

# Matsudaira Sadayuki's *nanban dō gusoku* - Towards an understanding of cross- cultural exchanges in seventeenth- century East Asia<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

In 1647, Matsudaira Sadayuki (1587-1668), a *daimyō* of Shikoku, acquired a European type of cuirass owned by a member of the Portuguese embassy that arrived in Nagasaki that year. That cuirass was then brought to Shikoku and refurbished into a *nanban dō gusoku* to fit the taste of the Japanese *daimyō*, remaining in the family until the nineteenth century. By definition, *nanban gusoku* 南蛮具足 ('nanban armours') are hybrid compositions that combine elements of two different cultures: European and Japanese. It is thus expected to find pieces that combine imported European made armour components, usually cuirasses and helmets, with Japanese armour elements. But what if the 'European' components were not produced in Europe but elsewhere? That is, what if some of the components followed European armour typologies but were produced in Asia using local techniques – making these pieces hybrid productions themselves – and then brought to Japan?

The cuirass acquired by Matsudaira Sadayuki is an example of a European type of cuirass produced in Asia for a Portuguese client. It is a hybrid production that fuses a European typology with East Asian construction and decoration techniques that afterwards has undergone another hybridization process with its modification into a *nanban dō gusoku*. In this sense, Sadayuki's *nanban dō gusoku* provides an interesting case study towards a better understanding of the cross-cultural exchanges and hybridization processes happening in East Asia during the seventeenth century. In this article I will

first focus on the historical background of Matsudaira Sadayuki's encounter with the Portuguese embassy that came to Japan in 1647, to explain how Sadayuki might have acquired his *nanban dō*. Then, a second section is dedicated to the comparative analysis of this *nanban dō gusoku* with examples of European and Japanese made armours to demonstrate the two different hybridization processes undergone by this piece. This two-step case study aims to challenge the rooted binary, unidirectional notions that still surround the research on cultural encounters, and to usher the reconsideration of *nanban gusoku* as a more encompassing category that considers the role of Japan in these macro scale cross-cultural exchanges happening in East Asia between Asian, European and Euro-Asian communities during the Early Modern period.

## Crossing paths: Matsudaira Sadayuki's encounter with the Portuguese embassy of 1644-1647

Matsudaira Sadayuki 松平定行 (1587-1668) was the second son of Hisamatsu Sadakatsu 久松定勝 (1560-1624), the younger half-brother of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543-1616). Sadayuki's father had built his career following Ieyasu, and their blood ties, together with Sadakatsu's loyal service, granted him Ieyasu's permission to use the surname Matsudaira, making Sadakatsu the founder of the Hisamatsu-Matsudaira lineage.<sup>3</sup> Sadayuki became the heir of the Hisamatsu-Matsudaira clan after the death of his older brother in 1603, and as Sadakatsu's heir, he played an important role in securing and consolidating the early formed

1 This research work is part of the doctoral project entitled "Nanban Armours. Cultural Transfer Processes Between Early Modern Europe and Japan" [SFRH/BD/137396/2018] funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT).

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3 Jacques E.J. Papinot, *Nobiliaire Du Japon. Compilation from [Jacques] E[Dimond] [Joseph] Papinot: Dictionnaire d'histoire et de Géographie Du Japon Illustré de 300 Gravures, de Plusieurs Cartes, et Suivi de 18 Appendices*, ed. Oliver Rost and Stefan Unterstein, 2003, 9.

Tokugawa Bakufu. He succeeded his father as *daimyō* of Kakegawa, in today's Shizuoka Prefecture, from 1607 to 1616, and again as *daimyō* of the Kuwana domain in Mie Prefecture from 1624 to 1634, when he was finally transferred to the Iyō-Matsuyama domain in Shikoku, by the shōgun Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604-1651).

In 1644, Matsudaira Sadayuki was appointed Nagasaki *tandai* 長崎探題 ('Nagasaki commander'), whose role was to collaborate with the Nagasaki *bugyō* 長崎奉行 ('Nagasaki magistrate') during emergency military mobilizations caused by potential foreign threats. This post was created as part of a system devised to guard the city of Nagasaki and was drawn up two years after the Ōmura, with the connivance of the Nagasaki officials, torched the ship of a Portuguese embassy sent by the city of Macau in 1640.<sup>4</sup> This event pressed the *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemitsu to conceive a permanent security plan for the city, that comprised the alternate guard duty of Nagasaki to Fukuoka and Saga domains. The *daimyō* of both domains, the Kuroda of Fukuoka and the Nabeshima of Saga, were expected to act in articulation with the *bakufu* officials, the two *bugyō* of Nagasaki, the *ōmetsuke* 大目付 ('inspector') and, in emergency situations, with the *tandai*.<sup>5</sup>

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 1647, another Portuguese embassy composed of two galleons arrived in Nagasaki. The ambassador Gonçalo de Sequeira de Souza (1587?-1648) had come to Japan in representation of the newly instated King of Portugal, Dom João IV

(r. 1640-1656), aiming to restore the commercial relations between Macau and Japan. The arrival of a second Portuguese embassy after the disastrous outcome of their last diplomatic mission was regarded as a possible threat by the Japanese, that had been expecting retaliation for the death of 61 Portuguese in 1640. As a result, the defence plan of Nagasaki was implemented by the city's authorities, who promptly summoned the Kyūshū *daimyō* to defend the harbour, as well as the *tandai*, Matsudaira Sadayuki, called from his domain in Shikoku. From late July to early August circa 50,000 troops were sent from ten domains in Kyūshū to defend Nagasaki.<sup>6</sup> According to the Dutch diaries, Sadayuki reached the city on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, coming with his son, his brother Sadafusa 松平定房 (1604-1676), and a host of soldiers.<sup>7</sup> It was following the encounter with the Portuguese embassy that Sadayuki acquired the cuirass of his *nanban* armour that is now stored at the Shinonome Shrine in Matsuyama, Shikoku.

