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"A Ship Arrived from an Unknown Country on a Fire-Bird Day": Another Look at the *Teppōki*

SUSAN TSUMURA

Although the Venetian merchant Marco Polo (ca. 1254–1324) mentions Japan in his *Travels*, the first Europeans to come to Japan were Portuguese. They reached India at the end of the fifteenth century and in 1511 established a stronghold in the strategic port of Malacca. From there they became active in trading in Southeast Asia and China, especially in the silver, silk, and pepper trades. In the 1540s they arrived in Japan.[1] Among the accounts of such arrivals, the most famous and detailed is the *Teppōki* 鉄砲記 (An Account of Firearms), which describes how Portuguese traders introduced firearms (*teppō* 鉄砲) to Tanegashima 種子島, an island just south of Kyushu, in 1543.[2] Thus it is an important historical document describing a significant event in the transition from Japan's medieval to early modern period—the arrival of Europeans and with it the start of the widespread manufacture of firearms in Japan.[3]

Since the end of the nineteenth century a vast literature has been written about the *Teppōki*. This article looks at a few of the issues often discussed, especially the relation between the European and Japanese accounts of the first Portuguese-Japanese contact, questioning whether they refer to the same event, and the identification of a translator on board the ship that brought the Portuguese. I also present an argument that even though the *Teppōki* was written over sixty years after the event, its author must have utilized a source written in 1543, which supports its reliability.[4]

I would like to express my thanks to members of an online Japan history forum with whom I discussed issues brought up in this paper. The author takes responsibility for any errors.

1 See Boxer, *Christian Century*, who discusses Japanese-European relations, especially commercial activity, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Haneda and Oka, in *A Maritime History of East Asia*, address maritime activity in East Asia from 1250 to 1800, both that of Asians and that of Europeans. Matsuda, in *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, discusses European and Japanese relations in Japan.

2 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frames 7–12). For English translations, see Tsunoda et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, pp. 317–21; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 36–42.

3 For a discussion of European culture in Japan in this period, see for example, Toby, *Engaging the Other*, pp. 106–20, 129–41; Cooper, *Southern Barbarians*; Smith, *Japan: A History in Art*, pp. 148–60; and articles in Nakajima, *Nanban, Kōmō, Tōjin*.

4 This article can cover only a small part of the relevant literature. In English, the subject is discussed in the classic works of Murdoch (*History of Japan*, pp. 33–43) and Boxer (*Christian Century*, pp. 24–27), and in detail in the recent book by Lidin, *Tanegashima*. Many Japanese historians have written on the *Teppōki*; one of the earliest is Tsuboi in his 1892 articles "Teppō denrai-kō" and "Teppō denrai-kō (shōzen)." Most claims have been stated and rebutted multiple times. I bring up only a few representative works.

The *Teppōki* and Similar Japanese Accounts

The *Teppōki* was written in 1606 by Nanpo Bunshi 南浦文之 (1555–1620), a Zen monk who often served the Satsuma 薩摩 domain in southern Kyushu as an envoy and writer of diplomatic letters. It was commissioned by Tanegashima Hisatoki 種子島久時 (1568–1611), the lord of Tanegashima. He was the son of Tanegashima Tokitaka 時堯 (1528–1579), the lord at the time of the arrival. It was published in 1625 in the *Nanpo bunshū* 南浦文集 (Nanpo's Works).

According to the *Teppōki*, "in the water-rabbit year of the Tenbun era [*Tenbun mizunoto-u* 天文癸卯], on the twenty-fifth day of the autumnal eighth month, a fire-bird day [*hinoto-tori* 丁酉]" (23 September 1543), a large ship arrived at Nishinomura 西村 in Tanegashima. It was not known what country it came from. It had a hundred strange-looking passengers, and it was not known what country they came from. A Chinese scholar on board named Gohō 五峯 (Ch. Wu Feng), who communicated with the village headmaster by writing on the sand with a cane in Chinese, identified them as "western Southern-barbarian traders" (*nishi Nanban shu no koko* 西南蛮種之賈胡). The Chinese called the lands to its south, that is, Southeast Asia, the "Southern-barbarian region" (Ban 蛮 [Ch. Man] or Nanban 南蛮 [Ch. Nanman]), and the Portuguese were based in Malacca on its western edge.[5] Two days later the ship came to the island capital of Akaogi 赤尾木. The traders were led by two men with Portuguese names, and they sold two firearms to the local lord, Tokitaka. The ship was in Akaogi at least until the festival of the ninth day of the ninth month (7 October), but it is not stated when it left. Under Tokitaka's direction, the island's ironworkers eventually mastered the technique for manufacturing firearms, with the help of a Portuguese ironworker who arrived the next year. The *Teppōki* emphasizes that it was from Tanegashima that the manufacture of firearms spread to the rest of Japan. By Nanpo's time, firearms were important in war, and "*tanegashima*" had become a popular term for firearms.

Later Edo-period works also refer to this event. The *Tanegashima kafu* 種子島家譜 (Tanegashima House Chronicle)[6] gives an account that reads like a shortened version of the *Teppōki*. It seems to be based either on the *Teppōki* itself or on its sources. It states that a ship arrived from an unknown country with strange passengers, who are identified as Nanban merchants, and the next year a Nanban ship arrived with an ironworker who helped perfect the techniques for manufacturing firearms. There is also an account in the 1633 *Kunitomo teppōki* 国友鉄砲記 (An Account of the Kunitomo Firearms)[7] that explains how firearms came to be manufactured in Kunitomo in Ōmi 近江国 Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture). It seems to be based on the *Teppōki*, even in the dialogues, though with some additions. It says that the ship was from the Nanban country and carried over a hundred Southern-barbarian traders. This seems to have been the standard Japanese understanding of the arrival of Portuguese throughout the Edo period. Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), a German who lived in Japan from 1823 to 1828, quotes a long passage from a Japanese annal which gives an account of the first Portuguese-Japanese contact. It has many verbal similarities with the *Teppōki* and the other accounts, even to the names of the two Portuguese from the "nan-ban" ship. Siebold specifies that this ship was a Portuguese ship.[8]

Although their exact date of compilation is unclear, there are also documents preserved in Tanegashima itself that mention the event. A list of heirlooms called the *Tanegashimaki* 種子島記 includes a description of a "Nanban gun" (*Nanban tsutsu* 南蛮筒) that "the captain of the Nanban ship" (*Nanban senchō* 南蛮船長) presented to Tokitaka.[9] The genealogical records of two island families also mention the visit.[10]

5 The characters 西南蛮 are sometimes translated into English in this passage as "southwestern barbarian" (*seinan Ban*), but Ban and Nanban refer specifically to the region south of China, and Malacca is more likely to be referred to as being in the "western Southern-barbarian region" rather than in the "southwestern Southern-barbarian region." Different terms are used for the other "barbarian" areas surrounding China—those to the east, including Japan, as Tōi 東夷 (Ch. Dongyi), those to the west as Seijū 西戎 (Ch. Xirong), and to the north as Hokuteki 北狄 (Ch. Beidi).

