Chapter 3
From *Nanbanjin* to *Kabukimono*: Portraying Iberians in Early Modern Japan

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3.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, notions such as 'Europe' and 'Iberia' were unknown and incomprehensible to the Japanese. The reverse is also true, with Japan being equally mysterious to Europeans. Although European reference to Japan had been made as early as the late thirteenth century—for example, in Marco Polo's *Milione* (under the term *Zipangu* or *Cipangu*, from the Chinese *Jih-pen kuo*, or 'Land of the Rising Sun')—the land and its inhabitants remained broadly unknown to Europeans until much later. Reference to *Ilha Jampom* (Jampom Island) first surfaced in Europe in the *Suma Oriental*, written in Malacca between 1512 and 1515, by the Portuguese apothecary Tomé Pires (c. 1465–c. 1540). While in Malacca, Pires gathered extensive and reliable information about the maritime regions of Asia, ranging from the Red Sea to China, Japan, and the remote islands of Insulindia (Maritime Southeast Asia). These terms gradually became concrete geographical concepts for Europeans, through knowledge of the region that was gathered, accumulated, and translated over the years.[1] For Japan, 'Europe' and 'Iberia' would only become concrete realities once they were materialized through relations with Europeans, and contact with their culture, scientific knowledge, and habits.

[1] It was only in the mid-fifteenth century that *Zipangu* first appeared in European cartography, in the works of Fra Mauro (Venice, c. 1450), Henricus Martellus Germanus (Florence, c. 1490), Martin Behaim (Nuremberg, 1492), and Christopher Columbus (1492), among others. See Pires (2017) [1512–1515]; Cattaneo (2014).

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The perception of southern Europeans in Japan during the second half of the sixteenth century and beyond was shaped by a process of cultural translation.[2] This involved associating Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian travellers with other non-European groups who were also present in Japan at the time, such as Africans, Indians, and South Asians. Collectively, these peoples were referred to as the *nanbanjin*, or 'southern barbarians', a term derived from the Chinese *nanman*, whose character *ban*/*man* means 'foreigner', as well as 'fierce, savage, uncivilized'.[3]

In Japanese historical accounts, one can observe two different attitudes towards the Europeans' presence in Japan. On one hand, the strangers inspired curiosity and awe. On the other, their presence also caused shock, distress, and fear. These dual emotions played a key role in shaping relations between the Japanese and the *nanbanjin*, and were evident in both written and visual accounts. It is important to note that these seemingly opposite attitudes did not cancel each other out, but rather existed side by side. In a complex processing of this novel reality, the prevailing Japanese images and textual accounts often associate the 'Iberians' with the exotic—both as an appealing curiosity, and, at the same time, as something unknown, often identified as potentially threatening or disruptive.[4]

When analyzing historical processes and practices, it is necessary to consider complex social realities through the lens of literary and cultural theory, and material (and visual) reality.[5] Therefore, this chapter aims to provide some background information regarding the written sources, which are mainly of European origin, and the visual sources, which are primarily Japanese. I will contextualize this information within the delicate and intricate social and political atmosphere of Japan, which was going through a period of political turmoil, and emerging as a distinctive 'contact zone'—a term that refers to a social space where different cultures meet and interact, often with an imbalance in power and influence.[6] In Japan, Portugal was never a colonizing force (indeed, nor was any other European power), but rather a tolerated presence. There was an asymmetry in relations here, with the European agents always occupying the subordinate position. The presence of these foreigners triggered complex and seemingly contradictory responses that are worth considering because they were significant enough to give rise to transcultural processes, stemming from diverse interactions and the constant need for selection and negotiation. By analyzing the accounts of these responses, it is possible to explore the practices of translation, borrowing, and appropriation that early modern Japan employed with regard to the European 'other'. This also allows for an examination of the binary contrast between Japan and this 'otherness', and how it served as a discourse of Japanese self-identification through the deconstruction of the 'other'. By

[2] Burke (2007), pp. 7–38.

[3] Toby (2019), n. 6, p. 107.

[4] This subject was reflected on in Curvelo et al. (2018), particularly pp. 14–17. See also Curvelo (2012).

[5] Loomba (1998), p. 94.

[6] Pratt (1992), p. 4.

recognizing that norms and the idea of the 'native' can only be defined in relation to 'foreign' elements, this analysis acknowledges the importance of including and embracing elements originating outside of established cultural or societal norms.[7]

3.2 The First Images of the New Southern Barbarians

Some 30 years after Tomé Pires collected his information about Japan during his stay in Malacca, a Chinese junk carrying Portuguese merchants was shipwrecked on the island of Tanegashima, south of Kyushu. These merchants became the first Europeans to land on Japanese soil.

Although there is still doubt as to exactly when the first Portuguese arrived in Tanegashima, and precisely who they were,[8] two written Japanese accounts—the *Teppōki* (The Record of the Musket) and *Tanegashima kafu* (Chronicle of the Tanegashima Family)—give the date of their arrival as 23 September 1543 (Tenbun 12, 25th day of the 8th month).[9] The oldest of these records, the *Teppōki*, was written in 1606—still more than 60 years after the event—by Nanpo Bunshi (1555–1620), a Zen priest and scholar in the employ of the daimyo (feudal lord) of Kagoshima. The story is well known to historians of this period, and one particular—frequently cited—passage of the text is of concrete relevance to this chapter. It relates to the moment when one of the passengers on board the ship, a Chinese scholar named Gohō (Wu-Feng in Chinese), first communicated with the Japanese inhabitants of the island onshore. Despite being referred to as a scholar, it appears that his useful expertise was limited to writing in Chinese characters in the beach sand. For the Japanese, this 'scholar' was recognized for his familiarity, by contrast to the two or three Portuguese merchants on board the ship—strange men "whose physical features differed from ours, and whose language was not understood".[10] Gohō, who had travelled with the Portuguese merchants, had some knowledge of his European shipmates, and introduced them to the Japanese ashore as follows:

> They are traders from among the southwestern barbarians […]. They have some knowledge of the relationship between superior and inferior, but, otherwise, they do not know about propriety […]. Therefore, when they drink, they do not use cups, and when they eat, they use their fingers and not chopsticks, as we do. They show their feelings without any self-control and they do not know the written script or the use of it. Such traders are in the habit of roving from place to place, bartering things which they have for those they do not have. They are not very strange and are withal quite harmless.[11]

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[7] Bhabha (2018), p. 7.