The Portuguese embassy had left Lisbon in January 1644 and faced several setbacks after passing the Cape of Good Hope, forcing its two galleons to separate. The ambassador's ship, the *Santo André*, kept on its course until it reached the port of Bantam, while the second ship was forced to make a detour to the Coromandel coast. From Bantam, the *Santo André* was escorted to Batavia, the Dutch headquarters in Asia, where it stayed until early 1645. After a brief stop at Macau, where its citizens felt reluctant with the perspective of sending another embassy to Japan,

4 The need for a defensive plan for the city of Nagasaki started after the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637-38, a peasant uprising in a heavily Christian populated region of Kyūshū. This rebellion led the *bakufu* to reinforce the proscription of Christianity in Japan and to ultimately expel the Portuguese from the archipelago. For how the events of this rebellion helped shape the defensive system of Nagasaki, read: Noell Wilson, *Defensive Positions. The Politics of Maritime Security in Tokugawa Japan.*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 381 (Cambridge (Massachusetts), London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 29-35.

5 Nagasaki had been under direct control of the *bakufu* since 1604, represented by two magistrates, the Nagasaki *bugyō*, a position usually conferred to a *hatamoto* official 旗本, a direct retainer of the *shōgun* without land investiture or significant retainer bands. Despite representing the Tokugawa government, the *bugyō* had little effective military power. Thus, the defence of the city was delegated to the surrounding domains of Saga and Fukuoka, whose *daimyō* alternated in their duty to supply troops to guard the city. To deal with latent tensions caused by the power asymmetries between the Kyūshū *daimyō* and the Nagasaki *bugyō* during emergency situations, the *bakufu* created the *tandai* position. The *tandai* was also a *bakufu* representative, but unlike the *bugyō* he was a *fudai daimyō* with familial ties with the Tokugawa, an unequivocal political ally of the *bakufu* with similar status to de *daimyō* of Saga and Fukuoka. Theoretically, the *tandai* held supreme command during military crisis, but as Noell Wilson argues, practical situations have shown that "no single individual held clearly defined, preeminent decision-making power." Noell Wilson, 'Tokugawa Defense Redux: Organizational Failure in the "Phaeton" Incident of 1808', *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 36, no. 1 (2010): 7-9. For a lengthy explanation of this system consult: Wilson, *Defensive Positions*, 29-55.

6 Noell Wilson writes that a total of 55,528 troops gathered to defend Nagasaki: Wilson, 'Tokugawa Defense Redux', 8. The *Tokugawa Jikki* gives a slight lower figure, of 48,354 men: Chisō Naitō, 徳川実紀 [Tokugawa Jikki], vol. 150-180 (Tokyo: Tokugawa Jikki Publisher, 1899), 38 (Shōhō 4/07/12). An exacerbated number is given by the Dutch stationed at Deshima, stating circa 100,000 men from Kyūshū were expected to gather in Nagasaki: Leonard Blussé and Cynthia Viallé, eds., *The Deshima Dagregisters*, Volume XI, 1641-1650, vol. XI: 1641-1650, Intercontinenta 23 (Leiden: Institute for the History of European Expansion, 2001), 291 (30<sup>th</sup> of July 1647).

7 Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters*, Volume XI, 1641-1650, XI: 1641-1650:296 (13<sup>th</sup> of August 1647).



Fig.1 – Matsudaira Sadayuki’s *nanban dô gusoku*, Edo period, mid-seventeenth century, Shinonome Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).



Fig.2 – Matsudaira Sadayuki’s *nanban dô*, Edo period, mid-seventeenth century, Shinonome Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

Gonçalo de Sequeira de Souza sailed back to Goa, where he found the Viceroy of the *Estado da Índia* – the Portuguese government in Asia – willing to sponsor the royal mission. The Viceroy provisioned two galleons, “supplied with good infantry, capable seafarers, and everything other necessary (...)”<sup>8</sup>, preparing a new flagship for the ambassador, the *São João*, captained by António Cabral, knight of the *Ordem de Santiago*, and refurbishing the *Santo André*, commanded by António Gouveia do Valle, knight of the *Ordem de Cristo*. These two noblemen<sup>9</sup> were seasoned military men with experience in Asia and had received knighthood for services rendered to the Crown.<sup>10</sup>

As members of the nobility appointed to go on a royal

8 Free translation from the Portuguese: “(...) guarnecidos de boa infantaria, homens de mar lustrosos, e todos os petrechos necessários (...)” Padre António Francisco Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão. Inédito Destinado à Sessão Do Congresso Internacional Dos Orientalistas.*, ed. Luciano Cordeiro (LisbWWnsa Nacional, 1894), 48.

9 According to the Portuguese tradition, the captains working for the Portuguese crown were all of noble status. They were not required to have extensive nautical knowledge for this position, since their functions comprised matters of management, as well as the military and judicial administration of the ship. Rui Landeiro Godinho, ‘Homens Do Mar: Categorias, Funções e Formas de Organização’, in *História Da Marinha Portuguesa: Navios, Marinheiros e Arte de Navegar, 1500-1668*, ed. Francisco Contento Domingues (Lisbon: História da Marinha Portuguesa: Navios, Marinheiros e Arte de Navegar, 1500-1668, 2012), p.234.

