targets and lying. Williams writes:

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[68] Morita, "Heigakusha Nagura Nobuatsu no Bakumatsu kaigai kenbun," 60.

[69] Luo Sen, *Journal*, 397.

[70] Judith N. Rabinovitch, "An Introduction to Hentai Kambun [Variant Chinese]: A Hybrid Sinico-Japanese Used by the Male Elite in Premodern Japan" 古代日本男性上层人士运用的由汉语和日语组成的混合词: 变体汉文, *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 24, no. 1 (1996): 100.

> The incident was a good illustration of the ease with which a confusion of purposes may arise where the medium of communication is so imperfect, and little pains taken to state the intentions of each side.[71]

By then the two parties had been colliding over religious and behavioral issues. The Japanese side accused an American officer of leaving the Bible at one of the temples, to which Perry responded that "none would have left it if the monks had not willingly taken [it]."[72] When the Japanese requested that Perry order his sailors not to get drunk on the shore, he sent a reply which said that if the Japanese did not sell sake, nobody would get drunk. Given these circumstances, it is not clear whether the misunderstandings between the Americans and Japanese arose chiefly on account of the imperfect medium of communication as postulated by Williams. In any case, the Americans and Japanese eventually decided to abandon brushtalk and Literary Sinitic as an official medium of communication and turned to Dutch as the sole language of both oral communication and written documentation for the final phase of the US–Japan intercourse during Perry's second expedition.[73]

Like virtually all linguistic methods of communication, brushtalk was neither perfect nor free from unintended meanings, even when all interlocutors involved had a high level of Sinitic literacy. That said, the broad spectrum of mid-nineteenth-century transnational interactions exemplified and discussed in this article demonstrates that writing was a truly effective, if not essential, modality of communication between the Chinese and Japanese, synchronously and interactively. By turning to brush and ink in face-to-face encounters, Japanese and Chinese interlocutors were instantaneously able to carry out practical transactions, properly conduct diplomatic affairs and courtesy visits, and passionately engage in intellectual and poignant conversations—often in ad-hoc situations—at port cities all over the world from Tokyo to Shanghai and from San Francisco to Batavia and Hong Kong. There is no doubt that brushtalk played a crucial role in helping the Japanese to significantly extend their knowledge horizons and world views following two centuries of self-imposed isolation, not least by being exposed to the Chinese perspective via Sino-Japanese encounters inside and outside China, a country which became familiar with the power of Western military might and the potential of modern science and technology much earlier than Japan, which had only just started to face the same existential threat. In this article, I hope to have shown that Sinitic brushtalk was, in fact, brought to bear alongside Dutch by the Americans themselves as a means of face-to-face interaction during the first bilateral diplomatic negotiations between the United States and Japan—an insight indebted to Tao Demin's inspiring observations and analysis.[74]

The active use of brushtalk by the Chinese and Japanese politicians, diplomats and intellectuals in cross-border encounters continued well into the early twentieth century, as evidenced, for example, in the well-known interactions between Sun Yat-sen and his supporter and ideological comrade Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天. The frequency of brushtalk events, however, significantly decreased after the vernacularization of both the Chinese and Japanese languages, and the dramatic rise in mutual interest in learning one another's spoken language in more recent decades.

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[71] S. Wells Williams, *A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853–1854)* (Yokohama, Japan: Kelly & Walsh, 1910), 206.
[72] Williams, *Journal*, 206–210.
[73] Tao, "Negotiating Language," 107.
[74] Tao, "Negotiating Language."

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