6 See bk. 2 of the *Tanegashima kafu*; facsimile in Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 189, English translation on pp. 45–46; Japanese translation in the *Tanegashima kafu*, vol. 1, p. 1.29. The *Tanegashima kafu* incorporated the *Tanegashima fu* 種子島譜 (Tanegashima Chronicle), which covered Tanegashima history until 1611 and was completed in 1677.

7 Text in Hora, *Tanegashima-jū*, pp. 502–7; also in Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 190–94, translation on pp. 130–38.

8 Siebold, *Manners and Customs*, pp. 256–57.

9 See the *Tanegashimaki*, quoted in Tokoro, *Hinawajū*, pp. 246–47.

10 See the Yaita 八板 family genealogy and the Tokunaga 徳永 family

The above records almost all give the date for the arrival of the ship as the eighth month of Tenbun 12.[11] Tenbun 12 is the same year as that given in the *Teppōki*, "the water-rabbit year of Tenbun," that is, 1543.[12] For naming years, the year-count and the cyclic-year designations were freely interchanged or used together; there was no question of confusion.[13] However, the *Teppōki* is the only source that gives the cyclic *day* of the arrival, a fire-bird day.

The accounts written after the *Teppōki* use the term "Nanban," not the "western Nanban" used in the *Teppōki*. In the decades following the arrival of the Portuguese in Japan, "Nanban" came to refer especially to the Portuguese and Spanish. For example, in 1606, the year he wrote the *Teppōki*, Nanpo wrote to the "Nanban ship captain" of Luzon.[14] "Nanban" is also used as a prefix with many items associated with the Portuguese, notably screens depicting the arrival of Portuguese ships (*Nanban byōbu* 南蛮屏風) and various foods.

European Accounts

There are also European accounts of Portuguese arriving in Japan around 1543. Two state that Portuguese arrived in Japan in 1542. One account is found in the 1563 *Tratado dos Descobrimentos* (Treatise of Discoveries) of António Galvão (ca. 1490–1557), the Portuguese governor of Malacca from 1536 until 1540, which gives brief accounts of European discoveries of various places in the world through 1555.[15] Galvão generally gives the year, a brief account of the discovery with the names of the people involved, the name of the place discovered, and its latitude.[16] According to him, in 1542 three Portuguese fled on a "junk" (Pt. *junco*; from Ch. *chuan* 船, via Malay *jong*) from Diogo de Freitas (fl. mid-sixteenth century), the "capitam de hũ nauio" (captain of a ship) in Siam, intending to go to "Lianpo [Ningbo 寧波], which is at thirty degrees plus latitude [the correct latitude]." They were blown off course and saw an island named Sipangas, "which is at thirty-two degrees." No other description of the place is given. A similar but more detailed account of a visit to Japan is given in the *Decada quinta da Asia* (Fifth Decade in Asia) written by the official historian of Portuguese India, Diogo do Couto (1542–1616). It states that in 1542 three merchants were blown by a typhoon to "Nipongì," which is known as "Ipaõ," and were hospitably received.[17] There is no description of the place. The names given are the same as those in Galvão, but these were said to have a load of skins and other commodities for trading, and their original destination was "Chincheo" (Quanzhou 泉州), a city on the Chinese coast opposite Taiwan.

There is also a 1545 letter of the Spaniard Garcia de Escalante Alvarado (fl. mid-sixteenth century), passing on what he heard from Freitas.[18] Two Portuguese merchants trying to go from Siam to China in a junk were blown to a Lequios (Ryukyu) island[19] and were treated well because of Ryukyuan friends they had met in Siam. Some other Portuguese merchants upon hearing this went to Ryukyu on a junk, but were not allowed to land. Escalante does not date these, but based on the timeframe of when he could have met Freitas given the sailing seasons, the visits were probably in 1542 and 1543.[20]

genealogy quoted in Shimizu, *Nichi-Ō kōshō no kigen*, pp. 30–31, 34.

11 The *Kunitomo teppōki* dates the arrival to Tenbun 8 (1539).8.25; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 190.

12 In Japan years are named in the order of the sexagenary cycle (further explained below) introduced from China, and this was the accepted East Asian standard. Tenbun 1 (1532) was a water-dragon (*mizunoe-tatsu* 壬辰) year. As water-dragon is the twenty-ninth pair in the cycle and water-rabbit is the fortieth, "Tenbun 12" and "Tenbun water-rabbit" therefore refer to the same year, that is, 1543. The Tanegashima genealogies both give "Tenbun 12, water-rabbit" as the year, and Siebold informs his readers that "the twelfth year of the *Nengo Tenbun*" was 1543.

13 For instance, Nanpo gives the year of his 1606 writing of the *Teppōki* as "Keichō 11, fire-horse" (*Keichō jūichinen hinoe-uma* 慶長十一年丙午). Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 12).

14 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 2 (frames 91–93).

15 Galvão, *Descobrimentos*, ff. 75–76 (frames 166–67); English translation in Galvano, *Discoveries*, pp. 229–30.

16 The Portuguese regularly recorded latitudes. For instance, Jorge Alvarez (fl. mid-sixteenth century) says he stayed in a port at N 32° 4′ 3″; see Kishino, "Aruvaresu no 'Nihon hōkoku,'" p. 103. A later Portuguese *roteiro* (log) states that Tanegashima is at 30½ degrees; see Boxer, *Christian Century*, p. 127.

17 Couto, *Decada quinta*, ff. 183–84 (bk. 8, ch. 12; frames 398–401). See also the translation in Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 24–25. The book was published in 1612, but was finished in 1597; ibid., p. 454 n. 18.

18 For the background and a translation see Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 18–21, 25–27.

19 Ryukyu was then a kingdom on the chain of islands south of Japan (now Okinawa Prefecture). It was a major actor in the trade of the area.

20 Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 30–31.

The relationship of these three accounts is unclear. One theory is that Galvão's account and Couto's account were misunderstandings of the visits to Ryukyu that Freitas reported to Escalante. Also, some have claimed that the visits to Ryukyu mentioned by Escalante were actually visits to Japan and were the same as those mentioned by Galvão and Couto. It is to be noted that none of these accounts mention firearms.