10 Since Portugal was under Spanish rule from 1580 to 1640, many of these men served under the Iberian monarchy. António Gouveia do Valle sent a petition of knighthood in 1637 to king Phillip IV of Spain, three years before the restoration of independence of Portugal: ‘Diligência de Habilitação para a Ordem de Cristo de António de Gouveia do Vale’ (1637), Mesa da Consciência e Ordens, Habilitações para a Ordem de Cristo, Letra A, mç.49, n.o91, Torre do Tombo, <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=7675029>.



Fig.3 – The coat of arms of the Gouveia family, depicted at *Tesouro de Nobreza*, 1675, fol.35, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (©ANTT, Lisbon. Edited by the author).

mission, it was expected of the captains to prepare themselves to perform in ceremonial settings. Clothing, as well as arms and armour were elements of social demarcation worn to make statements of varied nature. In this sense, decorated armours were special differentiators of social standing and economic power, fitting to use on such occasions.<sup>11</sup> The blazoned cuirass of Shinonome Shrine's armour (figs.1-2) suggests that it was a part of an armour brought to Japan by António Gouveia do Valle to perform his duty as one of the embassy's delegates. The coat of arms depicted on the breastplate of this piece resembles the blazon of the Gouveia family (fig.3); the main differences being the dimidiated dexter flank (right-hand side) of the armour's shield, which only presents three blue *arruelas* ('circles') framed in gold over a red field, whilst in the arms

of the Gouveia we find six plate *arruelas* framed by a golden grid over a red field. Another noticeable difference is the depiction of two affronted lions supporting the shield. The coat of arms of the Gouveia family not only does not present supporters, as their family crest is an eagle with six blue *arruelas* either on its body or wings. This indicates that António Gouveia do Valle used a personal insignia inspired by the coat of arms of the Gouveia family, albeit not having familial ties with them, hence the differences between the two shields.<sup>12</sup> The coat of arms depicted on the armour also presents some similarities to the Mello e Castro family blazon. However, the written sources do not indicate the involvement of the family in this embassy, making António Gouveia do Valle the most likely original owner of the cuirass.<sup>13</sup>

The circumstances surrounding the transfer of this cuirass into Sadayuki's possession are not clearly stated in the sources. Despite this, the surviving accounts depict a tense scenario between the members of the Portuguese embassy and the Japanese authorities, which might have led the Portuguese to offer the cuirass to curry favour with the Japanese. The tensions started before Sadayuki arrived at Nagasaki, when the Portuguese ambassador refused to follow the Japanese protocol of surrendering the artillery and arms to the Nagasaki officials when entering the harbour.<sup>14</sup> Baba Saburōzaemon 馬場三郎座衛門 (?-1657), the *bugyō* stationed at Nagasaki that year, attempted to persuade the Portuguese to follow protocol, communicating with the members of the embassy through his secretaries and interpreters while waiting for the *tandai* and the Kyūshū *daimyō* to convene at Nagasaki. After Sadayuki's arrival on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, Saburōzaemon assembled with the *daimyō* and a plan was devised to confine the Portuguese fleet inside the harbour until further

11 Ruel A. Macaraeg, 'Dressed to Kill: Toward a Theory of Fashion in Arm and Armor', *Fashion Theory* 11, no. 1 (2007): 41–64; Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance* (L.A.: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 140.  
 12 From his knighthood petition we come to know that his mother's family was established in the Portuguese Indies. Op.cit. 'Diligência de Habilitação para a Ordem de Cristo de António de Gouveia do Vale'.  
 13 The name of António Gouveia do Valle appears in both Portuguese and Dutch contemporary sources. Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:291 (Versteeghen: 28-07-1647); Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão*, 48; Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 23.  
 14 The Portuguese refusal to surrender the artillery of their fleet was not a misunderstanding, but a demonstration of the Portuguese intention of not partaking in the Japanese tributary system, but rather to engage in an equal status relationship with Japan: Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 35–36; Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:291. For the conceptualization and implementation of the Japanese tributary system read: Shogo Suzuki, 'Europe at the Periphery of the Japanese World Order', in *International Orders in the Early Modern World. Before the Rise of the West*, ed. Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang, and Joel Quirk, The New International Relations Series (N.Y.: Routledge, 2014), 76–93; Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan. Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (UK: Princeton University Press, 1984).



Fig.4 – Map of Nagasaki illustrating the blockage of the Portuguese embassy, Japan c.1647, ink and colours on paper, mounted on a wooden frame, 101 x 216 cm (with frame), Jorge Welsh Works of Art, Lisbon/London (©JWWA, Lisbon).

orders from Edo arrived.<sup>15</sup> On the 15<sup>th</sup> the entry of the port was “crossed from one side to the other with lines of innumerable vessels [and] people that worked on the production of a type of bridge, (...)”,<sup>16</sup> that blocked the entrance of the harbour.

