

**CURIOSITIES OF THE FIVE NATIONS:
NANSŌAN SHŌHAKU'S YOKOHAMA TALES**

*Todd S. Munson
Randolph-Macon College*

Because Japan's initial contacts with foreigners in the *bakumatsu* and Meiji periods were crucial in shaping the county's future course, scholars of Japan have produced considerable scholarship on the subject of nineteenth-century international relations. One focus of this literature has been the ports established by Western powers via the "unequal treaties" of the mid-century; the first of these, Yokohama, opened in the summer of 1859 [Ansei 安政 6]. Within a few short years, the port was home to hundreds of foreign residents hailing from China, France, Great Britain, Holland, the United States, and the West Indies, among other locations. Like many treaty ports throughout Asia, Yokohama quickly became a magnet for Japanese thirsting for foreign knowledge, or else seeking a glimpse of the exotic; as resident Francis Hall recorded in the February 10, 1862 entry to his journal, "our streets are daily thronged with [Japanese] travelers. Curiosity to see how we *tōjins* live has brought them in such numbers to Yokohama."¹

Given the trail of letters, diaries, newspapers, and business records left behind by men such as Francis Hall, historians have an excellent understanding of how foreigners experienced Yokohama – but it remains difficult to arrive at a comparable understanding of how Japanese sightseers understood this unusual locality so close to the shogun's great city of Edo. While woodblock prints from the era which took Yokohama as their subject (categorized *ex post facto* as Yokohama-e, or "Yokohama pictures") provide one valuable avenue for exploration into this area, the fact remains that Yokohama-e as often as not portrayed fanciful themes unbound by the constraints of actual observation and experience.²

¹ F. G. Notehelfer, *Japan Through American Eyes: The Journal of Francis Hall of Kanagawa and Yokohama, 1859-1866* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 398. The term *tōjin* 唐人 literally means "Chinese," but was also used to mean foreigners in general.

² Readers interested in Yokohama-e may turn to Anne Yonemura, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Washington, D.C.

Fortunately, there exist native materials about Yokohama beyond the woodblock print. Though rarely studied in Western language scholarship, there were a small number of travel accounts and “tourist guides” of Yokohama published in the 1860s. In the course of this short essay we will explore one such account, a travel guide to Yokohama written by Nansōan Shōhaku 南草庵松伯 entitled *Chinji gokakkoku Yokohama hanashi* 珍事五ヶ國横濱はなし, or *Curiosities of the Five Nations: Yokohama Tales*.³ As we shall see in the pages that follow, Nansōan’s *Yokohama Tales* is a remarkable document in the fact that it is relentlessly and unapologetically xenophobic. As such, it provides a unique window into the anti-foreign rhetoric that swirled around the issue of Japanese foreign policy in the mid-nineteenth century, and demonstrates that not all Japanese visiting Yokohama were necessarily impressed with their new guests from beyond the seas.

Written in 1862 (Bunkyū 文久 2), Nansōan’s work appeared at the height of public interest in Yokohama, but the author informs us in the preface that he wrote *Yokohama Tales* specifically for those who were unable to make the journey:

I have composed this humble pamphlet entitled *Curiosities of the Five Nations: Yokohama Tales* as a souvenir for women and children of distant provinces; therefore I have used simple children’s words while settling down my account of the actual things I have witnessed. In order to cater to the well-to-do, I have made it a rather large volume; and it is with this balance in mind that I wrote.⁴

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), or Todd S. Munson, “A Tempestuous Tea-port: Socio-political Commentary in Yokohama-e, 1859-1862,” *East Asian History* 24 (2002): 67-92.

³ “Five nations” refers to those countries with which Japan had entered formal commercial relations: France, Great Britain, Holland, Russia, and the United States.

⁴ Nansōan Shōhaku, *Chinji gokakkoku Yokohama hanashi* (Yokohama: Kineya Yonehachi 杵屋米八, Bunkyū 文久 2 [1862]); reprinted in *Mikan Yokohama kaikō shiryō* 未刊横浜開港資料, ed. Kanagawa-ken toshokan kyōkai 神奈川県図書館協会 and Kyōdo shiryō shūsei hensan iinkai 郷土資料集成編纂委員会 (Kanagawa: Kanagawa-ken Toshokan Kyōkai,

Yokohama Tales is indeed a “large volume,” running forty-two *chō* 丁 in the original edition and nearly forty pages in the modern reprinted version.