European Accounts and the *Teppōki*

It is commonly understood that the visit described in the *Teppōki* and the visit in Portuguese accounts, in particular that of Galvão, were the same event, and arguments have been based on this supposition.[21] Thus, the visit of the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* is often described as the arrival of a few Portuguese in a Chinese ship.[22] What the Japanese and European accounts have in common is that some Portuguese arrived in Japan around 1542–1543. However, there are significant differences.

To start with, though it is often "assumed"[23] that the men in the Portuguese accounts landed in Tanegashima, the texts do not specify this. These sources state only that the men arrived in "Sipangas" or "Nipongi." Also, Galvão states the island they arrived at was at thirty-two degrees latitude; however, Tanegashima is at about 30° 30'.[24] Thus, there seems to be no clear reason why the Portuguese accounts would refer to Tanegashima. Moreover, one would have to say the latitude Galvão gives is mistaken.

As for Escalante's account, Georg Schurhammer argues that the information that Escalante got directly from Freitas about the visit to Ryukyu was correct and that the later accounts by Galvão and Couto are confused versions of that, so Portuguese visited Ryukyu in 1542 and Tanegashima in 1543.[25] Many historians have agreed, though some say the visit in Escalante's account was to Japan, not Ryukyu.[26]

Escalante's account of the visits to Ryukyu, however, does not match the *Teppōki* in a number of important respects. Unlike Escalante's narrative, there is no indication that the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* had friends from Tanegashima. Also, while the *Teppōki* says the arrival of a Portuguese iron worker the next year was very welcome, Escalante states that the Portuguese in the second trip were not allowed to land. So, it is unlikely that the visit in Escalante's account refers to the *Teppōki* visit. In that case, if the accounts by Galvão and Couto are based on the same information that Escalante got from Freitas, as is put forward by some scholars, their descriptions would not concern the *Teppōki* visit either. Therefore, there is little reason to identify any of the three European accounts with the arrival of the Portuguese in Tanegashima, and they probably refer to different events.

Another important difference in the accounts is the date. For the year of arrival, both Galvão and Couto give 1542, but the *Teppōki* and the other Japanese accounts give 1543. In Japan, 1543 is widely accepted as standard and is one of the dates memorized by school children.[27] However, scholarly opinion about the year has gone back and forth, usually under the assumption that European and Japanese accounts refer to the same event.[28] James Murdoch considers that 1542 is more likely, because it "seems to have been the date generally accepted by the missionary writers." Okamoto Ryōchi cautiously accepts 1542, though he does not rule out

21 Nakajima, "Sairon," pp. 47–48 (Nakajima disagrees with this understanding). Some examples are Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 16, and *passim*; Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," p. 1110; Udagawa, *Shinsetsu*, pp. 10, 44.

22 Cooper, *Southern Barbarians*, p. 24; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, *passim*; see also the 1977 children's picture book by Ishikawa, *Teppō ōsawagi*.

23 Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 18, 32; see also Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 144 (*de arō to suitei serareru* であろうと推定せられる); Tokoro, "Teppō denrai," p. 60 (*to omowarete iru* と思われている).

24 It is possible that Galvão assumed this latitude from other accounts of Japan; thirty-two degrees is given by Escalante for the 1544 visit to Japan of Pero Diez (fl. mid-sixteenth century); see Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 28.

25 Kishino gives a summary of Schurhammer's work in his *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 30–32. Schurhammer noted that if the Spaniard Escalante wrote that the voyage was to Ryukyu, not to Japan, to avoid crediting the Portuguese with the discovery of Japan, he would not have wanted to credit them with the discovery of Ryukyu either. Schurhammer's work may be found in his "O descobrimento do Japão pelos portugueses no ano de 1543," in *Anais da Academia Portuguesa da História*, 2. Série, vol. 1, Lisbon, 1946.

26 Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 144; Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 20–21; Boxer, *Christian Century*, p. 27; Nakajima, "Kaiiki kōeki," p. 50.

27 Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," p. 1107; NHK TV program "*Buratamori* ブラタモリ," episode on Tanegashima, aired 3 June 2023.

28 For this, see Nakajima, "Kaiiki kōeki," pp. 33–35; ibid., "Sairon," pp. 41–42.

1543 completely, and Matsuda Kiichi suggests that several trips to Tanegashima were treated in the *Teppōki* as one.[29] Those who accept 1542 suggest several reasons for the 1543 of the *Teppōki*. The year of the long-ago event could have been misremembered by the elderly men who were Nanpo's source.[30] An original date of 1542 could have been changed to 1543 for some reason, such as to make it the year that Tokitaka assumed leadership of Tanegashima[31] or to emphasize that his father Shigetoki 恵時 (1503–1567) was living with him in Akaogi, even after the tumultuous events of the first part of 1543.[32] But as I discuss below, the day of the arrival given in the *Teppōki*—"the twenty-fifth of the eighth month, a fire-bird day"—was a fire-bird day only in 1543 in that century, a fact that apparently has not been pointed out before, so that year seems certain. Again, the most obvious solution is to conclude that the European accounts refer to a different event or events, probably occurring in 1542, and that several visits by Portuguese took place around that time.

Another major difference in the European and Japanese accounts concerns the passengers on board the ship that arrived in Japan. On the one hand, Galvão's account says three men fled from Siam and reached Japan in a junk. Apparently, these three were the only Portuguese aboard. Couto's and Escalante's Portuguese also traveled in a small group from Siam. On the other hand, the ship in the *Teppōki* had over a hundred passengers whose shape was strange and whose language was unintelligible. Moreover, it was not known from what country they came (*Izure no kuni no hito naru ya shirazu* 不知何國人也).[33] They were certainly not Chinese, and were identified by Gohō, the abovementioned Chinese scholar on board, as traders from western Nanban. They are considered as a unified group from the same country, and their customs and attitudes are described: they have some knowledge of rank, but do not know proper eating etiquette, do not use chopsticks, and do not understand writing. Later, two of the men are identified as the "leaders of the traders" (*koko no osa* 賈胡之長), which also suggests that the hundred traders came as a group. Since the ship was in the island capital of Akaogi from 8.27 until at least 9.9, their behavior as traders and leaders could be observed. So, they were not just a few Portuguese among a mixture of Chinese and perhaps other peoples. As I argue below, Nanpo had a contemporary source, and even if he supplemented it with the memories of elderly men and what Tanegashima Hisatoki, the commissioner of the work, had heard from his father Tokitaka, it seems unlikely that only two or three strange-looking Portuguese would have come to be remembered as being over one hundred in number.

