A selection of travel accounts in English compiled by Daniel Botsman, Professor of History at UNC, with the assistance of Rustin Gates, currently Assistant Professor of History at Bradley University, for Professor Botsman’s course ‘Journeys to Japan, 1550-1900,’ given Autumn 2006 at UNC.

**Sengoku (Pre-Tokugawa) Era: 1500s**

Galvão, António, d. 1557. *The discoveries of the world, from their first original unto the year of Our Lord 1555* / by Antonio Galvano, governor of Ternate; corrected, quoted, and published in England, by Richard Hakluyt (1601) ; now reprinted with the original Portuguese text ; and ed. by Vice-Admiral Bethune. London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1862.


A secondary source. The five foreigners are: Fernando Mendez Pinto; Saint Francis Xavier; Will Adams, the pilot; Ranald MacDonald of Oregon; and Townsend Harris, the first American envoy.

Hakluyt, Richard, 1552?-1616. *The principal navigations : voyages, traffiqves and discoveries of the English nation, made by sea or ouerland, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth, at any time within the compasse of these 1600 yeres: diuided into three seuerall volumes, according to the positions of the regions, whereunto they were directed. The first volume containeth the worthy discoveries &c. of the English toward the north and northeast by sea ... together with many notable monuments and testimonies of the ancient forren trades, and of the warrelke and other shipping of this realme of England in former ages. Whereunto is annexed a briefe commentary of the true state of Island, and of the northren seas and lands situate that way; as also the memorable defeat of the Spanish huge Armada, Anno 1588. The second volume comprehendeth the principall nauigations, voyages, traffiques and discoueries of the English nation made by sea or ouer-land, to the south and south-east ...* / by Richard Hakluyt, preacher, and sometime Student of Christ-Church in Oxford. London : George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599-1600.

There are various non-circulating copies in the Beinecke and British Art Center collections; there are also facsimile and reprinted editions circulating, either in the Mudd collections or retrievable from LSF.


Willes, Richard, fl. 1558-1573. England and Japan; the first known account of Japan in English, extracted from The history of travayle, 1577. Pref. by M. Paske-Smith. Kobe, Japan, J. L. Thompson, 1928.

13 p., facsim. (252-260 p. maps) 40-69 p. 22 cm. With reproduction of t. p. of Richard Eden’s The history of travayle, 1577, and of the chapter by Richard Willes entitled: Of the ilande Giapan and other litle isles in the East Ocean. With facsimile reproduction of the title-page and chapter on Japan in the "History of Travayle". "A portion of this chapter is the original work of Willis himself, and the remainder a translation of a letter from Father Froes."

Yale does not hold this particular edition; however, the Beinecke has a copy of the original, which also exists as an internet resource.

**Early Tokugawa Era (1600s)**

Caron, François, 1600-1673. *A true description of the mighty kingdoms of Japan and Siam [microform] / written originally in Dutch by Francis Caron and Joost Schorten; and novv rendred into English by Capt. Roger Manley*. London: Printed by Samuel Broun and John de l'Ecluse ..., 1663.

Available as an internet book or in a variety of other forms, editions and languages.

(Yale’s copy is a 1964[?] republication by B. Franklin of New York)


A secondary source. The five foreigners are: Fernando Mendez Pinto; Saint Francis Xavier; Will Adams, the pilot; Ranald MacDonald of Oregon; and Townsend Harris, the first American envoy.

Great Britain Public Record Office. *Calendar of state papers. Colonial series ... preserved in the Public record office ... London : Longman, [etc.], 1860-.*


Volumes 2-4 contain correspondence between the East India Company and their agents in Japan in the early 1600s. A large collection, containing useful information on English attempts at entering the Japanese markets and the frustrations they encountered. In addition to information on Anglo-Japanese trade and encounters, the letters often mention the Dutch and Japanese domestic politics.


xxvi, 307 p. : ill. ; 23 cm. "List of errata" (fold. leaf) not included in pagination. "The letters of William Adams ... are ... reprinted from Rundall’s edition [Memorials of the Empire of Japan, in the 16th and 17th centuries with some ... alterations ... in the second part, all articles relating to Japan are reprinted from W. Noel Sainsbury’s Calendar of state papers: Colonial series, East Indies, China and Japan, 1513-1624. A description of Japan in the 16th century ... forming the first part of the ... work of Rundall, is given as an Appendix."

Yale does not hold this book, although a 1973 reprint is available through Borrow
Direct. However, the original sources—both Rundall’s book and Sainsbury’s compilation of state papers—are available at Yale. See previous citations.