Perhaps to sate those “women and children” looking for specifics on the settlement, a great deal of the text is given over to simple recitation of place-names, shops, and religious institutions that crowded Yokohama’s streets. We learn the names and addresses of shrines, temples, soba restaurants, dye-shops, book sellers, snack houses, import shops, bathhouses, barber shops, wooden sandal shops, ironworkers, rice-cracker manufacturers, tea sellers, medicine shops, butchers, guard houses, official’s residences, churches, silk dealers, sumo wrestlers, fried eel restaurants, exotic animal dealers, couriers, and so forth, in addition to detailed information about the flora and fauna indigenous to the area. As such, the text is an invaluable repository of information otherwise lost to the historical record.

Of greater interest than such lists are longer passages which seek to analyze and interpret Yokohama and its foreign residents, because it is here that the author’s anti-foreign perspective comes into focus. Through such passages we find that Yokohama is notable not *for* its foreign presence, but rather, *despite* it. In the first half of the text, Nansōan argues that Yokohama is indeed remarkable, but as a distinctly Japanese locale, rather than a half-foreign hybrid like the treaty ports of Shanghai or Canton; in the especially vitriolic second half, he denigrates foreign technology, culture, and religion as lagging far behind that of his native Japan. Though certainly not alone in his feelings of xenophobia or nationalist fervor, Nansōan nonetheless expressed his views in the context of Japan’s first “treaty port,” and as such his work is worthy of serious consideration.

Bustle and Prosperity on Yokohama’s Streets

Before embarking on his critique of foreign residents of Yokohama, Nansōan paints a picture of the area’s natural beauty – though even this description hints at his particular point of view. Yokohama’s foremost quality, the author tells us, is the sheer visual spectacle it presents to the visitor: “for generations, prosperous places, famous sights, and historic spots have existed, and many of these have been praised by the various famous masters of poetic verse; however, not one of them can

1960), pp. 266-305. This quote is located in *Ibid.*, p. 267; subsequent references will also refer to this reprinted edition.

compare to present-day Yokohama.”⁵ Yokohama’s incomparability, we learn, stems from its unique combination of financial prosperity and aesthetic beauty. Nansōan was surely neither the first nor the only person to comment on Yokohama’s remarkable affluence, but his vivid depiction of the area’s “financial scenery” is wonderfully detailed and well worth presenting *in extenso*:

[On Benten Dōri] there is a large shop selling rarities of foreign and domestic origin, various things that shock the eyes. In front there is a large foreign [style] residence. Here too there is a wide path; day and night, an unusual number of peepshows, mechanical contraptions, magic tricks, street comics all ply their trades. This area is called Imon-zaka, and it is a steeply ascending slope. There is an herbal drugstore, a wooden sandal shop called Kuzumi, a medicine shop called Kame no yu, an eel shop called Owari, a restaurant called Atsukawa and another called Yanagawa. There is an iron seller called Nakaya and a iron wholesaler called Itsumiya. Also there is spectacular bird shop with foreign birds and animal shows, and in addition there are all manner of other large shops, selling foreign, Japanese, and Chinese goods: gold, silver, ruby agate, coral, and wood inlay. No trouble is spared, and these shops are believed to be superior to any shop in Kyoto or Edo, to say nothing of those of foreign lands. Truly they are beautiful and spacious merchant [houses].⁶

It is significant to note there that whereas artists of Yokohama-e, for example, were quick to draw comparisons between the port of Yokohama and European cities such as London and Paris, Nansōan’s points of reference are Kyoto and Edo.

In addition to its commercial bustle, Yokohama boasts of a natural and scenic beauty. Though the port was founded as a place for foreigners to live and do business, much of Nansōan’s description is given over to elements of the landscape where no foreign imprint is to be found, as this representative passage indicates:

⁵ Ibid., p. 267.

⁶ Ibid., p. 281.