That being said, the *Teppōki* is often interpreted in the light of Galvão to mean that the ship was a Chinese junk with only a few Portuguese aboard. For instance, Olof Lidin throughout his book on Tanegashima simply assumes that the boat was a junk with two, and only two, Portuguese, and even adjusts his translations to fit this assumption.[34]

Another problem with claiming the visits in the Portuguese and Japanese accounts are the same is that the names given for the Portuguese do not match. The *Teppōki* has characters that are most reasonably read as "Murashukusha" 牟良叔舍 and "Kirishita da Mouta" 喜利志多侘孟太, while Galvão has "Antonio da Mota," "Francisco Zeimoto," and "Antonio Pexoto."[35] The only duplication is the common Portuguese surname da Mota. There have been various attempts to reconcile the names, but they do not seem particularly successful,[36]

29 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 43; Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 293; Matsuda, *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 69.

30 Shimizu, in *Shokuhō seiken*, pp. 34–41, and in *Nichi-Ō kōshō no kigen*, pp. 39–40, mentions this and some other possibilities. See Nakajima's response in "Kaiiki kōeki," p. 66 n. 22; "Sairon," p. 75 n. 61. There is a problem within the *Teppōki* of matching the date of the year firearms were finally manufactured on Tanegashima (two years after the first visit) with the mention of the firearms on a tribute ship to China that left Tanegashima in 1543 or 1544. For more on this see Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," pp. 1115–18, 1121–22, and Nakajima's response in "Kaiiki kōeki," pp. 54–61.

31 Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 158.

32 In the third month of that year there was a revolt against Shigetoki, and he had to flee Tanegashima, but Tokitaka remained. Shigetoki returned in the fourth month. See *Tanegashima kafu*, bk. 2 (vol. 1, pp. 1.28–1.29); English translation in Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 43–45.

33 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frames 7–8).

34 He translates the *Teppōki*'s "*Fune no kyaku hyaku-nin amari. Sono katachi ruisezu. Sono katari tsūsezu*" 船客百余人其形不類其語不通 as, "There were some hundred people on board, [among whom there were those] whose physical features differed from ours, and whose language was not understood" (his brackets); Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 36. See also his similar translation of the corresponding passage of the *Tanegashima kafu* on p. 45 and his "the (two) western barbarians" in the *Kunitomo teppōki* on p. 140. If there were only two Portuguese on board, one has to wonder who they were the leaders of.

35 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 8); Galvão, *Descobrimentos*, f. 76 (frame 167).

36 See suggestions in Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 157; Lidin,

and therefore it seems unlikely that the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* and in Galvão were the same.

The description of the ship in the European and Japanese accounts also appears to be different. In the European accounts the Portuguese rode on a "junk" from Siam. The *Teppōki* states that a "large ship arrived and it was not known what country it came from" (*Hitotsu no ō-fune ari. Izure no kuni kara kitareru ka shirezu* 有一大舩不知自何國来). It would be natural to judge the origin of a ship by its appearance, so this suggests that the appearance of the ship was different from those they were used to. "It was not known what country it came from," is the same phrase which, as mentioned above, was used for the strange passengers, who were definitely not Chinese. Therefore, it is not likely to have been a Chinese ship with Portuguese on board.

The people of Kyushu were undoubtedly used to Chinese ships. The Portuguese captain Jorge Alvares (fl. mid-sixteenth century) wrote that in 1546 sixty Chinese boats in one Japanese harbor had been lost in a storm.[37] The *Teppōki* states that merchant ships from the north and south frequently visited the island capital of Akaogi. Furthermore, on Tenbun 9 (1540).6.26 a Chinese ship (*tōsen* 唐船) had arrived at Takezaki no Ura 竹崎ノ浦, the port of Nishinomura where the *Teppōki* ship first arrived.[38] Therefore, it is unlikely that a Chinese junk would have been described as coming from an unknown country. Rather, the *Teppōki* seems to treat this ship as being from the same country as the passengers, that is, a Malaccan or Portuguese ship, and it was understood as such in the *Tanegashima kafu*. As was noted above, the other Edo-period accounts state that it was a Nanban ship. Therefore, it was most likely a Portuguese-style carrack, although in this period a ship from the stronghold of Malacca might also have been a junk. The term "junk" refers to a wide type of Asian boat, but they are typified especially by square sails made with bamboo sticks woven into a pattern with bamboo twigs and leaves inserted. Pictures show the sails secured to a number of horizontal crossbars.[39] For a short time after the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511, they usually chartered junks for the pepper trade between Malacca and China. Then they gradually came to buy junks, but by the mid-sixteenth century they began voyaging to Japan in ships with a rounded bottom known in Portuguese as *nau* (carrack).[40] As mentioned earlier, Galvão describes Diogo de Freitas as captain of a *nau*, in contrast to the *junco* that the three Portuguese fled on, so it is certain that there were carracks in East Asia in 1542, and it would not be surprising if one had arrived in Japan the following year. Therefore, the strange ship was probably a carrack, or perhaps a Malaccan junk with characteristics notably different from the junks that came from China.

Nakajima Gakushō, a historian of East Asia, though not identifying the Tanegashima visit with that of the European accounts, says that the ship was probably a Chinese junk.[41] He points out that many merchants, including Europeans, took passage on Chinese ships. A Portuguese named Pero Diez (fl. mid-sixteenth century) visited Japan on a Chinese ship in 1544,[42] and it is well known that Francis Xavier (1506–1552) arrived in Japan in 1549 on a Chinese junk.[43] From this, Nakajima concludes it is more likely that the first Portuguese arrived in Tanegashima on a Chinese junk than on a Portuguese ship.[44] However, he does not explain why a Portuguese ship would be *un*likely, and though he admits that a "large ship" could be either a Chinese- or Portuguese-style ship, he does not discuss the statement that it came from an unknown country. The cases he mentions involved only a few Europeans, and of course some scattered Portuguese could have arrived in Japan earlier without leaving a record in Japan. But it seems that a group of over a hundred passengers from Malacca would be more likely to arrive on a Portuguese ship than on a Chinese ship.

The arrival of a Portuguese ship in 1543 would not be surprising. The Portuguese captain Jorge Alvares arrived in Yamagawa 山川 in the Satsuma 薩摩 domain (part of present-day Kagoshima Prefecture) in 1546, and there appear to have been two other Portuguese ships in

Tanegashima, pp. 16–17; Tokoro, "Teppō denrai," pp. 61–63.

37 This appears in his report written for the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552), translated in Kishino, "Aruvaresu no 'Nihon hōkoku,'" p. 105.

38 *Tanegashima kafu*, bk. 2 (vol. 1, p. 1.28).

39 Haneda and Oka, *A Maritime History*, pp. 33–34, 37 fig. 1.

40 Ibid., pp. 148–49. The Portuguese developed carracks when they started sailing in the Indian Ocean, influenced by Islamic shipbuilding techniques.

41 Nakajima, "Sairon," pp. 58–59.

42 Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 27.