This episode marked the apex of the tensions between the Japanese and the Portuguese delegation, and for this reason it was represented in several Japanese paintings. One of such works (fig.4), now exhibited at the Jorge Welsh Gallery, in Lisbon, depicts the two Portuguese galleons inside the bay of Nagasaki, blocked by a bridge and chains of boats.<sup>17</sup> Contingents of *daimyō* troops were stationed on land, identified by their *mon*. The map shows that the *daimyō* stationed closest to the Portuguese vessels were the Kuroda, the clan in charge of guarding Nagasaki that year, followed by the joint forces of the supreme commander Matsudaira Sadayuki, identified by his title Oki-no-kami 隠岐守, and his brother Matsudaira Sadafusa, identified as Mimasaka-no-kami 美作守,

whose forces were stationed on both ends of the bridge. The map’s caption over the red Hisamatsu-Matsudaira *mon* (fig.5), located on the upper part of the painting reads: “Matsudaira Oki-no-kami/ both [deployed] 1190 people/ both [deployed] 26 small ships”,<sup>18</sup> whereas over the blue *mon* stands the name of Sadafusa, “Matsudaira Mimasaka-no-kami”. The bottom banners’ captions repeat the names of both commanders, implying that the forces of Sadayuki and Sadafusa were distributed along these two positions. Other paintings on the subject illustrate the same overall positioning of the Japanese troops, with the Kuroda and the *tandai* forces stationed before the blockage, in a privileged location to quickly engage with the Portuguese fleet.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of this proximity, since actual military conflict was ultimately avoided, the possibility of a direct encounter between Matsudaira Sadayuki and António Gouveia do Valle seems improbable.

15 Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:296 (Versteeghen: 14/08/1647).

16 Free translation from the Portuguese: “ (...) aos quinze amaceneheco pela entrada do surgidouro o rio atravessado de huma, e de outra banda com fileiras de embarcaçoens inumeráveis; gente que trabalhavam na fabrica a maneira de ponte (...)” in ‘Apêndice’, fol.48v. Vide also Boxer, ‘Relação Inédita’, 42; Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:296 (Versteeghen: 14/08/1647 and 15/08/1647).

17 Luísa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh, eds., *After the Barbarians II: Namban Works of Art for the Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch Markets* (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2008), 180–87.

18 Free translation from the Japanese: “松平隠岐守/ 兩人數千百九十人/ 兩舟數二十六艘”

19 Charles R. Boxer, ‘The Embassy of Captain Gonçalo de Siqueira de Souza to Japan, 1644-1647’, *Monumenta Nipponica* 2, no. 1 (January 1939): 40–74; AAVV, *Arte Namban. Os Portugueses No Japão*. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, 1990), 86.



Fig.5 – Captions over the Hisamatsu-Matsudaira banners on the upper section of the map of Nagasaki (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

The Tokugawa society was highly hierarchical, and the sources state that most of the meetings between the Portuguese and the Japanese were mediated by Baba Saburōzaemon's secretaries and interpreters.<sup>20</sup> According to the Portuguese sources, the Japanese officials were received by the ambassador Gonçalo de Sequeira de Souza in a ceremonial setting, and the ambassador conducted the conversations through his own secretary, following the Japanese protocol.<sup>21</sup> The exchange of gifts is not mentioned, but it was an established diplomatic practice in Asia and one of the foundations of social etiquette in Japan.<sup>22</sup> Thus, considering that the meetings were set according to the Japanese custom, the offer of gifts was probably used by the Portuguese during negotiations to manoeuvre the tense situation they found themselves

in. Moreover, the Portuguese delegation met directly with the two Nagasaki *bugyō*<sup>23</sup> and the *ōmetsuke*, Inoue Masashige 井上 政重 (1585-1661), who had gone to the ambassador's galleon to read the 'sentence' passed by the *rōjū* 老中 ('Council of Elders') in Edo,<sup>24</sup> which allowed the embassy to safely leave Japan, yet reinstated the *bakufu's* unavailability to restore relations with Portugal.<sup>25</sup> This meeting with three of the top *bakufu* officials of Nagasaki certainly required the customary exchange of gifts, and the sources state that the Portuguese ambassador tried to further negotiate with these officials, even after the final decision from Edo was delivered.<sup>26</sup>

Written sources reveal that European weaponry and armour were still popular items in Japan, sought amongst the European curiosities brought by the Dutch

20 Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 29; 'Apêndice'; Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:291.

21 The ambassador's galleon was prepared to receive the guests and decorated with textiles and other adornments, with embroidered velvet chairs prepared for the secretaries. The guests were received by the Portuguese and escorted to the ambassador, who was waiting for them inside [the adorned balcony] and asked "them to sit, the interpreters and our people on the carpets, the secretary and the galleon's corporal on pillows", in accordance with their status. Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 29-30. Vide also: Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão*, 50-51.

22 Michael Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan. Gift Giving and Diplomacy* (UK, USA: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); Martha Chaiklin, 'Introduction', in *Mediated by Gifts: Politics and Society in Japan, 1350-1850*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library 57 (Brill, 2017), 1-23.

23 The two *bugyō* were Baba Saburōzaemon and Yamazaki Gonpachirō 山崎權八郎 (?-?).

24 'Apêndice', fol.49v.; Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 47. The Dutch sources identify the two members that had come from Edo with the *rōjū's* verdict as the "Commissioner Chikugo-no-kami", that is, the *ōmetsuke* Inoue Masashige, and "the second governor, Gonpachirō", or the second Nagasaki *bugyō*, Yamazaki Gonpachirō: Blussé and Viallé, XI: 1641-1650:299 (Versteeghen: 29/08/1647).

25 The reasons stated by the *rōjū* to reject the embassy were grounded on the Portuguese precedent violation of Tokugawa laws regarding the proscription of Christianity in Japan when, after the promulgation of the anti-Christianity edicts, the Portuguese continued to bring Catholic priests to the archipelago. Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 47-49; Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão*, 56-57; 'Apêndice', fol.49v.-50v-.