[8] According to António Galvão's *Tratado dos Descobrimentos*, Francisco Zeimoto, António Peixoto, and António da Mota were the first Portuguese navigators to reach Japan in 1543.

[9] The most comprehensive book on this subject is Lidin (2002).

[10] I am using the English translation of the *Teppōki* published by Lidin (2002), p. 36.

[11] Lidin (2002), pp. 36–37. In *Tanegashima kafu*, the account is slightly different: "Among the (guests) people on board the ship were some whose physical features differed from ours, and

To our knowledge, this is the first documented impression that the Japanese had of the Portuguese. It came from a Chinese scholar, whose words are considered somewhat significant and trustworthy, owing to his being educated and 'local'—at least compared to the European voyagers. Therefore, the Japanese gave him enough credit to record his opinion. Still, the description can also be seen as a narrative device, with the primary aim of emphasizing the great national importance of the Tanegashima family.

Of particular interest are the references to the fact that these foreigners had some notion of social hierarchy, that they did not know how to behave appropriately, and that they could not restrain their feelings, which they showed "without any self-control". I shall return to these value judgments and their implications later.

The Japanese soon had a chance to interact with the Portuguese merchants directly, and it was at this juncture that the new arrivals presented the islanders with firearms—more precisely, muskets or arquebuses (*teppō*): "They carried in their hands an object which could not be compared with anything known. Its use was both strange and wondrous. It was named *teppō*".[12] This event had significant repercussions, both in terms of the subsequent Japanese relationship with the Portuguese and the other southern Europeans that travelled with them, and in terms of its impact on Japanese politics over the final years of the Sengoku (Warring States) era. This period, lasting from the Ōnin War (1467–1477) to 1615[13]—the year of the fall of Osaka castle and the death of Toyotomi Hideyori—was a time of instability, with frequent power struggles between different elements of society, namely Buddhist sects, the daimyo, and minor feudal lords (*jitō*). During the military and political unification of the Japanese kingdom that occurred towards the end of this period, led by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), there was a rise in the dispersed local power of low-ranking warriors (samurai) and minor feudal lords, bringing about a displacement or transfer of power. Through this process, highly ranked positions, once occupied by warriors of high birth, were taken over by those who had previously been their vassals. This phenomenon was termed *gekokujō*, literally meaning 'the lower rules the higher'. Another way to describe the broader political and social Japanese context during these times is that 'the world turned upside down', leading the historian Naitō Konan to assert that, in order to understand modern Japan, it is crucial to unpick the history of the country following the Ōnin War.[14]

The arrival of the southern Europeans, soon followed by the English and the Dutch (both in 1600), coincided with this turbulent, violent, and critical period of Japanese history. This context is of paramount importance for our understanding of the resulting image of these newcomers, and the local response to their presence. It

whose language was not understood. Those who saw them found them strange". See Lidin, (2002), p. 45.

[12] In Lidin (2002), p. 45.

[13] Note that this end date is not universally accepted. The relevant literature offers a range of end dates for the period.

[14] Naitō Konan in Souyri (2002), p. 217.

is worth noting that disputes between the opposing European forces also played a role in how the Japanese perceived the Europeans. Not only did oceans become an international politicized space for the European empires of the Early Modern period, but Japan also became an arena for the struggles between the forces of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. On their ascension to power in 1603, the Tokugawa sided with the English, preventing the mission and trade of the Catholic Iberian powers, especially from 1613 onwards.[15] Prior to this, though, some of the feudal lords from the island of Kyushu eagerly engaged in diplomatic negotiations with the 'southern barbarians'—both merchants and missionaries—seeking to have the Portuguese ship visit their dominions. One of the outcomes of this collaboration was the donation of the small fishing settlement of Nagasaki to the Society of Jesus in June 1580. From this point on, for the duration of the Portuguese presence there, Nagasaki increasingly became a safe haven for missionaries, as well as for merchants engaged in maritime commerce; in time, it would become the centre of the Catholic mission in Japan.[16] Moreover, with the foundation of Nagasaki, the Jesuits began to oversee the port, and to collect the anchorage tax from the Portuguese vessel. Through this direct involvement, they were able to take an active role in the trading of 'official'—in the sense that they were taxed and heavily regulated—goods, such as silk and silver.[17] This inseparable bond between missionaries (primarily Jesuits) and trade, although common to all the territories under Portuguese patronage in Asia (and indeed elsewhere), was particularly heightened in Japan. This substantiates what António Vieira (1608–1697) wrote in *História do Futuro* (History of the Future), a text he started writing in 1649 and left unfinished: "If there were no merchants to retrieve earth's treasures from this India or the other, who would take the preachers who carry with them the treasures of Heaven? The preachers carry the Gospel, and trade carries the preachers".[18]

In a matter of a decade, Nagasaki transformed into a cosmopolitan city, attracting wealthy merchants and a large Chinese community.[19] It became one of the main trading posts in Japan, a role that prevailed even after the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639, at which point the Dutch became the sole European presence tolerated in Japan—albeit offshore—a status they retained for the next 200 years.