43 For some other individuals and small groups, see Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 99–100.

44 Nakajima, "Sairon," p. 59.

Japan at the time,[45] so there is no problem with a Portuguese ship having come to Tanegashima three years earlier. Matsuda Kiichi, however, argues that if the Portuguese first arrived on a Portuguese ship, one would expect there to be some Portuguese record of it and so this probably was not a Portuguese ship.[46] But even if Galvão knew about a 1543 visit to Tanegashima, he would not have mentioned it, as he only mentions the first (European) visit to a particular region/country, which, according to him, in the case of Japan took place in 1542 when three Portuguese fled Siam. Furthermore, C. R. Boxer gives a year-by-year detailed account of what is known about Portuguese merchants visiting Japan from 1555, about the time the Portuguese "captain-major" system started, a system in which the right to conduct voyages and reap their profits was granted by the king. He makes statements like, "There were apparently two Portuguese ships which went to Hirado that year [1555], but we only have definite information concerning [one carrack]," and, "A statement in one of the lists of the Captain-majors that a certain Aires Betelho visited Hirado in his ship that year [1560] lacks confirmation from any other source and so should be treated with reserve."[47] Therefore, we cannot assume we have complete information about Portuguese ships in 1543. Therefore, it is hard to argue that the ship was not a Portuguese ship, especially as it seems strange that a Chinese junk would be described by the phrase, "it was not known what country it came from."

Thus, from the differences discussed above in terms of the locations, years, passengers, and perhaps the ships themselves, there seems little positive reason for identifying the voyages in Galvão or the other European accounts with that in the *Teppōki*.

The best argument for identifying the visit in Galvão with that in the *Teppōki* is the fact that the Jesuit João Rodrigues (1561–1634), who was in Japan between 1577 and 1610, does identify them in his church history *História da Igreja do Japão* (History of the Church of Japan), written 1614–1634.[48] He explicitly quotes Galvão's *Descobrimentos*, stating that three Portuguese, giving the same names as Galvão, arrived in Japan in 1542. He further states that the ship reached an island called Tanegashima where the Portuguese taught the people how to use arquebuses, that from there their use spread throughout Japan, and that the names of the Portuguese were still preserved—statements which clearly agree with the *Teppōki* account.

Rodrigues's statements probably are based on accounts handed down by earlier Jesuits in Japan. Xavier arrived in Japan in 1549 and at the end of 1551 departed the Kyushu province of Bungo 豊後 (roughly corresponding to present-day Ōita Prefecture) for India on the ship of the Portuguese merchant Duarte da Gama, stopping at Tanegashima on the way. The next year, a group including the Jesuit Balthasar Gago (1515–1583) arrived at Tanegashima on the same ship on their way to Bungo.[49] During their stays in Tanegashima, Xavier and Gago undoubtedly heard of the Portuguese who had arrived at Tanegashima some years before bringing firearms, and that visit would have been well known among the later Jesuits in Japan. Therefore, when they read about the 1542 visit to Japan in Portuguese sources such as Galvão, it was natural for them to assume it was the same as the Tanegashima visit that they knew about.

However, one doubts that Xavier or Gago had learned and transmitted the details of the visit such as the year and the names of the Portuguese involved, and that Rodrigues had compared them with those in Galvão. In a 1552 letter, Xavier says that the Portuguese had discovered the Japanese islands eight or nine years before, so he was somewhat vague about the date.[50] Note also that Rodrigues quotes Galvão, not Jesuits in Japan, for his date and names, which are different from those in the *Teppōki*. In fact, if one accepts that the ship arrived in 1543, as many historians do, one has to say

45 Alvarez states that a Portuguese ship was lost in a storm; Kishino, "Aruvaresu no 'Nihon hōkoku,'" p. 105. A 1548 letter of Anjiró (d. circa 1551) (see Frois, *Nihon-shi*, pp. 18–19) suggests that two Portuguese ships besides Alvarez's were also in Japan in 1546; see Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 311. Anjiró was probably the first Japanese Christian convert. His name appears variously in the Jesuit writings. Matsuda's translation of Frois's *Nihon-shi* uses "Yajirō" 弥次郎.

46 Matsuda, *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 69.

47 Boxer, *The Great Ship*, pp. 21–26.

48 Rodrigues, *This Island of Japon*, pp. 63–64. This is a translation of Rodrigues's *História da Igreja do Japão*. The translator, Cooper, notes that Rodrigues seems to have drawn on European sources in addition to Galvão here (p. 63 nn. 5, 7). This passage is translated also in Murdoch, *History of Japan*, pp. 33–34.

49 Frois, *Nihon-shi*, pp. 80–81 n. 20, 105 n. 7, 107, 111 n. 5; Pacheco, "Xavier and Tanegashima"; *Nihon Kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten* 日本キリスト教歴史大事典 (Kyōbunkan, 1988), s.v. "Tanegashima" (by Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一).

50 Letter no. 96 of 29 January 1552; see Xavier, *Zen shokan*, vol. 3, pp. 169–70.

that Rodrigues either ignored the year remembered in Tanegashima or did not know it, which weakens his identification. Therefore, it is hard to say that Rodrigues's work proves that the visits were the same.

Another account of the introduction of firearms is given by the Portuguese merchant-adventurer Fernão Mendes Pinto (ca. 1509–1583). In a 1582 interview and also in his semi-autobiographical adventure novel *Peregrinaçam* (Pilgrimage) he claims to be one of the first three Portuguese to visit Tanegashima.[51] Pinto was in Asia from about 1526 to 1558, and it is certain that he was in Japan early. There he met Xavier, and he may have visited Tanegashima. He had probably also read Galvão's account. However, though Pinto's work shows a knowledge of Asian marine travel and of Japan and certainly draws on his experiences, much of it is clearly made up. Many of his adventures are improbable, he puts himself at the center of any event, and he claims to have been in China or perhaps in Burma between 1542 and 1544, the period when the Portuguese reached Tanegashima. Most historians agree that he was not on the ship that introduced firearms.[52]

According to Pinto, three Portuguese, including himself, arrived at Tanegashima from China on a junk belonging to a pirate (*cossayro*). One of them gave a firearm to the lord of the island, after which firearms spread throughout Japan. There are similarities with the *Teppōki* account: Portuguese arrived in the town of the lord (*o naotoquim*; probably from Tokitaka's earlier name of Naotoki 直時) of Tanegashima, the lord was impressed by the firearm(s) they had; he obtained a firearm(s); and he had them manufactured. However, these are general matters that would have soon been widely known in Japan. Importantly though, the details that Pinto gives do not match the *Teppōki*. In the 1582 interview he gives the date of arrival as 1541, and the date in the book is vague. He states that there were only three non-Chinese on the pirate ship. In particular, the descriptions of the arrivals are different. The *Teppōki* states that the ship arrived first in the harbor of Nishinomura, and it was not known where it came from until the village headman asked a Chinese scholar. It came to the capital two days later. In contrast, according to Pinto, when after a battle with another junk and then a storm the pirate ship finally arrived in sight of land, they told the official boats that came to meet them that they were from China. They were shown the port in which they were to anchor, which was clearly that of the capital since the lord of the island came out to the ship two hours later. It was he who first noticed the three strange-looking visitors. Given these differences, although Pinto's account may well have used his own experiences in Japan, it does not seem to reflect any particular details about the event recorded in the *Teppōki*, and even if it does, we do not know which ones they are. For example, Pinto's stating that he arrived in Tanegashima on a pirate ship is not evidence that the first Portuguese did so, especially because to say that he arrived on a merchant ship would probably have been too tame.