26 Boxer, 'Relação Inédita', 49. Also mentioned in Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão*, 58.



Fig.6 – Lateral view of Matsudaira Sadayuki's *nanban dô*, Edo period, mid-seventeenth century, Shinonome Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

merchants to be given to the Japanese officialdom.<sup>27</sup> In fact, the year before, Baba Saburōzaemon had been offered several suits of armour by the Dutch, which were brought to Edo.<sup>28</sup> The Dutch diaries also report that the European curiosities brought to Japan per request of the *shōgun's* officials were sometimes used as gifts for their hierarchical superiors, serving



Fig.7 – Cuirass ca.1560, Italian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (©MET).<sup>36</sup>

as a “social lubricant that more or less facilitated interpersonal relationships in Japan at every level of society.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, some of the foreign pieces that arrived to Nagasaki were acquired indirectly by some *daimyō* and *bakufu* officials via the gift economy prevalent in Tokugawa Japan.

The circumstances surrounding the Portuguese embassy's affair indicate that Matsudaira Sadayuki acquired the cuirass of his *nanban* armour indirectly, likely as a gift from one of the three officials that contacted with the Portuguese embassy. This possibility is further strengthened if we consider that Baba Saburōzaemon ordered the Dutch merchants, who presented themselves as vassals of the *shōgun*,<sup>30</sup> to give a gift to Matsudaira Sadayuki before his

27 For an English translation of parts of the diaries kept by the VOC captains: Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*; Leonard Blussé and Cynthia Viallé, eds., *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XIII, 1660-1670*, vol. XIII, Intercontinenta 27 (Leiden: Institute for the History of European Expansion, 2010). On the gifts brought by the Dutch to the Japanese officials and the shōgun, read: Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan*. (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2014); Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan*.

28 Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:256 (Versteeghen: 18/12/1646).

29 Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan*, 81.

30 To secure trade with Japan, the Dutch proclaimed to be vassals of the shōgun. By doing so they were inserted into the Japanese tributary system and the web of relational obligations that comprised Japanese society. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan. Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*; Suzuki, 'Europe at the Periphery of the Japanese World Order'. For further readings on the Dutch strategy and involvement in the Japanese tributary system, read: Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*; Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan*.



Fig.8 – Matsudaira Sadayuki's *wasei nanban dō gusoku*, Edo period, seventeenth century, Shinonme Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

departure from Nagasaki back to his domain in Shikoku: “On the order of the governor, the parrot and some other birds were handed to Matsudaira Oki-no-kami, who is a blood relative of the Shogun and lord of the four provinces of the island of Shikoku. We can but comply with his order.”<sup>31</sup> While not being aware of the position of Matsudaira Sadayuki as Nagasaki *tandai*, the Dutch were conscious of his kinship ties with the Tokugawa, and thus complied with the *bugyō*'s order, giving the *daimyō* a gift comprised of several birds, another much requested exotic product in Japan.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, due to Sadayuki's status as the highest *bakufu* official present at Nagasaki at the time, and as a *fudai daimyō* with familial ties to

the Tokugawa, he was likely to receive gifts from the Nagasaki officials, to whom Sadayuki was a hierarchical superior. A decorated armour acquired from the Portuguese would have been a fitting gift for the supreme commander of Nagasaki, who had travelled from his domain to suppress a potential Portuguese military threat.

The Portuguese embassy departed safely from Nagasaki in early September without being received by the *shōgun* in Edo. Notwithstanding that its goal to restore the Macau-Nagasaki trade route ultimately failed, the Portuguese sources are unanimous about the positive outcome of the mission.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, this was the last Portuguese attempt to restore the relations with Japan during the Tokugawa rule. In this sense, the cuirass acquired by Matsudaira Sadayuki was most likely the last European type of armour brought to Japan via the Portuguese. In Sadayuki's possession, the cuirass would then be refurbished to the Japanese taste and would remain in the Hisamatsu-Matsudaira clan as a family heirloom, until it was bestowed to the Shinonome Shrine after its edification in the nineteenth century (fig.1).

#### *Matsudaira Sadayuki's nanban dō gusoku*

The cuirass of this armour is a formidable example of the circulation of forms and manufacturing techniques taking place through cross-cultural exchanges during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is inspired by the European peascod breastplate armour, but was most likely made in Southern China, probably commissioned by António Gouveia do Valle in Macau, using hybrid techniques. In coastal entrepôts such as Macau, Manila or Nagasaki, amongst others, the coexistence (even when regulated) and miscegenation of different peoples fomented processes of cultural appropriation and adaptation at several levels that had an impact on the material culture produced, exchanged, and consumed in these locations. Sadayuki's *nanban dō* encompasses the complexity of these transcultural exchanges, especially since it presents two different levels of hybridization. First, at a production level with the adaptation of an European type of armour manufactured and decorated in Asia using heterogenous techniques. Second, with its subsequent adaptation to the Japanese taste by assembling Japanese armour components with this cuirass.

Thus, from a morphological perspective, this cuirass

31 Blussé and Viallé, *The Deshima Dagregisters, Volume XI, 1641-1650*, XI: 1641-1650:301 (Versteeghen: 08/09/1647).

32 Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan*, 37-54.

