The American Oriental Society and the First Japanese Book Printed in the United States (1855)

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Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan in 1853–1854 was more than just a diplomatic mission: it also had scientific objectives and for the officers and crews it was in addition an opportunity to do some shopping. Among the goods bought in Japan (Shimoda and Hakodate) were various books, some of which were donated to the American Oriental Society. In 1855 the Lippincott Company of Philadelphia published a facsimile of a Japanese illustrated book, which had first been published in 1740, with accompanying transcription and partial translation. This was the work of Joseph Wilson MD, a naval surgeon who served on one of the ships that took part in the Perry Expedition. In this article I consider why this facsimile was published, how Wilson managed to learn sufficient Japanese to undertake the translation, and what its reception was. Why did it sell so few copies, why did the reviewers focus on botany, and why did it not stimulate an interest in the academic study of Japan? Why, for that matter, were no articles on Japan published in *JAOS* between 1855 and 1910? This article explores the hesitant start to American japanology by examining the fate of the first Japanese book printed anywhere in the world outside Japan.

At the inaugural meeting of the American Oriental Society in 1842, the first president, John Pickering (1777–1846), addressed the question of the scope of the new society. He was an accomplished linguist who knew Hebrew, Turkish, and Arabic, and he defined as the field of inquiry "the history, languages, literature, and general characteristics of the various people, both civilized and barbarous, who are usually classed under the somewhat indefinite name of *Oriental* nations." In a magisterial survey of the field, he included Mongolian, Manchu, Korean, and Japanese as well as Chinese and many other languages and cultures; for Japan, he drew upon an essay on the Japanese language by Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), who had lived on Deshima as the resident doctor from 1823 to 1829, and referred to him as "the learned Dr. Siebold."[1] It was evident, then, that the American Oriental Society was open to the study of East Asia from the outset, and that included Japan.

Sure enough, the second issue of *JAOS* in 1844 included two articles on China, one by John Pickering himself on paper money in China and another by William Whitwell Greenough (1818–1899) on population and trade in China.[2] A few years later, in 1853, the Sanskritist Edward Elbridge Salisbury (1814–1901), in a brief note on Commodore Perry's

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1. John Pickering, "Address," *JAOS* 1 (1843): 43–45; Daniel Appleton White, "Eulogy on John Pickering, LL.D., President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences," *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Scien*ces, n.s. 3 (1848): i–lxxxii.

2. Pickering, "The History of Paper Money in China," *JAOS* 1 (1844): 136–42, and Greenough, "China: Its Population, Trade, and the Prospect of a Treaty," *JAOS* 1 (1844): 143–61.

Fig. 1. *Japanese Botany*, title slip (*daisen*). Note that it is rather wider than the norm for title slips on Japanese printed books and that it reads simply *Sōka* 草花 (Plants and Flowers). (Private collection)

expedition to Japan, expressed the hope that "it may contribute to enlarge our knowledge of that great Empire, all we know of which, at present, only excites the desire to know more."[3] In fact, in 1851 two articles on Japan had already appeared in *JAOS*. The first was a lengthy review, by the polymath William Wadden Turner (1810–1859), of a Japanese novel that had been translated into German by August Pfizmaier (1808–1887), and Turner included a lithographic reproduction of one of the original illustrations; he, too, was familiar with the writings of von Siebold. The second article was by Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), an American missionary in Canton who supervised the printing press of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Williams's essay was on the Japanese syllabaries and, as we shall see, he was well qualified to write it. What was striking, though, was that it made use of a font of katakana type, which he had had made in New York while on home leave: this enabled him to present and explain the katakana syllabary in print.[4]

Shortly after these promising beginnings, the J.B. Lippincott Company of Philadelphia published a reproduction of a Japanese book. This curious and now rare book is both undated and anonymous, but, as evidence cited below shows conclusively, it was printed in 1855. It

3. *JAOS* 3 (1853): 493.

4. Turner, "Account of a Japanese Romance," *JAOS* 2 (1851): 29–54; Williams, "Note on Japanese Syllabaries," *JAOS* 2 (1851): 55–60.

bears the title *Japanese Botany: Being a Facsimile of a Japanese Book with Introductory Notes and Translations* (hereafter *Japanese Botany*) and consists both of reproduced Japanese text and of a partial translation. What was curious about this book was the fact that it was made to look like a Japanese block-printed book, with Japanese-style covers, *fukurotoji* 袋綴じ binding, and a title slip (*daisen* 題簽) on the back cover (from the Western perspective) (fig. 1).