Thus, to summarize, the sixteenth-century accounts of Galvão, Couto, and Escalante state that in 1542 two or three Portuguese arrived somewhere in Japan or Ryukyu on a Chinese ship, whereas the *Teppōki* states that in 1543 a ship with over a hundred Portuguese arrived at Tanegashima and introduced firearms to the island. The early Portuguese sources do not indicate that they arrived at Tanegashima, and the details in the number of people involved, the date, and the type of ship are different from those in the *Teppōki*. For later sources, it is unclear whether Rodrigues had sufficient basis to identify the accounts in Galvão and the *Teppōki*, and Pinto is not trustworthy. Therefore, one should be careful about using the Portuguese sources when interpreting the *Teppōki*.

Identification of the Translator Gohō

According to the *Teppōki*, one of the passengers on the ship was a Ming scholar (*Daimin jusei* 大明儒生) named Gohō, who was able to communicate with the people of Tanegashima in written Chinese. He was apparently the only one on the ship who could write in Chinese. Recent Japanese scholarship often states that this Gohō was the famous Chinese pirate leader Wang Zhi 王直 (Jp. Ōchoku) (d. 1557) and that the junk that brought the Portuguese with the firearms was his ship,[53]

51 Pinto, *Peregrinaçam*, esp. ff. 159–62 (frames 324–32); English translation, Pinto, *Travels of Mendes Pinto*, pp. 272–78. A first draft was ready in 1569, but it was only published in 1614. For the 1582 interview, see Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 22–23.

52 Rodrigues, *This Island of Japon*, p. 64; see also p. 64 n. 2; Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 18–28; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 102–29.

53 Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," pp. 1111–15; Udagawa, *Shinsetsu*

since there are Chinese references to Wang Zhi being called Wu Feng 五峯 (the Chinese reading for Gohō).[54] At that time, the Ming court officially allowed only a few tribute ships for trading, but many mariners engaged in a mixture of private trade, smuggling, and piracy, and they are usually referred to as "Japanese pirates" (*wakō* 倭寇), though they were not all Japanese. Wang Zhi was a major leader of one of these *wakō* groups. He was from Huizhou 惠州 in southeast China. From 1540 he opened up a smuggling route from his base in Guangdong 広東, linking Southeast Asia and Japan. In 1544 he formed a smuggling group that included Japanese and then the next year established himself in Hirado just off the western coast of Kyushu, so he had the opportunity to familiarize himself with Tanegashima. However, the depiction of Gohō in the *Teppōki* is not what we would expect of Wang Zhi and his *wakō* ship.

Wang Zhi had close ties with Japan and his *wakō* band included a considerable number of Japanese,[55] so one would expect a ship of his to have Japanese speakers on board, but the ship of the *Teppōki* apparently had none. The Gohō of the *Teppōki* is described as a scholar. There is nothing in the *Teppōki* to suggest that he was the owner or captain of the ship.[56] When they first landed in Nishinomura, the village headman happened to meet Gohō (*gū ni au* 偶遇), and asked him about the passengers by writing in Chinese in the sand. If Gohō was the owner, one would expect the headman to have sought him out. The ship was at Tanegashima for at least two weeks, and during this time apparently Gohō behaved like a scholar rather than like a *wakō* or a ship's captain, who would have been treated as such by the crew and would have had various responsibilities to carry out during the stay. The mere fact that he could write Chinese would not have made the people of Tanegashima think he was a scholar, as Chinese and Japanese in ports normally communicated by writing.[57]

The *Teppōki* states that in Akaogi, where the ship sailed after its arrival in Nishinomura, there was a monk of the Lotus sect (Hokke 法華) whose background is described in detail.[58] He was versed in the classics and could write Chinese well, and he corresponded with Gohō through writing. It is stated that Gohō felt him to be a kindred spirit (*dōruisō* 同気相), but he is not the kindred spirit one would expect of a *wakō*. One would assume he was the main translator for Gohō during the stay in Akaogi and so would have had the opportunity to know what kind of person Gohō was.

Later, it is said that the two Portuguese head traders explained the use of the firearm using "double translation" (*jūyaku* 重訳). Apparently Gohō translated their port lingo, which as experienced traders they would have known, into written Chinese, then someone, probably the monk, translated his Chinese into spoken Japanese for Tokitaka. However, while we would not expect a scholar to know much about firearms and so he would have needed to translate the traders' explanation, we would expect that a *wakō* chief could have explained the use of firearms himself, without the need of a "double" translation.

Thus, if we claim that Gohō was Wang Zhi, it seems we have to question everything in the account that mentions Gohō, except the name Gohō. We could posit that Nanpo, or his source, wanted to hide the fact that *wakō* were involved, but then why would he leave Gohō's name in? Also, as discussed above, it would be strange if Wang Zhi's Chinese ship was described as being from an unknown country. Of course, when we claim that Wang Zhi and Gohō are not the same person, we have to conclude that they probably just happened to have the same name,[59] and this might be questioned. But saying the two are the same person also has its problems.

Udagawa Takehisa takes the identification of Gohō and Wang Zhi a step further and even claims that it was Wang Zhi, not the Portuguese, that brought firearms to

teppō denrai, pp. 44–46; ibid., *Heiki kōryū-shi*, p. 138; Nakajima, "Kaiiki kōeki," pp. 51–53; ibid., "Sairon," pp. 60–61; Haneda and Oka, *Maritime History*, pp. 154–55.

54 See Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," pp. 1110–13, quoting the 1565 *Riben yijian* 日本一鑑 (Jp. *Nihon ikkan*) of Zheng Shungong 鄭舜功 (Jp. Tei Shunkō) and the 1562 *Chouhai tubian* 籌海図編 (Jp. *Chūkai zuhen*) of Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾 (Jp. Tei Jakusō).