33 Boxer, 'Relação Inédita'; 'Apêndice'; Cardim, *Batalhas Da Companhia de Jesus Na Gloriosa Província Do Japão*.



Fig. 9 – Top view of Matsudaira Sadayuki's *nanban dō*, Edo period, mid-seventeenth century, Shinonome Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

follows the European peascod breastplate armour, characterised by a protrude belly and funnel waistline with a medial ridge, composed by a backplate with a detachable lame to protect the lower back (culet) and a breastplate with a detachable lame to protect the lower torso (fauld). Similar to European armour (fig.7), the edges of the upper part of both plates are cut straight and curved inwards, giving a round profile to the side openings of the cuirass (fig.6), that contrasts with the straighter profile of the *tōsei gusoku* 当世具足. The same style straight cut edges and round profile can be found, for instance, on the *nanban dō gusoku* owned by Sakakibara Yasumasa 榊原康政 (1548-1606),<sup>34</sup> now stored at the Tokyo National Museum.<sup>35</sup> The round profile can also be found in many *wasei nanban*

*dō gusoku* 和製南蛮胴具足, like the one also owned by Matsudaira Sadayuki (fig.8), though this armour's *munaita* 胸板 presents round edges instead of sharp straight ones like his *nanban dō*.

In European types of armour, the upper part of the breastplate and backplate connect on top of the shoulder, using straps and buckles, which brings the collar of the breastplate up and close to the neck. Sadayuki's *nanban dō* originally followed the European model, which was then modified to adapt to the Japanese taste. To change this structural feature and lower the *munaita*, metal pieces with hinges were added to both edges of the backplate of Sadayuki's *nanban dō* to lengthen the *wadagami* 肩, to which cords were then attached to fasten the *dō* (fig.9). A similar solution had been used on the Tokyo National Museum's *nanban dō gusoku*,<sup>36</sup> where *kobire* 小鱗 in the *kitsutsukemori agezane* 切付盛上札 style were added,<sup>37</sup> together with unadorned *gyōyō* 杏葉. Similarly, European cuirasses are commonly fastened on the waistline using a system of straps and buckles, sometimes combined with small hinges or hooks (fig.10). Nevertheless, Sadayuki's *nanban dō* was manufactured with an enclosed hinge on the left-hand side of the cuirass, a system that had been used in Japanese armour since at least the early-sixteenth century. The right-hand side of the armour is currently fastened with cords, though these could have been added later to substitute a strap and buckle system. We find hinges in other *nanban dō gusoku* but exposed, which can point to a later modification. The use of enclosed hinges, however, indicates that this feature was not added afterwards, but otherwise originally built in Sadayuki's *nanban dō*. This construction resembles a *ni-mai dō gusoku* and suggests that the enclosed hinge system might have been transferred outside Japan via the migration of Japanese artisans, especially after the tightening of the anti-Christianity policies in the archipelago from 1614 onwards.

Likewise, the plate construction of the cuirass indicates that further technical transfers were occurring in East Asia during this time. Structurally,

34 Regarding this armour, Dr. Ikeda Hiroshi advanced the possibility of its helmet having been made in India or China, and its cuirass in Japan: Hiroshi Ikeda, 'Japanese Armor: An Overview', in *Art of the Samurai: Japanese Arms and Armor, 1156-1868*. (N.Y.: MET Museum, 2009), 71. There are, however, some features in this cuirass that point, at least, for this piece to have been made for a European or Euro-Asian commissioner before it was gifted to the *daimyō* by Tokugawa Ieyasu, as it will be demonstrated in further comparison to Matsudaira Sadayuki's *nanban dō*.

35 For high quality images of Sakaibara Yasumasa's *kon-ito odoshi nanban dō gusoku* 紺糸威し南蛮胴具足, visit: ColBase: Integrated Collections Database of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan ([https://colbase.nich.go.jp/collection\\_items/tnm/F-20137?locale=ja](https://colbase.nich.go.jp/collection_items/tnm/F-20137?locale=ja))

36 Vide footnotes 34 and 35.

37 Yoshihiko Sasama, *Nihon Katchū Daizukan (An Illustrated Book of Japanese Armor)* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 2007), 334.



Fig.10 – Front and back views of portions of an armor for Vincenzo Luigi di Capua (d.1627), made by Pompeo della Cesa, ca.1595, Milan, Italy, Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection, New York (©MET).<sup>39</sup>

both plates are composed by six horizontal metal lames riveted together, to which the fauld and culet are affixed. The horizontal lames were forged into the desired shape and riveted in the middle and sides of both the breastplate and backplate. Two types of rivets were applied on its construction: a set of small flat-head rivets was hammered down along the outline of the cuirass, serving solely a structural function; and another set composed by a salient type of flat-head rivets was applied in the middle section of the plates, topped with button-shaped decorative covers. Although lamellar types of cuirasses were produced in Europe, called *anima* armour, these were usually articulated or semi-articulated armours that used a system of sliding rivets and leather straps to secure the lames. Sadayuki's *nanban dō* uses simple flat rivets for a fixed structure, which resembles the construction method of the *okegawa dō* 桶側胴. Another feature commonly found in European armour is the roping design applied on the borders of the cuirass. This design was used in several *wasei nanban dō gusoku* and was soon integrated in other Japanese types of armour, having been completely assimilated

into the Japanese armour production. The prominent rims found in European armours, either simple turned borders or roping borders, were functional rather than just ornamental, and served to prevent the point of a weapon from sliding up the cuirass and reach the wearer's vital points.<sup>38</sup> In Sadayuki's *nanban dō* this roping design can be seen on the lateral rims of the cuirass, but a simple turned design was chosen for the neckline. Usually there is no difference in design within the same piece, but since this cuirass has two holes under its neckline, it might have had another element affixed to it at some point in time. Otherwise, the decoration of the cuirass is typical of pieces commissioned in the Luso-Asian taste, characterized by a profusion of ornamental motifs that cover entire surfaces. The black background and gilt motifs resemble the decoration of *nanban sikki* 南蛮漆器 ('nanban lacquerware'), identified by *maki-e* 蒔絵 ornamentation on black lacquered surfaces abundantly inlaid with mother-of-pearl shells.<sup>39</sup> The *horror vacui* that distinguishes Luso-Asian lacquered artifacts contrasts, for example, with lacquerware produced for the Dutch market,