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[15] Mancke (1999); Screech (2012).

[16] On the foundation of Nagasaki, see Pacheco (1989). The most recent and comprehensive study on Nagasaki from its origins to the expulsion of the Portuguese is Hesselink (2016).

[17] Leitão (1994), pp. 69–70.

[18] I am using the English translation from Curvelo (2015), p. 35.

[19] One important and rare written testimony is the diary of Ōwada Shigekyo (?–1619), a samurai retainer of the Satake family of the Mito domain (in modern-day Ibaraki Prefecture, in the Kantō region of Honshu), who was sent to Nagasaki on a shopping trip for foreign merchandise in August 1593. Through Reinier Hesselink's translation and analysis of the text, we know the kind of products that were on sale in town, their prices, and what Ōwada Shigekyo was looking for. The diary substantiates the idea that superior Chinese silk products were particularly desired by the Japanese upper class. See Hesselink (2015).

The annual letter written by the Jesuits, to be sent to the General of the Society in Rome, recounts events that occurred between March 1594 and October 1595, and mentions the turbulent times Japan was undergoing, and how these affected the city:

> To this port of Nagasaki, as it has been said on other occasions, the Portuguese Ship comes from China to Japan, year after year, carrying much rich merchandise, silk, fabrics, gold, musk, and other goods of that sort. And since this ship of the Portuguese is the greatest treasure and trade there is in Japan, so to this port come a great many people, from all the kingdoms and parts of Japan, to buy their goods. And because of the presence of these people, there is much to be gained in this port and ways of earning a living, [and therefore] this settlement of Nagasaki has grown so much that in it there emerged a great city, where there were more than seven or eight thousand souls. And for this, it was helpful that in Japan there are revolts and changes in kingdoms, and so there are always many thrown into exile, and in the era of Taico Sama [Toyotomi Hideyoshi] more so than ever, many of them come to settle in this port, which thus becomes larger every day [...].[20]

At the time of this letter's writing, Toyotomi Hideyoshi had already committed to the Imjin War, a military campaign in Korea that occurred in two phases: one from 1592 to 1593, and one from 1597 to 1598. The document was written during a break in the campaign, between the two phases. The first phase of the war began in 1592, with Japanese forces invading Korea, taking control of the fortress at Pusan, and occupying Seoul. The Japanese armies were led on the ground by Katō Kiyomasa (1562–1611) and Konishi Yukinaga (c. 1555–1600), the latter known to the Portuguese under his Christian name Agostinho, while Hideyoshi oversaw the operation from Nagoya (now part of Chinzei, in the city of Karatsu, Saga Prefecture), in the province of Hizen, on the island of Kyushu. Hideyoshi's second invasion of the Korean kingdom began in 1597, with the Taikō this time being headquartered in Osaka Castle.[21]

Prior to the first invasion, Hideyoshi had ordered the construction of Nagoya castle in 1591, and subsequently settled there; this became one of the locations at which painted *nanban* folding screens first depicted the southern barbarians and the *kurofune* ('Black Ship', the Japanese name for the Portuguese *nau*, the Great Ship). Nagoya castle was not far from Nagasaki, where the ship could be found. Okamoto Yoshitomo and Takamizawa Tadao note that, on the conclusion of the castle's decorative programme in the spring of 1593, a group of painters from the Kanō school visited Nagasaki, among them the influential Kanō Mitsunobu (1562/65–1608).[22] Here, the visiting painters had the opportunity to see the Europeans and the ship first hand, and experience the general ambience of the port city. By this time, Nagasaki was already a safe port for the ship, a centre for Macao-Japanese commerce, and the main base of operations for merchants and Western missionaries. It is probable that

[20] Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), Jap.Sin 52, Carta Ânua do Japão de Março de 1594 até Outubro de 1595 (Annual letter from Japan referring to the events that took place between March 1594 and October 1595), fl.88v. The English translation presented here is adapted from that in Curvelo et al. (2018), p. 38.

[21] The Korean campaign ended with Hideyoshi's death in 1598, upon which the invading Japanese armies were recalled from the territory.

[22] Okamoto and Takamizawa (1970).

the oldest known *nanban* folding screens—dated to between 1593 and 1605, and associated with Kanō Naizen (1570–1616) and Kanō Domi (dates unknown)—were commissioned by important members of the military elite stationed in Kyushu, or else by wealthy clients in the Kyoto and Osaka/Sakai regions, where these artists' most important painting studios were located. The screens resulted from the shift in Nagasaki's significance as a base for the 'southern barbarians' (Fig. 3.1).

The first folding screens portraying these foreigners eventually established a pictorial and iconographical compositional scheme that served as a model for the paintings that followed. With some minor variations on this theme, *nanban* folding screens mostly depict the Black Ship, its arrival in Japan, the goods being landed, the parade (*nanban gyōretsu*) that followed, and the locals observing all the turmoil caused by the event.[23] Afterwards, in a process that extended well beyond the expulsion of the Iberians from Japan, other painters from the Kanō school were involved in the production of similar images, but with a progressive deviation from the original scheme. Later compositions attest to a lack of direct knowledge of, and an estrangement from, the realities portrayed: the complex setting, the rich details and the dense iconography of Kanō Naizen's and Kanō Domi's paintings disappear, and instead we see isolated figures lost in almost empty backgrounds, almost entirely deprived of the movement and vivacious activity that we can observe in the earlier depictions.[24]

The *nanban* folding screens painted towards the end of the sixteenth century are one of the main visual documents of the Great Ship, and of the people and goods associated with it.[25] In a territory in which the concept of the exotic extended to include the southern barbarians, along with the multi-ethnic crew of the ship and all the goods on board, a new theme emerged in Japanese pictorial art. The painters from the Kanō school were the first to introduce this subject matter, which rapidly transformed into a favoured theme for a public interested in the exotic nature of the new arrivals.[26] Although we know that, more often than not, the depiction of certain