On one side of the New Yokohama Road there is the ocean; on the other, the Kabeya and Shōya reclaimed rice fields. In this area there are pine groves and a salt-beach. The smoke of the salt shops thinly weaves into the blowing small pines – this is a place that would move the hearts of poets. In the distance one can see from Suruga and Mt. Fuji, from Ōyama and the mountains of Chichibu to Hakone and Atami. Of such scenery my poor pen cannot express.⁷

And while some descriptive passages do demonstrate an appreciation of beauty that recognizes Yokohama's hybrid structure, the foreign elements are inevitably absorbed into the native landscape, rather than dominating it:

First of all, there is a ferry from Miya no Kaigan in Kanagawa to Yokohama-machi 1-chōme. The distance is one *ri*, more or less, and costs fifty copper coins. The ferry is an usually good bargain, and is the preferable method to make the journey. Around the shore are several marvelous locations; as for the sweeping scenery that greets one upon disembarkation, my unskillful pen cannot describe the scene. Facing me was the Dutch Consulate, its red, white, and blue flag waving. Next I saw the barracks of the Kanagawa security officers. Within, among the pines of Benten, lay the residences of the high officials. In front is the eastern wharf and the inspection station; in back is the famous merchant house of Kesekki, located at English No. 1. Each country's foreign residence flies national flags, which wave high in the wind. From the original village are visible the flowers of the Juniten shrine; beyond, the greenery of Awa, Shimōsa and Kazusa are faintly visible.⁸

⁷ Ibid., p. 270.

⁸ Ibid., p. 267. One *ri* 里 was roughly equivalent to 3.9 kilometers. By “coppers” (J. *tō* 銅) is meant the small copper coin known to the foreigners as the “tempo.” “Kesekki” refers to William Keswick, who established the Yokohama branch of the Hong Kong trading firm Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd. in 1859.

A similar view from the Bluff (a steep bank to the immediate West of the settlement) further demonstrates that Nansōan did not define Yokohama's scenery as Japanese versus "barbarian," but rather saw the area as composed of different elements that worked together to produce a multinational montage:

The scenery visible from here is as follows: one looks down on all the foreign residences; from there, the Customs House and officials' residences, then to Hon-chō, Benten dōri, Ōta-chō, all as though they could fit in the palm of one's hand. Ahead, one can see everything from the residences of the officials in Tobe, and the rooms of the inns at the Kanagawa post station, to the girls in the rooms of the Daimachi tea house. On the left, one follows the three Buddhist laws of Sōtokuin; on the right, one thinks that they are gallivanting in the splendid houses of Miyozaki (the licensed prostitution district). At sea, ships of the five nations enter [the harbor]. As everything within two *ri* in all directions is in one's purview, this is surely the number one scenic spot in the area.⁹

Without overstating the point, we should note that the Nansōan's Yokohama – despite the presence of foreigners – is first and foremost a native locality, like Edo, rather than a place dominated wholly by the non-Japanese element. Moreover, it is a pleasant and attractive place, in large part due to the distinctively Japanese natural scenery.

Finally, the author lavishes praise upon an area that combines Yokohama's best features of beauty and prosperity: the licensed district of Miyozaki, which was located in the rear of the settlement. "In the evenings," Nansōan tells us:

Lamps are lit at every house, so that it is as bright as midday. Among the establishments, the tallest to be seen is the Gankirō; it is composed of two houses, one for foreigners and one for Japanese. Both are very spacious, and there are many young

⁹ Ibid., pp. 284-285. Miyozaki, of course, was the licensed prostitution district, while Sōtokuin was a Buddhist temple located on the Bluff. The "three laws" are those of Buddhism: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) and *anatta* (no soul).

women and servants in attendance. At right I have listed those highest-ranking courtesans (*J. oshoku jorō* お職女郎).¹⁰

Following a list of brothels and their highest-ranking employees, Nansōan continues: “Upon entering the great gate there is the town (of Miyozaki). There are flowers blooming throughout the four seasons. In the spring, cherry blossoms and roses bloom in a riot of color; in the summer, flowering calamus; in the fall, chrysanthemum, bush clover, and bellflower; and in the winter many varieties of narcissus are in bloom.”¹¹



From *Chinji gokakkoku Yokohama hanashi*.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 271. It may also be of interest to readers to note that male prostitutes were included in this section (though in a separate list). If trucking with courtesans was a taboo subject for Victorian-era Europeans and Americans, homosexual relations would have been doubly so; needless to say, there are no accounts, images, or records of any such relationships to be found in any existing historical record.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 277.

¹² Ibid., p. 266.