38 Donald J. la Rocca, *How to Read European Armor* (N.Y.: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017), 51.

39 Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, eds., *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800* (London: V&A Publications, 2004), 236; *Nanban. Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu no Mita Tōzai Kouryū* (Gifu: Gifu City History Museum, 2003); Nagoya City Museum, *Henkaku no toki Momoyama / Momoyama: Time of Transformation*. (Nagoya: Nagoya City Museum, The Chunichi Shinbun, 2010).



Fig.11 - Back view of Matsudaira Sadayuki's *nanban dō*, Edo period, mid-seventeenth century, Shinonome Shrine, Matsuyama, Japan (©Madalena Matos, low quality image done for data collection).

characterized by open black lacquered fields with decorative motifs in *takamaki-e* 高蒔絵 ('embossed gilt lacquer work') relegated to the central ogival cartouches and geometric patterned rims.<sup>40</sup>

As previously mentioned, the breastplate of the cuirass bears Gouveia do Valle's insignia painted in colour, supported by two gilt affronted lions depicted in the European style. The background is lacquered black and adorned with gilt leafy peony branches. At the centre of the backplate a golden lion standing up with its exposed white chest is depicted over the

black lacquered surface, surrounded by the same gilt floral motifs (fig.11). The texture of the gilt decorative motifs is given by scraping fine lines that expose the lacquered background, a technique used in East Asian lacquerwork.<sup>41</sup> Overall, the decoration of this cuirass is analogous to several wooden parade shields produced in East Asia that bear coats-of-arms of Portuguese families.<sup>42</sup> These are for the most part coated with black lacquer and profusely decorated with gilt vegetal, floral, animal, or arabesque motifs. The material analysis of two of these shields showed that the tincture of the coats-of-arms was not lacquer, but of a different substance,<sup>43</sup> which seems to also be the case of Sadayuki's *nanban dō*, though conclusions in this regard are only possible upon material analysis.

The interior of the cuirass is also lacquered black but employs lacquer of higher quality. In general, high-quality lacquerwork relies on the quality of the raw materials used, such as the type of lacquer chosen to coat the pieces, but also on the number of layers of lacquer applied, as well as the layering techniques employed during the coating process.<sup>44</sup> Japanese lacquer, and specially the lacquerware produced for the domestic market, was reputed to have the best quality in Asia.<sup>45</sup> The interior lacquer coating of this cuirass is thick, smooth and shiny, contrasting with the thin layered, unpolished exterior surface. The differences between the exterior and interior coatings of the cuirass suggests that these were lacquered at different times and in different places, indicating that the internal coating was most likely applied during the refurbishing of the cuirass upon Sadayuki's request.

The cuirass received other adaptations after its acquisition by the Japanese *daimyō* (fig.1). Besides the above-mentioned changes to the fastening systems and the interior lacquer coating, a six section *kusazuri* 草摺 made of gilt leather *sane* 札 was added to the cuirass. The lower edges of the front and back plates were punctured to set the *kusazuri* in place. The

40 Jackson and Jaffer, *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800*, 238–39.

41 Miho Kitagawa, 'Materials, Tools and Techniques Used on Namban Lacquerwork', in *After the Barbarians II: Namban Works of Art for the Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch Markets*, ed. Luísa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2008), 70–91.

42 Ulrike Körber, 'The Journey of Artifacts: The Study and Characterization of a Nucleus of Lacquered Luso-Asian Objects from the 16th and 17th Centuries' (Évora, Universidade de Évora, 2018); Margarida Cavaco et al., 'A Study on 16th and 17th Century Luso-Oriental Lacquerware', in *Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer*, ed. Janet Bridgland (Committee for Conservation (ICOM) Triennial Conference, 16th, Lisbon, Lisbon: Critério, 2011).

43 Körber, 'The Journey of Artifacts: The Study and Characterization of a Nucleus of Lacquered Luso-Asian Objects from the 16th and 17th Centuries', 143–48.

44 Kitagawa, 'After the Barbarians II'; Körber, 'The Journey of Artifacts: The Study and Characterization of a Nucleus of Lacquered Luso-Asian Objects from the 16th and 17th Centuries'.