[23] The variations on the same motif—the Black Ship and the *nanbanjin*—have led to the classification of these screens, which were typically produced as a set comprising a pair of non-identical screens, into three distinct categories. In the first category, by far the most numerous, one screen from the pair depicts the Black Ship anchored at a Japanese port and its exotic products being unloaded; the other screen displays the *nanban* parade, watched by the local inhabitants and missionaries from their residences and churches. In the second category, the two aforementioned scenes from the first category are condensed into a single image on one screen, while the other screen depicts the departure of the ship from a foreign port. In the third and final category, the two scenes of the second category are further condensed onto one screen. The second screen shows Europeans on a terrace. See Takamizawa (1981), which follows Okamoto and Takamizawa (1970)—the earliest attempt to systematize and study Japanese folding screens depicting the black ship and the *nanbanjin*.

[24] This can be attested by close observation of the *nanban* folding screens in Sakamoto et al. (2008).

[25] The most comprehensive compilation of *nanban* folding screens is Sakamoto et al. (2008).

[26] The image of the *nanbanjin* was not limited to paintings, also appearing on lacquered objects (tiered food boxes, writing boxes, and backgammon boards), metal works (stirrups and gunpowder flasks) and ceramics (candle holders).

Fig. 3.1 Pair of six-panel folding screens depicting the Black Ship (*kurofune*) and the *nanbanjin*. Japan, attributed to Kanō Domi. Late sixteenth to early seventeenth century (c. 1593–1614). Tempera and gold leaf on paper; silk; lacquered frame with metal protection; wood (frame). H. 172.8 × W. 380.8 cm. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Inv. 1638–1639 Mov. © Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Museus e Monumentos de Portugal/Arquivo de Documentação Fotográfica (MMP/ADF) (Photographs by Luisa Oliveira/José Paulo Ruas)

elements—such as the ship—is far from exact (including features that were made up or exaggerated), the general traits of these images nonetheless register and translate a reality as the painters perceived it. They valued the exoticism of the people and the goods that arrived in Japan on board the ship—including silk, various textiles, porcelain, furniture, musk, gold, and tiger and leopard skins—which led to the association of the ship with traditional Japanese iconographic elements. This ship, which traced a direct route between Japan and the Indian and Atlantic oceans, came to symbolize fortune, abundance, and the remote and unknown world. Eventually, it became an auspicious motif, particularly cherished by the merchants involved in maritime trade; the motif was identified with a Japanese traditional treasure ship, the *takarabune*, a symbol of wealth and happiness. Therefore, *nanban* folding screens were understood as bearers of good luck and fortune (*engimono*) in the

same way that ships coming from the high seas were considered such through their carrying all sorts of treasures. This hypothesis linking folding screens to good luck is reinforced by the fact that some of these folding screens belonged to merchant families involved in maritime commerce from Sakai and the Sea of Japan coast.[27]

Along with the material goods it carried, the ship cannot be dissociated from its multi-ethnic crew. Although the European contingent predominated, the crew also included a non-Portuguese and non-European element, made up of slaves (mostly African, depicted barefoot and with blue and white chequered clothes) and people from other parts of Asia (such as the Malabar coast, China, Malaysia, and Gujarat), who performed the various tasks necessary for life on board. The *sarangues* (*sarang*, local pilots) and *jurubaças* (*jurubahasa*, translators or interpreters), many of them coming from Malacca, rose to the higher ranks of the local social hierarchy on board. At the top of this social pyramid was the figure of the Captain-major, usually represented sitting on a chair on the poop deck, symbolizing his power and status. Merchants are dressed in colourful, eye-catching garments made of textiles of diverse geographical provenance, although generally following European models, while noblemen wear more sober garments, mostly black—a respectable colour—with magnificent gold buttons, chains and whistles.[28] All the individuals are depicted dressing and behaving according to their social status, echoing Gohō's statement that they "have some knowledge of the relationship between superior and inferior". It is perhaps unsurprising that Japanese painters expressed this hierarchical structure visually, given the deeply hierarchical and structured nature of Japanese society. The portrait of an idealized hierarchy would have been familiar to Japanese audiences and could be seen as a successful example of visual cultural translation.

The feature that these paintings have in common is their rendering of the exceptional and outlandish, and it was precisely this exotic nature of the reality depicted in these folding screens that contributed to their preservation. According to Matthew McKelway, "the 'otherness' of foreigners may indeed be a factor that guaranteed the perpetuation and preservation of *nanban* screens even long after Europeans disappeared from the Japanese landscape".[29] In other words, the curiosity and sense of wonder caused by the arrival and presence of these outsiders never ceased to amaze at least a section of Japanese society. But the recollection of it was also preserved, albeit perhaps less accurately, through the collective memory of past events, as depicted in the *nanban gyōretsu* parades in some Japanese cities. Among these, perhaps one of the most sumptuous was the return of the Tenshō mission to Japan in 1590, having been sent by the Jesuits to Rome in 1583. This embassy consisted of four young Japanese men who were representatives of three Christian daimyo of Kyushu. The return of the mission culminated in the young men's and the Jesuits' arrival in Kyoto, in a parade led by the Jesuit Visitor Alessandro Valignano

[27] On this subject, and particularly on the association between the *nanban* ship and the *takarabune*, and its integration into a local *repertoire*, see Jackson (2004); Lippit (2007).

[28] Curvelo (2015).

[29] McKelway (2006), p. 211.