The author's Miyozaki is indeed a colorful and prosperous place, and the subject of sexual relations with foreigners is also depicted in detail:

At right [is a listing of] several courtesans, but the mistresses (J. *rashamen* ラシヤメン) of the foreigners are listed separately. When foreigners so choose, [a woman] is sent to their place of residence for three pieces of silver a night. This includes everything, down to the palanquin fare to and from the Gankirō. Also there are concubines (J. *mekake* 妾) who live in foreign residences, and also those women who are kept in town.¹³

In the pages immediately following, Nansōan lists all the foreign residents of Yokohama and the Japanese persons in their employ – including live-in mistresses. Dutch Vice-Consul D. De Graeff van Palsbroek, for example, lived with a woman named Chō, and a significant percentage of the merchant houses also listed young women among their native employment rolls. No doubt these foreigners would have been horrified to learn that their sexual habits had been recorded for posterity, but language barriers would have meant that few of these men would have been aware of the list's publication.

While some of the customers may have been foreign, the author's description of the area shows us this was a place readily understood on Japanese terms – like licensed districts in Edo and elsewhere, Yokohama's Miyozaki was a feast for the eye and the flesh. It was an attraction not because it catered to non-Japanese, but because it was the most lavish licensed district in all of Japan. Built in part for foreigners, but constructed according to native tastes, Nansōan's Miyozaki was a synecdoche for Yokohama's own international foundation and financial prosperity.

Foreign Devils

While Nansōan's nativist reading of Yokohama's scenery might hint at his opinion of foreigners, the modern reader may still be taken aback by the xenophobic invective that predominates in the later pages of *Yokohama Tales*. Foreign officials bear the initial brunt of his attacks:

¹³ Ibid., pp. 279-280.

The American consulate is located at Honkakuji 本覚寺. Truly it is a venerable temple. Nonetheless, in Ansei 6 (1859), ogres (*onidomo* 鬼共) from the underworld forced their way in pushing their way into such temples, they removed the sacred images outside the gates, set up the Buddhist altar rooms as their bedrooms, and there they gather together [with] beautiful young women. Their lechery, day and night, is something I cannot begin to speak of.¹⁴

The lechery of foreign ministers, Nansōan adds, is not confined to their own residences, but extends into the Japanese quarter: “Foreign officials called ‘ministers’ are comparable to our elders (老中 *rōjū*), but these men peep into the women’s baths, or else go into the baths to have a look. On these occasions they are accompanied by a crowd of onlookers.”¹⁵ From the very top, it seems, the foreigners are led by lecherous subhumans bent on besmirching the Land of the Gods.

Japanese “Firsts”

Our author, it becomes very clear, has a very low opinion of foreigners, their culture and achievements, and the remainder of *Yokohama Tales* is given over to an extended critique of the various technological advances that foreigners have brought to Japan. Historical comparison is a conceit Nansōan employs to denigrate foreign customs and technology; the barbarians might have religion or fast ships, he suggests, but Japan had these things centuries earlier. Foreigners, the author informs us, have come to Japan seeking products like fabric and tea, products with such an extended lineage in Japan that they are at once superior in quality and quotidian in usage – for foreigners to have crossed the sea for such items did not indicate their superiority, but precisely the opposite. By selectively calling on the traditional historical record, Nansōan was able to neatly invert the argument for native inferiority in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The author’s first comparison comes with regard to foreign hairstyle: foreigners “do not tie up their hair. They do not use combs or hairpins, but rather stick bird feathers or flowers in their

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 288. The reference is to E.M. Dorr, who opened the American Consulate at Honkakuji Temple near Yokohama in 1859.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 288.

headgear.” The significance? “In our Imperial Land, hair has been tied up since the tenth year of the fortieth Heavenly Sovereign Temmu Tennō. Until that time hair was worn in the style of the foreigner. It has been 1140 years since that time.”¹⁶ In other words, the foreigner persists in habits that the Japanese themselves rejected over a millennium ago.

Christianity and Buddhism

This brief criticism may not carry much impact, but Nansōan carries the argument further in his discussion of foreign religion. One structure that caught the author’s eye was the French Catholic church located at No. 80 in the foreign settlement, the first Catholic church in Japan at the time of its opening in 1862:

Up ahead from this location are foreign residences exclusively. Amidst them an oval *koban*-shaped temple has been built by the French, called the Tenshudō 天主堂. On the roof’s central pillar stands a column in the shape of the number ten 十. It is modeled after a crucifix. A venerable image of a holy man, made of exotic metals, hangs upon the crucifix. There are several stories [about him], but I will not describe what I have not seen; they say that plaques of his life from birth to death are hung within.¹⁷

Following his description of the Tenshudō’s religious iconography is a corresponding account of the introduction to Buddhist images to Japan:

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 269. Temmu Tennō 天武天皇 was the fortieth emperor according to traditional count who reigned from 672 to 686. For an English translation of the traditional historical account of this event, see *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, W.G. Aston, trans., vol. 2 (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972), p. 355: “(11th year, 4th month), 23rd day. The Emperor made a decree, saying: ‘Henceforth all persons whatsoever, men or women, must tie up their hair. This is to be completed not later than the 30th day of the 12th month.’”