Montanus, Arnoldus, 1625?-1683. *Atlas japannensis: being remarkable addresses by way of embassy from the East-India company of the United Provinces, to the emperor of Japan*. Containing a description of their several territories, cities, temples, and fortresses; their religions, laws and customs; their prodigious wealth, and gorgeous habits; the nature of their soil, plants, beasts, hills, rivers, and fountains. With the character of the ancient and modern Japanners. Collected out of their several writings and journals by Arnoldvs Montanvs. English’d, and adorn’d with above a hundred several sculptures, by John Ogilby, esq. London, Printed by T. Johnson for the author, 1670.


Moxon, Joseph, 1627-1691. A brief discourse of a passage by the North-pole to Japan, China, &c. [microform]: pleaded by three experiments, and answers to all objections that can be urged against a passage that way ... with a map of all the discovered lands neerest to the pole / by Jospeh Moxon ... London: Printed for Joseph Moxon, and sold at his shop ..., 1674.

There is a copy in the Beinecke, a microform edition, and an internet resource

Purchas, Samuel, 1577?-1626. *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or, Relations of the world and the religions obserued in all ages and places discovered, from the Creation vnto this present: in foure partes: his first containeth a theologicall and geographicall historie of Asia, Africa, and America, with the ilands adiacent: declaring the ancient religions before the Flovd, the heathenish, Jewish, and Saracenicall in all ages since ...: with briefe descriptions of the countries, nations, states, discoveries, priuate and publike customes, and the most remarkable rarities of nature, or humane industrie, in the same / by Samuel Purchas*. London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613.

There are a number of editions, both print and online—this particular edition is in the Beinecke.


Mid Tokugawa Era: 1700s

Benyowsky, Maurice Auguste, comte de, 1746-1786. Memoirs and travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky; magnate of the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, one of the chiefs of the confederation of Poland, &c. &c. Consisting of his military operations in Poland, his exile into Kamchatka, his escape and voyage... through the northern Pacific Ocean,... Written by himself. Translated from the original manuscript. In two volumes. [electronic resource]... Dublin : printed by William Porter, for P. Wogan, L. White, P. Byrne, J. Moore, C. Lewis, [and 4 others in Dublin], 1790.


Yale does not have this reprint; instead, the original 1804 publication exists in both Beinecke and the Franklin Collection, or on microform.


4 v.: ill.

Titsingh, Isaac, 1744-1812. Cerémonies uistées au Japon. Illustrations of Japan:
consisting of private memoirs and anecdotes of the reigning dynasty of the
Djogouns, or sovereigns of Japan: a description of the feasts and ceremonies
observed throughout the year at their court: and of the ceremonies customary at
marriages funerals ... / by M. Titsingh; translated from the French, by Frederic

xvi, 325 p., [13] leaves of plates (1 folded) : col. ill. ; 31 cm. Adapted by author
from original work in Japanese: Nipon-o-day-tche-lan. "With coloured plates,
faithfully copied from Japanese original designs." Bound in half morocco with
title in gilt on spine. "Catalogue of the books and manuscripts, Japanese, French,
English, and Dutch ... collected by the late M. Titsingh": p. [313]-325.

The British Art Center also has two copies of the English edition of this work.

**Late Tokugawa Era: Early 1800s**

Beechey, Frederick William, 1796-1856. Narrative of a voyage to the Pacific and
Beering's strait, to co-operate with the polar expeditions: performed in His
Majesty's ship Blossom, under the command of Captain F.W. Beechey ... in the
years 1825, 26, 27, 28 ... London, H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831.

Various copies exist in the Beinecke and Mudd collections.

Broughton, William Robert, 1762-1821. A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific

Yale does not have this reprint; instead, the original 1804 publication exists in
both Beinecke and the Franklin Collection, or on microform.

The court journey to the shōgun of Japan: from a private account by Jan Cock Blomhoff
/edited by F.R. Effert ; introduced and annotated by Matthi Forrer. Leiden, The

133 p. : ill. (some col.), maps ; 28 cm.

Golovnin, Vasiliĭ Mikhaĭlovich, 1776-1831. Japan and the Japanese: comprising the
narrative of a captivity in Japan, and an account of British commercial intercourse
with that country / by Captain Golovnin, of the Russian navy. New and rev. ed.
London : Colburn, 1853.


Golovnin, Vasiliĭ Mikhaĭlovich, 1776-1831. Recollections of Japan; comprising a particular account of the religion, language, government, laws and manners of the people with observations on the geography, climate, population & productions of the country, by Captain Golownin. London, H. Colburn, 1819.

Ixxxix, 302 p. 22 cm.