(1539–1606)—an episode that was vividly described by Luís Fróis (1532–1597) in his *História de Japam* (History of Japan), written between 1583 and 1597. According to Fróis, the impact of the parade in Kyoto was such that "when [the spectators] saw such ostentatious people come to Miaco [Kyoto], the likes of which they had never seen before, they all stood stunned with their fingers in their mouths, unable to speak".[30] Though we are well aware that such accounts were written to impress, and that there is likely to be some embellishment of the overall events, there is no reason to disbelieve that the impression was indeed considerable. In my view, the fact that the Japanese warrior elite came to emulate *nanban* fashion is significant evidence of the strength of their reaction.

3.3 Performing the Iberian 'Other'

While Nagoya (in Kyushu) acted as a pivotal centre of operations for Japan's Korean campaign, its proximity to Nagasaki enabled, and thus strengthened, the contact between the Japanese military elite and the Portuguese based in the latter city. One might even suggest that the Portuguese enhanced their displays of luxury and ostentation, with the aim of producing a new image of *nanbanjin* in the eyes of the Japanese, as well as of drawing the attention and presence of Japanese merchants and warriors to Nagasaki. These ostentatious displays may have been the inspiration for the representation of the *nanbanjin* on folding screens, thus ushering in a new iconography in Japanese visual arts. Furthermore, this atmosphere can also be associated with the gradual adoption of a '*nanban* style' of dressing by the Japanese warrior elite. In this regard, the Jesuits give several testimonies, one of which is to be found in the above-mentioned annual letter of 1594–1595:

> And then, with Taicosama's[31] (Toyotomi Hideyoshi) arrival at Nagoya castle, he ordered preparations for the war with Korea, and all the while Portuguese captains, dressed with great pomp, continued to pay him personal visits there bringing with them other Portuguese. Almost all the Japanese lords went to Nagasaki, curious to see the Portuguese ship, which they were invited to view, in accordance with their status. Feasting with the ship's captains, and celebrating with all the Portuguese that were there, they came to have a very different conception of the Portuguese than that which they previously held, since they had never before seen or dealt with them directly. And they thought they were very noble, illustrious, and conducted commerce very well, and thus they slowly changed their manner of dressing to the Portuguese way; and now, when ships come, Japanese overseers approach them with a great desire to purchase items and to make clothes for their lords in the Portuguese fash-

[30] Fróis, *História de Japam*, Vol. V, Chapter 38, pp. 295–296. For the English translation of the original Portuguese text, see Curvelo (2015), p. 12.

[31] Jesuit sources refer to Hideyoshi as 'Taicosama' from *taikō*, a retired *kanpaku* (regent), and the honorific *sama*.

> ion, and the Portuguese return to China virtually naked, having sold the best of their merchandise in Japan [...].[32]

Even allowing for some intentional exaggeration of the events, in the attempt to gain the approval of the Society of Jesus and its hierarchy, there is no doubt that there was an appropriation of the *nanbanjin* way of dressing by the Japanese warrior elite. This phenomenon must be associated with the image that was being constructed in Japan of the 'barbarian' or 'foreigner', through a process of transformation in the Japanese imagination, which Ronald Toby terms "the Indianness of Iberia" or "Indianizing Iberia".[33]

As Toby remarks, if it is true that, prior to 1542, the 'other' referred fundamentally to the territories of China, Korea and India, and was always located outside of Japan (evoking the term *tōjin*, which literally means 'Tang Chinese', but also refers to foreigners in general, including Westerners in the Edo period [1603–1868]),[34] the arrival of the Portuguese and other southern Europeans in Japan in the sixteenth century sparked a paradigm shift. Additionally, the connection between these Europeans and 'Southern land' peoples was inextricably linked to the fact that, from the beginning, the Japanese associated the *nanbanjin* with India and the Indians. This connection stems not only from the Portuguese rule over the city of Goa (the capital of the 'State of India') and other parts of India, which was reflected in the merchandise and commodities that were carried by the Black Ship, and subsequently depicted on the *nanban* folding screens. Perhaps more strongly, it relates to the arrival of Francis Xavier (1506–1552) in Japan in 1549, and the beginning of the Christian mission in the country. Xavier arrived with his interpreter and assistant Anjirō (also known as Yajirō, n.d.), an uneducated Japanese renegade that Xavier had met in Malacca in 1547, and who had travelled with him to Goa, where he had learned the basic rudiments of the Portuguese language. Anjirō was eventually baptized with the Christian name of Paulo da Santa Fé (Paul of the Holy Faith), thus becoming the first Japanese convert. However, when he assisted Xavier in introducing Christianity into Japan, the religion was perceived as a new Buddhist sect coming from India, thanks to a series of erroneous translations, misunderstandings, and misconceptions by both parties.[35] From then on, India (in Japanese, *Tenjiku*) was indissociable from the Christian Portuguese and the *nanbanjin*.

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[32] Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), Jap.Sin 52, Carta Ânua do Japão de Março de 1594 até Outubro de 1595 (Annual letter from Japan referring to the events that took place between March 1594 and October 1595), fls.113–113v. For the Portuguese transcription of the document, see Curvelo (2007), p. 282. The English translation presented here is adapted from that in Curvelo (2015), p. 12.

[33] Here I reference Ronald Toby's seminal works on the subject: the book *Engaging the Other: 'Japan' and Its Alter Egos, 1550–1850*, particularly pp. 106–141, and the first article he wrote on this particular subject: "The 'Indianness' of Iberians and the changing Japanese iconographies of Others" (1994).

[34] On the term *tōjin*, see also Suzuki (2007).

[35] Schurhammer (1982), pp. 223–225; App (1997, 1998).