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 284. *Koban* 小判 was an oval-shaped coin in circulation during the Tokugawa period. Prudence Seraphin Barthelemy Girard (1821-1867) was a French missionary who came to Japan in 1859 as Japanese interpreter for French legation. Girard orchestrated the construction of the French Catholic church at No. 80 in the foreign settlement.

Now then, as for the origins of Buddhist teaching in our Imperial Land: beginning in the 13th year of the 30th Heavenly Sovereign Kimmei Tennō, Buddhist images and sutras were presented by the country of Paekche (in Korea). The Sovereign and his lords examined them, but put no faith in such things out of respect for the majesty of the native deities. Only Soga no Ōmi Iname swore allegiance to them; accordingly the Sovereign gave the objects to Iname. Greatly pleased, Iname worshipped the Buddha image day and night. This was the beginning of Buddhist images in Japan. It has been 1287 years since that time.¹⁸

Note that in the author's view, indigenous religious belief (viz., Shintō 神道) apparently does not count as "religion;" for purposes of comparison, Christianity and its attendant image worship match up with the veneration of the Buddhist images introduced from Korea. In this regard, religious image worship has a 1287-year "head start" in Japan, and is presumably superior on that basis. Temples enjoy a similar lineage, the author notes; again following the traditional account, Nansōan informs us that Iname's residence – home to the Korean Buddhist images – was the first temple established in Japan, 1286 years prior to the establishment of the Tenshūdo.¹⁹ Note that in Nansōan's view there is nothing evil about

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 284. See also *Nihongi*, vol. 2, pp. 64-65. Kimmei Tennō 欽明天皇 was the twenty-ninth (not thirtieth) emperor according to traditional count who reigned from 531 (or 539) until 571. According to traditional historical records, it was during Kimmei's reign that Buddhism was introduced from Korea, precipitating a conflict between the pro-Buddhist Soga family and the anti-Buddhist Mononobe family. Paekche 百濟 (J. Kudara) was one of three kingdoms in early Korean history. King Sōng (523-584) of Paekche is said to have sent the delegation that introduced Buddhism to Japan. Soga no Ōmi Iname 蘇我の大臣稲目 was the father-in-law of Kimmei and chief minister (*ōmi*) to the Imperial court. According to the *Nihongi* account, Iname was the sole member of the court to profess allegiance to Buddhism, and the images were given to him and enshrined in his home.

¹⁹ Ibid.; see *Nihongi*, vol. 2, pp. 66-67: "The Oho-omi (Iname) knelt down and received it with joy. He enthroned it in his house at Oharida, where he

Christianity per se; one might think that the centuries-old Tokugawa proscription against Christianity would inculcate fear and suspicion on the part of Japanese who were suddenly faced with a “Christian temple” (especially a Japanese who considered foreigners “devils” and “like monkeys”), but such expectations are not met here. Christian religion to Nansōan was just another foreign import inferior to the native brand, a late-comer to a country that needed nothing from the outside world.

Foreign technology and modern methods of transportation were more of the same. “In the harbor foreign and native ships intermingle; the sight of the great ships is surprising. Of late the French ogres (*Furansu no onidomo* 仏蘭西國の鬼ども) have built a ship of black steel, in length twelve *ken* 間 and with sails of two *ken*. It is built entirely of steel, without a single beam of wood, as a passenger steam ship. The hull is painted in red, white, and blue, and the ship is used to convey the mail. In speed it is faster than an arrow’s flight.”²⁰ An all-steel ship that floated, to say nothing of sailing at an arrow’s speed, was a supreme feat of technology – but Nansōan reminds us once again that the Japanese were there first. “As for the beginning of ships in our Imperial Land: shipbuilding began in the province of Izu during the fifth year of the sixteenth Heavenly Sovereign, Ōjin Tennō; in length approximately ten *sun*, the ships were built of camphor wood from Higane-yama. This was 1610 years ago.”