55 Haneda and Oka, *Maritime History*, p. 155.

56 He was not understood as such in the Edo-period traditions about the visit. In fact, the *Kunitomo teppōki* states that he asked the Nanban traders to let him ride on their ship (*Nanbankuni no kojin ni binsen motomeki* 南蛮国買人求便船); Hora, *Tanegashima-jū*, p. 503; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 191.

57 See Alvares in his report in Kishino, "Aruvaresu no 'Nihon hōkoku,'" p. 111.

58 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 8). He would have been important as the person whose words were actually reported in the dialogue between Tokitaka and the Portuguese.

59 Nakajima, "Sairon," p. 60, comments that it is not impossible that Nanpo, or his source, used the name of someone they had heard of to represent a Chinese merchant, but in his discussion he takes Gohō and Wang Zhi as being the same person.

Tanegashima. He claims that the *Teppōki* was written sixty years later, so its historical value is not high, and because Galvão shows that the Portuguese arrived in a junk, Gohō was Wang Zhi. He moreover says that since the matchlock guns (*hinawajū* 火縄銃) in Japan are of Asian type, not European type, they are not the type one would expect if the Portuguese introduced European matchlocks, and since Southeast Asia was in the *wakō* trading area, it was they, in particular Wang Zhi, and not the Portuguese on his ship, who introduced firearms to Tanegashima.[60]

It is clear that the firearms associated with Tanegashima are not of European type. The firearms expert Tokoro Shōkichi investigated the provenance of guns from Tanegashima.[61] He noted that the firing mechanism did not match that of European matchlocks, including those from Spain and Portugal, or those that came to East Asia overland via Turkey. However, in a New York Metropolitan Museum catalog, he found a similar one. As a result, he concluded that the Tanegashima firearms were similar to those that originated in Malacca and Java and were found in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, but not similar to those from farther west or those of China. He referred to them as "Malacca-type."[62]

However, it does not follow from an Asian connection that the Portuguese could not have brought the original matchlocks. Even if Southeast Asia was within the trading area of the *wakō* from east China, the Portuguese had established a base in Malacca in 1511, and it had been the center of their trading area for decades. It was they who are the most likely people to have had the Malacca-type matchlocks for trading, and so are more likely than the *wakō* to have been the source of the Tanegashima matchlocks. It is natural that the Portuguese traders who arrived in Tanegashima would sell Malacca-type matchlocks—in fact, more natural than if they had sold European matchlocks. Furthermore, all the Tanegashima accounts state that the Nanban merchants brought them.

The Cyclic Day, a "Fire-Bird" Day

Whether Nanpo used an early record or not has been argued back and forth. Some argue that as he wrote the work sixty years after the event, it is unreliable. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that since the Tanegashima family asked him to write it, it is probable that they gave him old records handed down in the family.[63] I have not come across an argument that he *must* have had a contemporary record, though. However, I believe that the date Nanpo gives for the arrival of the first ship is evidence that he did have a record from that year, or at least an extract of one.

Nanpo wrote that the ship arrived at Tanegashima "in the water-rabbit year of Tenbun, on the twenty-fifth day of the autumnal eighth month, a fire-bird day" 天文癸卯秋八月二十五日丁酉 (23 September 1543). "Fire-bird day" (*hinoto-tori* or *teiyū* 丁酉) is usually dropped from the date in translations,[64] and I have not seen any discussion about its relation with the year, so apparently it has not been used in arguments. However, 8.25 was indeed a fire-bird day that year, so this is important evidence about the arrival of the ship and the reliability of Nanpo's source.

In East Asia, an unchanging cycle of sixty pairs of characters (*eto* or *kanshi* 干支, lit., "stem-branch")[65] was used as the standard for naming years and days. Its use for years is best known, but its use for days goes back to the earliest Chinese writings we have, the oracular bones of the thirteenth century BCE; its use for years started almost a millennium later. The *Teppōki* states that the day the ship arrived was a "fire-bird" day. Cyclic days are used along with month-day dates such as 8.25, similar to saying "Sunday, 23 September." They were indicated on virtually all calendars, from the earliest Chinese and the earliest Japanese calendar exemplars that we have, and they are still shown on some of the more detailed calendars. They were important in everyday life for determining hemerological notations, one of the major traditional uses of the calendar.

60 Udagawa, *Shinsetsu teppō denrai*, pp. 44–46; ibid., *Heiki kōryū-shi*, pp. 137, 142–43; see the English exhibition explanation in the National Museum of Japanese History (Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan 国立歴史民俗博物館 or Rekihaku): www.rekihaku.ac.jp/english/exhibitions/project/old/061003/img/061003_e.pdf.

61 Tokoro, "Teppō denrai"; ibid., *Hinawajū*, pp. 239–49.

62 Tokoro, "Teppō denrai," pp. 47–50; ibid., *Hinawajū*, pp. 247–49. He accepted that the Portuguese brought them.

63 For example, Nakajima, "Sairon," pp. 55–56.

64 Lidin, completely misunderstanding, takes the indication of the day 丁酉 to be an indication of the hour, "dawn (Hinoto Tori 'cock' hour)" (*Tanegashima,* p. 36; note also that the cock [bird] hour is the sunset hour, not the dawn hour). Apparently the meaning was not made clear in the works he consulted.

65 The first character in the pair is from the ten-element stem (*kan* 干) cycle, and the second from the twelve-element branch (*shi* 支) cycle. The first pair in the sixty-cycle is wood-rat (*kinoe-ne* 甲子).

The day cycle is similar to the Western seven-day week in that it repeats without regard to the starts of years or months, so a given month-day date occurs on different cyclic days in different years. However, in the Western calendar the yearly change is regular—each year the weekday is one day later, except that every four years it is two days later because of the leap year. In contrast, in the Chinese lunisolar calendar, the year-to-year correspondence of month-day dates and cyclic days is very irregular. The calendar is calculated using a multi-step calendar procedure (*rekihō* 暦法), which includes constants and tables.[66] The first day of the month is determined by the time of the new moon (*saku* 朔), so the month lengths change from year to year, and besides, there is an intercalary (leap) month (*uruuzuki* 閏月) every two or three years. From 1540 to 1545 the cyclic days of 8.25 were wood-monkey (the twenty-first pair of the cycle), earth-rabbit (sixteenth), water-rabbit (fortieth), fire-bird (thirty-fourth), water-dragon (twenty-ninth), and wood-rabbit (fifty-second). Therefore, the cyclic day of a particular date can be known only by calculating the calendar of that year, which is no easy task. Calendars for each year were calculated by trained calendarists and then copied and distributed. The Satsuma domain probably calculated its own calendar from early on. The Ryukyu kingdom is said to have gotten its calendars before 1465 from Japan, presumably from Satsuma.[67] Tanegashima would have gotten its calendars from Satsuma.