The reading of missionary accounts—especially those by the Jesuits—of this '*nanban* fashion', must be combined with analysis of some Japanese paintings, such as the folding screen *Hōkoku sairei-zu byōbu* by Kanō Naizen, which depicts revellers at the Hōkoku Shrine[36] festival of 1604. The partygoers are arrayed in *nanban* style, but are identified as Japanese masqueraders by the sandals on their feet.[37] The complex process of 'taming' or 'domesticating' the 'Iberian other' included—and was eventually most successful through—imitating their dress.

Dressing like a *nanbanjin* implied much more than just using pieces of cloth cut and modelled according to their fashion. It also involved making these clothes with specific fabrics, especially those from India that arrived in Japan aboard the Black Ship, which could reach high prices. The more colourful and elaborate patterns were difficult to imitate, as was the case with *sarasa*—a word derived from the Malay *sarasah*, meaning a finely woven cotton fabric from India—often translated into English as chintz or calico. In Japan, the name *sarasa* (which passed into the Japanese language via the Portuguese) came to be applied to pieces of cotton that were printed, painted, or dyed 'in *sarasa* style', made not only in India, but also in the Safavid Empire and the territories of present-day Indonesia, including Sumatra and Java. In time, pieces imitating the much sought-after imported material were also produced in Japan itself. Examples include *Nagasaki sarasa* and *Nabeshima sarasa*. The Portuguese first imported *sarasa* into Japan via Sumatra and Java in the mid-sixteenth century; these cotton fabrics' designs were, to Japanese eyes, unconventional, featuring bright colours and geometric, vegetal, and zoomorphic patterns—quite different from the most common Japanese textiles.[38] Adopting a *nanban style* also entailed the use of certain additional elements, such as hats of European shape, shoes and buttons (the Japanese word for which, *botan*, derives from the Portuguese *botão*), which were probably mostly used in ceremonial contexts associated with the Japanese warrior elite.

This incorporation of the exotic (in the form of *nanbanjin* fashion) by some in Japanese society can also be understood as a manifestation of the aesthetic of *basara* (extravagance), especially by the warrior class, during this period.[39] *Basara* is also associated with excess[40] and even unconventional behaviour, although, in this case, the unconventionality is controlled and codified. This behavioural element, too, can be linked to the Japanese impressions of the Europeans: from the beginning of their interaction with the Japanese onward, the Portuguese were associated with an irregular, extraordinary form of conduct; this association was then later expanded to cover Iberians in general, and then the *nanbanjin* as a whole. This idea is present in

[36] This shrine is one of several built in honour of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

[37] This pair of six-panel folding screens is found in Toyokuni Jinja, Kyoto, and the detail is reproduced in Toby (2019), Fig. 36, p. 115.

[38] Fujita, (2009).

[39] Schweizer (2016), pp. 308–314.

[40] *Basara* derives from the Sanskrit *vajra* or diamond, indicating excess. See *Chanoyu* 茶湯 in the JAANUS database. Accessed: 1 June 2021.

the *Teppōki*, particularly in its statement that "[t]hey show their feelings without any self-control".[41]

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a particular group, the *kabukimono*, coalesced and became associated with *basara* and with irregular behaviour and appearance. *Kabukimono* is defined in the *Vocabulario de lingoa de Iapam*, the Japanese-Portuguese dictionary published by the Jesuits in Nagasaki in 1603–1604, as "Cabuquita hito, I., cabuqimono. Cabuquita hito, I., cabuqimono. A person who gets carried away easily, takes more liberties than given, responds promptly, or rejoices excessively".[42] This definition of a *kabukita hito* or *kabukimono* as a person who takes more liberty than they should, answers quickly, or is more joyful than they should be, describes specific irregular behaviour that could be considered eccentric, and that could be associated with precisely the kind of lack of self-control ascribed to the Portuguese travellers in the *Teppōki*. But who exactly were these *kabukimono*?

For the most part, they were a group of marginal members of the samurai class, around the time of the consolidation of the Tokugawa shogunate. They were part of a fringe group that was dissatisfied with their position in the new social order, showing their discontent via the way they dressed, cultivating a deviant or unconventional fashion that was also labelled *kabukimono*. This repudiation of the conventional codes of conduct is also expressed in the language: the term *kabukimono* has origins in the verb *kabuku*, which has connotations of being 'twisted', 'out of kilter' or 'outlandish'.[43] The fact that these 'rebels' formed bonds of solidarity with each other, and defined themselves by their manner of dressing, led to the central government issuing its first decree against "people of our times who look different", in 1615.[44]

The drama surrounding *kabukimono* played out in Kyoto, where there was also a theatrical performance, kabuki, with which *kabukimono* came to be associated. In its earlier manifestations, kabuki was a form of dance theatre with female performers, the most famous of which was its founder, Izumo no Okuni, a priestess (or so she claimed) from the Izumo shrine. At first, around 1603, the shogunate considered kabuki to be inoffensive, albeit somewhat provocative. It was perceived as merely a simple form of entertainment and dramatization; even the *kabukimono*'s physical appearance and conduct were regarded as such. Both types of cultural expression were, however, a protest against the Tokugawa government, and expressed a desire for freedom. As such, they gradually came to be perceived as a sign of resistance to the *bakufu* (the shogunate or military government), and became synonymous with the violation of norms. *Nanbanjin* were involved in these performances only passively, as spectators. In one painting on paper in the Tokugawa Art Museum in Nagoya, they can be seen in the audience at a kabuki performance (Fig. 3.2).

[41] Lidin (2002), p. 37.

[42] "Cabuqi", *Vocabulario de lingoa de Iapam*; see Ōtsuka (1998), p. 57.

[43] Carpenter (2002), p. 470.

[44] Butler (1991), pp. 28–33.