Furthermore, we learn that with regard to horsemanship, the “ogres” may enjoy an advantage in technology – but not in skill or history:

Foreigners when riding horses put metal [on horse’s hooves] rather than straw sandals. They use reins of six to eight ropes. Foreigners have no riding skills, but just ride entirely roughshod. When they need to stop the horse they pull on the rope, raising the metal bit, and the horse stops. Also there are horse-carts, [upon which] two persons ride and a horse is hitched. The sound on the road is like thunder.”²¹

diligently carried out the rites of retirement from the world, and on that score purified his house at Muku-hara and made it a temple.”

²⁰ Ibid., p. 286. A *ken* was roughly 1.8 meters.

²¹ Ibid., p. 286.

Once again, the Japanese prove superior: “The origin of horses dates back to the fifteenth year of the sixteenth Heavenly Sovereign, Ōjin Tennō. It was at that time Adokiyo came from Paechke to raise [horses] at the slopes of Karu in the province of Yamato. It has been 1618 years since that time.”²²

Finally, there is the matter of trade. The products “of foremost significance in trade, from the earliest times to the present, are tea and raw silk,” the author informs us. “To what extent it will extend [in the future] is immeasurable and unknowable.” The increasingly familiar conceit of the ‘history lesson’ follows this pronouncement:

In our Imperial Land the origin of tea dates back to the eighty-second Heavenly Sovereign, Go-toba. In the ninth year of his reign, the Zen priest Eisai brought back three tea seeds from China. Fine cloth comes from the province of Go [in China], during the fourteenth year of the reign of the sixteenth Heavenly Sovereign, Ōjin Tennō. It has been 1571 years since that time.²³

This passage follows a pattern which should now be clear: foreigners have come seeking products from Japan; these products have a long history in Japan; the foreigners, therefore, seek items that are rare to them but ordinary in the eyes of native Japanese.

Nansōan’s “history lessons” have a deep significance for our understanding of nineteenth century Japanese relations with the outside

²² Ōjin Tennō 応神天皇 was the fifteenth emperor according to traditional count who reigned from the late fourth to early fifth century. His reign was notable for the significant influx of Chinese and Korean immigrants [J. *kikajin* 帰化人] who introduced new technology and information to Japan (among them the art of horse-breeding). See *Nihongi*, vol. 1, p. 261ff, for account described in this passage.

²³ Go-toba 後鳥羽 was the eighty-second emperor according to traditional count who reigned from 1183 until 1198. Eisai 栄西 was the founder of Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan who lived from 1141 until 1215. According to the accepted tradition, Eisai brought back tea seeds from his second trip to China and planted them in 1191. For a reference to “fine cloth” [*gofuku* 呉服], see *Nihongi*, vol. 1, pp. 261, 269-270.

world in general, and our understanding of Yokohama in particular. In nearly every instance, a Western custom, habit, or device is described for the reader who presumably has not been to Yokohama; in this sense such a catalogue of exotica is nothing out of the ordinary. Foreigners ride horses; they have ships; they trade for tea and silk; they profess faith in a religion and worship in a temple. And yet none of these are new to Japan; for thousands of years, the author reminds us time and again, Japanese have done the same. Denizens of the Imperial Land have ridden horses, have cultivated tea and silk, have venerated images of sacred figures, and built temples in their honor. Note, however, that all of these examples are the result of foreign intercourse – horses, shipbuilders, and religion from Korea; tea and silk from China. Thus Nansōan puts forward a version of Japanese history that freely acknowledges the advantages of trade and exchange with other countries; in the context of a tourist guide to Japan's foreign community, the condemnation of Westerners proves even more damning.

Thus *Yokohama Tales* draws to a close. In conclusion, what can we say about this fascinating text? Let us return to Nansōan's statement in his introduction that *Curiosities of the Five Nations: Yokohama Tales* was written for people unable to make the trip to Yokohama personally. What would such a person have learned from this guide? First, I believe, s/he would have understood that Yokohama was a repository of natural beauty, as well as a bustling center of commercial activity; in these respects, it was similar to Kyoto and Edo. Second, there is the unmistakable fact that Yokohama thrived not because of the presence of foreigners, but rather *despite* them. The foreigners, one would have discovered, were pitiable in their attempts to meet Japanese standards of religion, technology, and culture. In the final account, Nansōan's diatribes and disingenuous history lessons veer far from the reality of treaty port imperialism, but offer an intriguing counter-narrative of Japanese exceptionalism lacking in other sources from the period.