A long introduction (written by the editor) gives the history of British-Japanese relations from first contact until the 1810s. This is a surprisingly useful and detailed account, which even appears to utilize primary documents. Golovnin’s “Recollections” cover such aspects of Japan as its geography, history, religion, the character of the Japanese, the system of government, their trade and commerce, and their military. Throughout there are great quotations such as, “The Japanese are deficient in only one quality, which we reckon among virtues, namely, bravery or courage” (p. 12). A good source but perhaps not necessary if his other two books are available. In fact, the above Japan and the Japanese appears to contain both his captivity book and his recollections one as well.

Introduction copied. Contact Professor Botsman.


A secondary source. The five foreigners are: Fernando Mendez Pinto; Saint Francis Xavier; Will Adams, the pilot; Ranald MacDonald of Oregon; and Townsend Harris, the first American envoy.
James, T. Horton (Thomas Horton). The Sandwich and Bonin Islands [microform]: a letter to a noble lord, on the importance of settling the Sandwich & Bonin Islands, in the North Pacific Ocean, on the plan of a proprietary government: together with hints on the probability, in that case, of introducing British manufactures into the great empire of Japan / by T. Horton James. London : Printed by W. Tew, 1832. 18, [5] p.

The author visited the Sandwich (ie Hawaiian) Islands in 1832. In this piece he calls for their annexation by Britain. One selling point, he believes, is the close proximity to the Bonin Islands. A group of Englishmen with native islander wives established a settlement on the main island of the Bonin in 1830. Should Britain annex the Sandwich Islands the Bonin would naturally be an “appendage” the Sandwich Islands’ government. The Bonin Islands are important, the author believes, because it is through them that Britain could introduce manufactured goods to Japan.

Not in Yale’s collection; use ILL. Harvard seems to be the nearest holding library, and indeed the only library in the continental United States with this document.


In addition to the 1968 edition, there are numerous copies of the original translation, as well as original copies in other languages.


2 v. in 1: ill., map ; 24 cm. v. 1. The voyage from Copenhagen to Brazil, the South Sea, Kamtschatka, and Japan v. 2. The voyage from Kamtschatka to the island of St. Paul, Unalaska, Kodiak, Sitcha, New Albion, Kamtschatka, Ochotsk, and through Siberia to St. Petersburg. Voyage around the world, 1803-1807. "A new translation"--P. xxvii. Cover title: A voyage around the world, 1803-1807. Includes bibliographical references and index.

MacDonald, Ranald, 1824-1894. Ranald MacDonald: the narrative of his early life on the Columbia under the Hudson's Bay Company's regime, of his experiences in the Pacific whale fishery, and of his great adventure to Japan: with a sketch of his


Raffles, Sophia, Lady, 1786-1858. Memoir of the life and public services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles ... : particularly in the government of Java, 1811-1816, and of Bencoolen and its dependencies, 1817-1824; with details of the commerce and resources of the Eastern archipelago, and selections from his correspondence / By his widow. London: J. Murray, 1830.

xv, [1] 723, 100 p. front. (port.) plates (1 fold.) maps (part fold.) 28 cm.

Bakumatsu Era: 1850s


161 p.; ill., maps, port.; 23 cm.


A secondary source. The five foreigners are: Fernando Mendez Pinto; Saint Francis Xavier; Will Adams, the pilot; Ranald MacDonald of Oregon; and Townsend Harris, the first American envoy.


Harris, Townsend, 1804-1878. The complete journal of Townsend Harris, first American consul and minister to Japan. Introd. and noted by Mario Emilio Consenza. With a
Heard (Hurd) Family Papers 1754-1898. Baker Business Library, Historical Collections, Harvard University. Call number Mss: 766 1754-1898. This huge collection is entirely on microfilm. The majority of these papers are business records of Augustine Heard and Company (1840-1875). The company carried on a commission business in China based, at first, in Canton and then in Hong Kong. After the Harris Treaties they soon opened branch offices in Japanese treaty ports such as Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Kobe. Tea, silk, lumber, and opium (from India to China) were the commodities traded most by the company. The records include all aspects of the business: correspondence between offices and customers, account records, balance sheets, ship manifests, etc. The letters from company agents in the Japanese treaty ports are perhaps the most relevant and interesting. They detail such things as the tea market, selling steam ships to the Shogun, plans for foreign settlements in the ports, exchange rates, and the use of Chinese merchants in business transactions because of their familiarity with Japanese language and customs. The collection also includes Augustine Heard’s diary written during a brief trip to Japan in 1859, in which he makes many acute observations of the Japanese people and their daily life.

Diary copied. Contact Professor Botsman.

Heco, Joseph, 1837-1897. The narrative of a Japanese: what he has seen and the people he has met in the course of the last forty years/ by Joseph Heco; edited by James Murdoch.


xviii, 247 p. illus. 22 cm.
Hildreth, Richard, 1807-1865. *Japan as it was and is*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co., 1855.

xii, 576 p. fold. map. 21 cm.