45 Jackson and Jaffer, *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800*.

detachable lames, that is, the fauld and culet, were kept and used to cover the cords of the *kusazuri*, replacing the use of a *uwa-obi* 上帯 that can be found in other *nanban dō gusoku*, like those directly associated to the Tokugawa clan, stored at the Nikkō and Kishū Tōshōgū shrines. The cuirass was then complemented with and a pair of *fukube-gote* 瓢籠手 signed by Asai Katsushige 浅井勝重<sup>46</sup> and a pair of *suneate* 躰当. A *hōate* 頬当 mask with a *kittsuke kozane suga* 切付小札須賀 is topped by an unsigned *kawari kabuto* 変わり兜 inspired by *nanban bōshi* 南蛮帽子 (‘nanban hat’), a design also designated by the broader term *tōjin-gasa* 唐人笠 (‘Chinese/foreign hat’).<sup>47</sup>

The armour in focus is the only *nanban dō gusoku* known to be associated to Matsudaira Sadayuki. Although the factual circumstances surrounding its acquisition remain uncertain, the fact that Sadayuki possessed at least another *wasei nanban dō gusoku* shows the *daimyō*’s interest in this foreign-looking typology. It also demonstrates that the Tokugawa Bakufu’s ‘Christophobic’ and by extension ‘Iberophobic’ sentiments did not abruptly quash the *nanban* trend, that had started in the Momoyama period, after the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639.<sup>48</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century the figure of the *nanbanjin* was still a part of the Japanese imaginary, though it was waning. The increasingly fiercer persecutions on Japanese Christians and the association of Christianity with the Iberians had an impact on *nanban* fashion, and as performing *nanban* became dangerous, *nanban* related things were either put under the more elusive *tōjin* umbrella,<sup>49</sup> assimilated into the Japanese culture or discarded.

The study of this armour gives a glimpse on the different ways in which Japan was intertwined in the wide cultural exchange networks of seventeenth century East Asia, even after the implementation of

the Sakoku 鎖国 (‘closed country’) policies. As the analysis of this armour indicates, Japanese stemmed armour manufacturing techniques migrated outside Japan, where in places like Macau were appropriated and adapted to produce European typologies. In perspective, this is the reverse hybridization process that gave birth to the *wasei nanban dō gusoku* in Japan, where European types of armour were appropriated, reinterpreted, and adapted to accommodate to the Japanese cultural setting (fig.8). Nonetheless, the overall construction of Sadayuki’s *nanban dō* suggests that its producer understood the form of European armour and how it was supposed to fit on the body, which implies a certain level of acquaintance with European culture and the expectations of European and Euro-Asian commissioners. Notwithstanding this, the original production of this cuirass relies on methods derived from the Japanese tradition, and the fusion of these displaced forms and techniques makes it a hybrid object. Moreover, though its second hybridization process, the modification into a *nanban gusoku*, is already well documented<sup>50</sup>, the consideration of the introduction in Japan of hybrid European types of armour is still open for inquiry and can lead to a better understanding of many of the yet undecipherable *nanban* types of armour.

## Conclusion

The embassy of 1647 marks the last Portuguese attempt to restore relations with Japan in the Edo period. This makes Sadayuki’s *nanban dō* one of the last known European types of armour to reach Japan via the Portuguese, thus making it a particularly historically relevant artifact. Its link to this outstanding event gives a glimpse on how cross-cultural interactions took place and how objects played an important role mediating both political and interpersonal relationships.

46 Asai Katsushige was a *katchū-shi* established in Edo and active around the mid-seventeenth century. Markus Sesko, *Legends and Stories around the Japanese Sword 2*, 2012. My thanks to Tomozawa-san for sharing this information with me.

47 The term *tōjin* became increasingly common to designate the Portuguese and Spanish peoples after the proscriptions on Christianity were imposed in Japan, which consequently led to a progressive negative connotation surrounding the *nanbanjin* and everything *nanban*-related. Ronald P. Toby, *Engaging the Other: Japan and Its Alter Egos, 1550-1850*, Brill’s Japanese Studies Library 65 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 106–41. Osaka Castle Museum, ed., *Tokubetsuten: Toyotomi Gaikou/ Special Exhibition: Diplomacy of the Toyotomi Administration* (Osaka: Osaka Castle Museum, 2019), 19.

48 The terms ‘Christophobia’ and ‘Iberophobia’ were borrowed from Ronald P. Toby who uses them to describe the xenophobic sentiment of the Tokugawa government towards the Catholic and Iberian cultures: Toby, *Engaging the Other: Japan and Its Alter Egos, 1550-1850*, 106–41.

49 Toby, 118.

50 The bibliography on the subject is extensive yet disperse, and it is mostly integrated in more comprehensive works on Japanese armour. Amongst the fundamental works that discuss this issue, read: Sasama, *Nihon Katchū Daizukan*; Masumi Miyazaki and Motō Yamagishi, *Nihon Katchū no Kiso Chikishi Shinsōban (Japanese Armour Basic Knowledge New Edition)* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 2006); H.R. Robinson, ‘Namban Gusoku’, *Journal of the Arms & Armour Society of London*, 1954; Markus Sesko, *Katchū. Japanische Rüstungen (USA: Lulu Entreprises, 2014)*; Ikeda, ‘Japanese Armor: An Overview’.

Moreover, its study enables the understanding of the complex hybridization processes coming about through cross-cultural encounters between Europeans, Euro-Asians and Asians in seventeenth century East Asia. It demonstrates how different forms and manufacturing techniques circulated, were appropriated, adapted and fused together in different locations, creating hybrid objects. In turn, these hybrid pieces produced in different settings, continued to circulate through commercial, diplomatic or kinship networks, potentiating the creation of new cycles of appropriation and adaptation, that is, of

new hybridization processes. In the specific case of Sadayuki's *nanban* armour, a hybrid cuirass that fused a European typology with East Asian production techniques, was re-appropriated and re-adapted in Japan into another type of hybrid object: the *nanban* armour. On this matter, Sadayuki's *nanban dō gusoku* forwards the reconsideration of *nanban* armours as a typology composed of pieces stemming from the unidirectional relationship between Europe and Japan to an encompassing category that takes into account the complexity and fluidity of hybridization processes resulting from successive cross-cultural interactions.

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