As such, without an official calendar of a year, there was no way of knowing the cyclic day of a given date, and calendars were normally not kept after use. Therefore, Nanpo's use of the correct cyclic day for 1543.8.25 shows that he used a record that goes back to that year, when a calendar would have been available.

What kind of record that specified cyclic days would he have had? Cyclic days were traditionally used in official annals, but not many other records give them. The Chinese "Twenty-four Standard Histories" (*Ershisi shi* 二十四史) give the cyclic days of dates, as do the Japanese "Six Histories" (*Rikkokushi* 六国史; the court annals through 887) and the *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡 (Azuma Mirror) of 1180–1266, so it would be natural for an official record in Tanegashima to have cyclic days. Also, they were often recorded in diaries. However, most other documents do not give cyclic days.[68] For example, in the material relating to the Tenbun era (1532–1555) in a collection of Satsuma documents, the only items to have cyclic days are from a diary; accounts, letters, and birth/death records do not have them.[69] Nanpo gives the cyclic day in only a few cases in the *Nanpo bunshū*, so he did not think it was necessary for a proper date and would not have tried to find the cyclic day if it was not in his source. Therefore, his source for the account of the arrival of the ship on 1543.8.25 was most likely an official log or a diary from that year, and he just used the date as it was written, which included the cyclic day.

The day of the arrival of the ship at the capital of Akaogi is also given with the cyclic day, "the twenty-seventh [of the eighth month], an earth-boar [*tsuchino-to-i* 己亥] day." This suggests that the source was probably an official log or a diary at Akaogi that recorded the report received from Nishinomura on the twenty-fifth, and then recorded the ship's arrival in Akaogi on the twenty-seventh.

The third date in the *Teppōki*, twelve days after the arrival at Akaogi, has a cyclic day that directly connects with firearms. "That year the Double-Nine Festival [*chōkyū no setsu* 重九之節, i.e., 9.9][70] was on a metal-boar [*kanoto-i* 辛亥] day,[71] and this was chosen as an auspicious day [*ryōshin* 良辰] for testing." Certainly, a metal-boar day would be very suitable for trying out a metal weapon that could kill a field-ravaging boar.[72] The festival was on a metal-boar day only in 1543 in that century, so the event must have taken place in that year.

66 For the calculation method for the calendar then being used in Japan, see Uchida, *Rekijitsu genten*, pp. 511–16.

67 *Ryūkyū-koku yuraiki*, bk. 4, ch. 1 Personnel (*jinjimon* 人事門), sec. 5 Calendar (*koyomi* 暦); p. 115 in *Teihon Ryūkyū-koku yuraiki*.

68 Similarly, most dated modern documents do not give the day of the week, despite their importance in daily life.

69 Kagoshima-ken Ishin Shiryō Hensanjo, *Kagoshima-ken shiryō*, pp. 712–928. The diary of Hongō Tadasake 北郷忠相 (fl. mid-sixteenth century) is quoted on pp. 729, 869–72. The cyclic day on p. 926 is also probably from his diary, as he is mentioned in the account a few days later.

70 In the date he gives at the end for his writing of the *Teppōki*, Nanpo does not use the term "Double-Nine Festival," but rather the term "Double-Yang Festival" (*chōyō setsu* 重陽節), which suggests that in the account he was directly quoting the wording of his source. "Double-Yang" refers to nine as the highest *yang* 陽 (odd) numeral.

71 While in China the 亥 (Ch. *hai*) branch is often associated with "pig," in Japan it is definitely associated with the wild boar (*inoshishi*), and is read as the abbreviated form *i*.

72 In fact, from the seventeenth century to the present day, killing field-ravaging boars has been one of the few legitimate uses of firearms; Howell, "The Social Life of Firearms."

This is the kind of association someone might remember.[73]

One can draw several conclusions from the specification of the cyclic days in the *Teppōki*. First, it seems certain that the ship arrived in Tanegashima in 1543, as the twenty-fifth of the eighth month was a fire-bird day only in that year in that century. If Nanpo had gotten his information from elderly men who had misremembered an event in 1542 as being in 1543, in the very unlikely event that they remembered the cyclic day, they would have remembered the cyclic day of 1542.8.25, which was a water-rabbit day, not the fire-bird day of 1543. Similarly, neither Nanpo nor an earlier source could have changed an original 1542 year to 1543, because they would not have known the correct cyclic day. Furthermore, the Double-Nine Festival was on a metal-boar day only in 1543.

Second, it is especially important to note that the only ones who could have known that 1543.8.25 was a fire-bird day were those who had a 1543 calendar. Therefore, at least concerning the first visit of the ship, Nanpo must have had a record from 1543, or an extract from one, which supports the reliability of the *Teppōki*.

Finally, the date may also confirm information about the kind of ship. Since only day-by-day records normally give the cyclic day, it is likely that the record was a log or diary, which would have recorded the information it received on that date. An entry about the arrival of a ship would normally have given its origin, what port it arrived at, and probably some other information about it, such as the type of passengers and who made the report. If the ship in this case was a Chinese ship, it could have immediately been identified, and the entry would have described it as such. But "it was not known where it came from" would more likely describe the report of a ship whose origin was at first not known, but whose passengers turned out to be from "western Nanban."

Conclusion

There are several contemporary Spanish and Portuguese references to a visit to Japan or Ryukyu, and it is often assumed that they refer to the visit to Tanegashima described in the *Teppōki*. However, the relationship among them is unclear, and there seems to be no reason why they should refer to a visit to Tanegashima rather than to any other place in southwest Japan. Furthermore, details are different from those in the *Teppōki*. The years are different, the number of Portuguese involved is different—three as against a hundred—and the ship does not seem to have been the ordinary "junk" mentioned in the European accounts. So, the European accounts probably refer to a different voyage, or voyages, than to the one of the *Teppōki*, ones which left no record in the place visited.

This article also looked at the recent proposal that the scholar Gohō mentioned in the *Teppōki* was the *wakō* captain Wang Zhi, who was active in Kyushu at this time. The activities of Gohō are those of a scholar rather than of a *wakō* captain established in the area, so it is likely that they are not the same person, and the ship was not Wang Zhi's ship. Furthermore, the matchlocks left on Tanegashima were of a type made in Malacca, where the Portuguese had had a stronghold for thirty years, so there is no problem in agreeing with all the Japanese sources that it was the Portuguese who brought them, not *wakō*.

In particular, this article presents an argument that Nanpo had access to a source from 1543. He could have known that 1543.8.25 was a fire-bird day only from a record written that year, when a calendar for the year would have been available. Furthermore, such a record would have recorded some basic facts about the ship and its passengers, which would imply that the outline of the account of the arrival of the ship in the *Teppōki* is trustworthy.

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