Fig. 3.2 Detail of the *Uneme kabuki zōshi* depicting *nanbanjin* in the audience at a kabuki performance. Early Edo period (seventeenth century). The Tokugawa Art Museum, © The Tokugawa Art Museum Image Archives/DNPartcom

In the *Uneme kabuki zōshi* (Illustrated Tale of the Kabuki Dancer Uneme), the titular Uneme, who is dressed as a man—stressing the gender ambiguity that became a feature of these highly eroticized performances—is depicted with a sword fastened to her waist, and another supporting her left arm. Wearing colourful patterned fabrics, she is adorned with various ornaments, including a cross around her neck. Far from implying any affiliation or direct relation to Christianity, the inclusion of this element must be understood as the appropriation of a Christian symbol around the time of the anti-Christian edict of 1614; its significance is thus clearly in its sense of subversion. Some of the audience members depicted in *Uneme kabuki zōshi* are smoking tobacco, another symbol often incorporated in these scenes. Several identifying features of the *nanbanjin*—the cross, tobacco, and colourful clothes—were used as aesthetic and behavioural components of *kabukimono*, and became associated with a non-conformist attitude.[45] A similar correlation can be found in Western-style playing cards (*carta* in Portuguese, and *karuta* in Japanese), introduced to Japan by the Portuguese, and soon produced locally. As art historian John Carpenter perceptively notes, a particular type of cards—the *unsun karuta*—depict Europeans in court costumes or on horseback, alongside other cards depicting local iconography (for example, Bodhidharma, or the Seven Lucky Gods). In addition to their extravagant costumes, the Western figures on these cards are sometimes ambiguous in their gender presentation (for example, the figure of the moustachioed queens). Carpenter notes that card games "unlike the traditional Japanese shell-matching games they partly replaced, had a more notorious kabuki aspect to them, since, as in Europe, they were closely associated with gambling".[46]

The *bakufu* made successive attempts to control these individual and collective (deviant) expressions through measures including regulations on clothing (as

[45] Nishiyama (1997), pp. 213–227.

[46] Carpenter (2002), p. 475.

mentioned above), a ban on women and young boys appearing on stage in kabuki performances,[47] a ban on playing cards, and even a restriction on the consumption of tobacco. [48] It was considered that public morals should be preserved at any cost; this general mood also contextualizes the ban on Christianity in 1614, for no other figure inspired more distress and mistrust in the shogunate than that of the *bateren* (Catholic priest).[49] The terrifying image these priests conjured up is best pictured in the *Kirishitan monogatari* (Tales of the Christians), an anonymous 1639 text, most probably of collective authorship, that appeared immediately after the Shimabara revolt. It is often identified "as the first of a genre of populist anti-Christian texts"[50] that emerged in the decades after the rebellion.[51] According to this text, around the Kōji era (1555–1558), a *nanban* merchant arrived in Japan—a 'creature' who initially appeared human but was unlike anything seen before. It was identified as a 'Padre'. It had large eyes, long claws, stood over seven feet tall, and had a black body, and a red nose. Its speech was incomprehensible. The roads were crowded with people who found it more terrifying than any other monster.[52]

As Elison puts it in his interpretation of the *Kirishitan monogatari*, "the trickery of description immediately fixed in the reader's mind the image of perniciousness approaching: the burlesque *bateren* landed, and menace hovered in the air".[53] The *bateren*'s physical features were terrifying, being described as a creature more akin to a goblin or a chimaera, or a mixture of both, indicating its weirdness and abnormality. Furthermore, perhaps more importantly, its mere presence caused disorder—"everyone ran to see it, mobbing the roads with abandon"—or, according to another version, "one and all rushed to see him, crowding all the roads in total lack of restraint".[54] From this description, there once again emerges the same sense of

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[47] Young women were banned from kabuki in 1629. Brandon and Leiter (2004), p. 1; Carpenter (2002), pp. 473–474.

[48] In 1646, 7 years after the expulsion of the Portuguese. Carpenter (2002), pp. 475–476.

[49] '*Bateren*' is the Japanese transliteration of the Portuguese word '*padre*' ('priest'). The *ateji* chosen to transliterate the Portuguese word refer to 'the group of companions that lived according to Heaven', resulting from three characters: 伴 *ba*, meaning companion; *te* 天, a contraction of *ten*, meaning heaven; and 連 *ren*, meaning group. See Farge (2016), p. 27.

[50] Paramore (2009), p. 61.

[51] Shimabara was one of the more significant regions for the history of Christianity in Japan, from the beginning of the Christian mission. Shimabara's daimyo Arima Yoshisada (1521–1576) and his son Arima Harunobu (1567–1612) were among the first to convert to Catholicism. At the time of the persecutions against the Christians, the commoners of Shimabara, along with peasants from Amakusa, instigated a Christian-inspired large-scale revolt in late 1637 and early 1638. See Ramos (2021).

[52] For the translation of this passage, see Toby (2019), p. 109. For a translation of the full text, see Elison (1973), pp. 319–374. See also Leuchtenberger (2013) for the *Kirishitan monogatari*, as well as other similar written accounts, including the *Baterenki* (History of the Padres; circa 1610), the *Nanbanji monogatari* (Tale of the Southern Barbarian Temple; circa eighteenth century), and the *Kirishitan shūmon raichō jikki* (True Account of the Arrival of the Kirishitan Sect; circa eighteenth century), and illustrations.

[53] Elison (1973), p. 30.