<7 > pts. on <125 > microfilm reels ; 35mm. + guides (3 v. ; 21 cm.).


Copied. Contact Professor Botsman.

Available at Harvard University.


A very attractive and readable first-hand account of Perry’s expedition. Complete with illustrations (some in color), maps, and letters, the journal chronicles Perry’s voyage from Norfolk to Edo and all the cities in between, including Hong Kong, Shimoda, and Hakodate. Also included is a copy of President Millard Fillmore’s letter to the Emperor and Japan’s response.

Perry, Matthew Calbraith, 1794-1858. Narrative of the expedition of an American squadron to the China seas and Japan: performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the command of Commodore M.C. Perry ... / compiled from the original notes and journals of Commodore Perry and his officers, at his request and under his supervision by Francis L. Hawks. New York: D. Appleton; London: Trubner, 1856.

vii, 624 p., [87] leaves of plates (some folded) : ill., maps, 26 cm.


Preble was a US Navy lieutenant on the USS Macedonia, one of the ships sailing with Perry to Japan. The diary is taken in full from the original manuscript held at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Since it is a private diary, it has escaped the editing and embellishment of the official journal of the expedition. The diary is wide-ranging, discussing topics such as life at sea, political events in Japan, Japanese customs, family matters, Japanese geography, etc.


Copied. Contact Professor Botsman.

Also available at Harvard, Yenching Library.


Whittingham, Bernard. Notes on the late expedition against the Russian settlements in eastern Siberia; and of a visit to Japan and to the shores of Tartary, and of the Sea of Okhostk. London, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856.

xv, 300 p. fold. map. 20 cm.

Not available at Yale, but relevant parts copied. Contact Professor Botsman. Alternatively, use Borrow Direct—there are copies at Columbia and Cornell.

**Bakumatsu Era: 1860s**


126 p.; 19 cm.

This is sort of a Griffis-type account. Ballagh and her husband are missionaries who live in Japan from 1861-66 in Yokohama and Kanagawa. Her “glimpses” recount the mood and political situation in the treaty port and beyond during this time of crisis right before the Restoration. She notes that the country seems to gearing up for a revolution and comments lucidly on the “Southern Princes” (Chōshū and Satsuma daimyo), the court in Kyoto, and the Bakufu. Ronin are constantly on the prowl and menace the foreigners in the settlement. Indeed, she writes that their lives are disturbed and anxious due to the political climate. This appears to be an excellent source for pre-Restoration events and for the mood of the country, which apparently had a great impact on foreign residents.


xxvi, 348 p. : ill. ; 21 cm. (Travelers' Tales classics)
Yale doesn’t have this particular edition, but there are several earlier versions, including the 1881 originals.


Harris, Townsend, 1804-1878. *The complete journal of Townsend Harris, first American consul and minister to Japan*. Introd. and noted by Mario Emilio Consenza. With a pref. by Douglas MacArthur, II. Rev. [i.e. 2d] ed. Rutland, Vt., C.E. Tuttle Co.1959.

Heco, Joseph, 1837-1897. *The narrative of a Japanese: what he has seen and the people he has met in the course of the last forty years*. / by Joseph Heco; edited by James Murdoch.


<7> pts. on <125> microfilm reels; 35mm. + guides (3 v.; 21 cm.).

Lowder, F. (Frederick) Conversations in Japanese & English [microform]: compiled for the use of visitors and residents / by F. Lowder. Yokohama: "Japan Times" office, [1867].


Not available at Yale; try ILL. Harvard seems to be the only US library with a copy.


Copied. Contact Professor Botsman.

Available at Harvard University.

Copied. Contact Professor Botsman.

Also available at Harvard, Yenching Library.

**Early Meiji Era**

A. M. *A Yoshiwara episode; Fred Wilson's fate* / by A.M. Allahabad: A.H. Wheeler, [1894].


Heco, Joseph, 1837-1897. *The narrative of a Japanese: what he has seen and the people he has met in the course of the last forty years* / by Joseph Heco; edited by James Murdoch.


<7 > pts. on <125 > microfilm reels ; 35mm. + guides (3 v. ; 21 cm.).

Nishimura, Shotaro. English and Japanese mercantile conversations [microform]: especially adapted for practical use in training business men / by Shōtarō Nishimura. Yokohama: [s.n.], 1888 (Yokohama: Printed at the "Seish Bunsha")


Written by a Japanese national for merchants, both Japanese and Western. It is [a] book full of translated conversations to be used in business interactions. A language training book.


x, 207 p., 24 leaves of plates : ill., map ; 20 cm.

Available through Borrow Direct/ILL.