[54] The first translation is Ronald Toby's version, and the latter is from Elison (1973), p. 321.

lack of control associated with the *nanbanjin*, as seen in the *Teppōki*, and also in the *nanban* folding screens, where these foreigners are depicted in a frenzied environment, engaged in conversations, hurrying around, and hastily mounting their horses. However, this time, rather than any particular behaviour on the part of a *nanbanjin*, it is the mere presence of this outsider that gives rise to 'abandon' or 'lack of restraint' among locals. In other words, the mere fact that he is here, in Japanese territory, is in itself a potential threat to public order. The fact that the foreigner is also a missionary (a priest) is of no less importance—quite the opposite. It was the Christian missionaries, and not the merchants, who were perceived from the very beginning as those who could not be controlled. The fact that perhaps as much as two per cent of the Japanese population had embraced the Catholic faith by 1614, the year it was proscribed by the Tokugawa government, must also be taken into account.[55] As Elisonas observes, the Roman Catholic European missionaries introduced a model of universal truth that was not easily accepted by the Tokugawa regime, which wanted to reshape Japanese society according to its own ideals. Consequently, the Catholic mission to Japan was ultimately seen as a threat to the social order of the Tokugawa, and the Catholics were expelled, being considered alien to the Japanese body politic.[56]

After 1614, Christianity was banned, and even the slightest reference to it was forbidden, whether doctrinal, literary, visual, or material. An anti-Christian inquisition (*shūmon aratame yaku*) was established in 1640, headed by Inoue Chikugo no Kami Masashige (1585–1661), a loyal vassal of the Tokugawa, in the role of inquisitor or 'great inspector' (*ōmetsuke*) of the *bakufu*. Twenty-four years later, in 1664, the *terauke seido*, or temple registration system, was introduced, utilizing Buddhism as a means of controlling previously Christian populations. This policy was in line with the anti-Christian texts that had emerged since the early seventeen century, namely *Ha daiusu* (Deus Destroyed), written by the Japanese apostate Fabian Fukansai (c. 1565–1621) in 1620, the already mentioned *Kirishitan monogatari*, and *Ha kirishitan* (Smash the Christians), written by Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655) in the 1660s. As Paramore emphasizes, in reference to the latter text, Christians are portrayed here "as foreign(-like) Others", an idea articulated through the central argument that Christianity threatened the traditional social relations that upheld the stability of the Tokugawa's political control systems; this apparent threat was used to justify Christianity's suppression.[57] The political system was built on the foundation of Japan's traditions and customs, which were inseparably linked to Buddhism and Shinto. It was thus felt that "if the 'buddhas and the gods' on the one hand, and the 'Imperial law' on the other, represented the 'two wheels of the cart' or 'two chambers of the heart', there could be no room for a 'third wheel' or a 'third chamber'".[58]

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[55] On this subject, see Nosco (1996), pp. 136–155.

[56] Elisonas (1997), p. 301.

[57] Paramore (2009), p. 63.

[58] Ucerler (2022), p. 284.

3.4 Final Remarks

The analysis of these sources attests to processes of translation, negotiation, acceptance, resistance, and rejection, in response to the presence of the *nanbanjin* in Japan, from around 1543 until the middle of the seventeenth century. The folding screens depicting the Great Ship that linked Japan to Southeast Asia, India, and Europe, as well as its travellers and its merchandise, reveal how their arrival gave rise to a new subject in Japanese painting. The 'exoticism' of this outlandish foreign presence, which sparked so much curiosity, is the main trait of these pictorial compositions. These folding screens also reveal the local symbolic readings of some of their elements, in particular the *kurofune*, and the associations made with Japanese mythology and tradition.

Alongside these folding screens, other paintings and objects give us supplementary information regarding cultural appropriation and adaptation, as in the case of the adoption of a *nanban* fashion, mainly by the warrior class, as well as the *kabukimono*'s consumption of tobacco and use of the cross as a disruptive and subversive symbol, aimed at contesting the shogunate.[59]

That this 'other' helped to shape a discourse of self-identification, in a moment when Japan was in the process of building a new political and social order, is undeniable. Furthermore, this process embraced two inexorably related strategies: domestication, and foreignizing or exoticizing. What is revealing, and worth pondering, is what this process of deconstruction of the 'other' implied, and how (and why) different social agents and translators took part in it. To approach these questions, it is valuable to reflect upon the use of the term 'identification' as a specific category of analysis.[60]

While the political context did not entirely determine the nature and mode of interactions between Iberians and Japanese, it did play a role in classifying, identifying, labelling, and judging these interactions, and the state ultimately decided to expel the Portuguese in 1639. During this process of identification, two significant groups emerged: the merchants and the missionaries. The former were not initially perceived as posing a threat, whereas the latter's religious and political influence sparked concern about the potential danger resulting from their presence. The two groups were thus initially recognized as separate entities, but it soon became apparent that they formed a single, foreign unit. It was, therefore, crucial to acknowledge their connection as an indivisible body, which the shogunate attempted to dismember in 1614—albeit unsuccessfully. However, the state, while powerful, is not the only relevant identifier. As Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker note, "even the

[59] Curvelo (2012).

[60] For this argument, I am following Frederick Cooper, who, along with Rogers Brubaker, discusses the term 'identity' and its replacement by concepts such as 'identification'. See Cooper (2005), particularly pp. 59–90.

most powerful state does not monopolize the production and diffusion of identifications and categories; and those that it does produce may be contested”.[61]

The dual nature (trade-based and religious) of the Iberian presence in Japan—unlike that of the English or, more importantly, the Dutch—ultimately led to their expulsion in 1639.[62] Still, the deep cultural and religious interactions between Iberians and the Japanese birthed multiple, and even competing, discourses within Japanese society about this ‘other’.

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[61] Cooper (2005), p. 72.

[62] Toby (2019), on page 141, argues that at some point, performing Iberia—that is, portraying or performatively representing the Southern Barbarians—was no longer deemed acceptable. Instead, the paintings depict people dressed in *nanban* costumes and wearing orange wigs (the *kōmōjin*, or red-hairs, referring to the Dutch and the English) as part of a masking process.

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