It is remarkable that Lippincott was able in this way to reproduce not only the content of a Japanese book but also its physical appearance, but why did Lippincott undertake it at all? In view of the fact that the Convention of Kanagawa (also known as the Treaty of Peace and Amity) between the United States and Japan was signed on March 31, 1854, as a consequence of the expedition to Japan led by Commodore Matthew Perry, the obvious assumption is that the publication of this book had something to do with Perry's mission, but what exactly was the connection? Who in America had the ability to translate Japanese into English and why did the title draw attention to botany?

This book poses many problems, but the problem of the date is easily solved. It must have been published in 1855. The British Library copy bears a red date stamp "29 NO 55," indicating that it was accessioned on or before 29 November 1855, and the bookseller C. Murquardt of Brussels advertised the book in his monthly list of October 1855.[5] Furthermore, *Japanese Botany* was reviewed in the *Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, DC at the end of August 1855, in *The Horticulturalist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* in the December issue of 1855, and in *JAOS* too, in 1855.[6] Lastly, the publisher's name is given on the imprint page of *Japanese Botany* as J.B. Lippincott & Co. of 20 North Fourth Street, Philadelphia (fig. 2). In 1855 the firm changed its name from Lippincott, Grambo & Co. to J.B. Lippincott & Co., having moved to 20 North Fourth Street the previous year. The year of publication was therefore indisputably 1855, and the Lippincott ledgers record that five hundred copies had been printed by July 2, 1855, of which two hundred copies were then bound.[7] The fate of these two hundred copies will be considered below.

On the question of authorship, there is only a katakana inscription on the imprint page, which reads ウヱルソン (presumably "Wilson") (fig. 2). All three reviews, however, identify the author as Dr. Joseph Wilson Jr., and they mention that he had participated in the Perry expedition: that information is not contained anywhere within the book, so the three reviewers were evidently relying upon other sources.

In all probability, since Samuel Wells Williams, the author of the *JAOS* article on the Japanese syllabaries, was back in Canton in 1855, there was not one person in North America who was able to read the Japanese text apart from Joseph Wilson himself. At first sight, therefore, it seems to make no sense whatsoever to publish a text that nobody could read, even if it was accompanied by a partial translation. But this was 1855, and Perry had just returned triumphantly from his expedition to Japan, so Japan was certainly newsworthy.

5. *Japanese Botany: Being a Facsimile of a Japanese Book, with Introductory Notes and Translations* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., [1855]), British Library shelf-mark 11098.a.15 (this copy is the source of the ebook available on Google Books but the original was so tightly bound at some stage that the image of the title page does not include the katakana indication of authorship referred to below); *A Monthly List of New Books Published in Great Britain, sold by Mr. C. Murquardt*, 155 (October 1, 1855): 634.

6. *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2; *The Horticulturalist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* 5 (December 1855): 568; *JAOS* 5 (1855–56): 274. The last review is signed "E. E. S.," probably the Sanskritist Edward Elbridge Salisbury.

7. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, J.B. Lippincott Company Records, Collection 3104: V74, Copyright ledger, 146.

Fig. 2. Title page of *Japanese Botany*. The cover is a composite: the two birds, the azaleas, the plum blossoms, and the bamboo leaves come from different illustrations in volume four of *Ehon ōshukubai* (fols. 9, 10, 17, and 22, respectively). The woman and the boat have been taken from an unidentified different book and oddly interrupt the plum blossom; in fact, the branches to the left of the woman and the right of the boat are identical. The katakana on the top right, ウヱルソン, is the only indication of Joseph Wilson's involvement. (Private collection)

What is more, as the reviews showed, the illustrations afforded other reasons for welcoming the publication of this book.

Japanese Botany has been neglected ever since it was published apart from a handful of reviews, but as the first Japanese book published in the United States, indeed the first Japanese book printed outside Japan, it is of no small interest. In this article I consider its significance both as a reproduced Japanese book and as a textbook for learners of Japanese. First, we need to examine how Japanese books, including the book reproduced in *Japanese Botany*, reached the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century; second, we need to unravel the connection with the Perry Expedition and establish how Wilson managed to learn Japanese; and third, we need to address, as far as possible, remaining questions, for example, why the reviews focused on the botany rather than the Japanese, and why the impact of the book was so slight.

SHOPPING FOR BOOKS IN JAPAN

It was in the Nara period (710–784) that Japanese books began to travel beyond the shores of Japan, mostly in the form of books written by Japanese authors in literary Chinese that were taken to China or Korea by Japanese monks or students. Japanese books first reached Europe in the early seventeenth century, or possibly the late sixteenth, brought back by Europeans who traveled to Japan.[8] On the other hand, no Japanese books are known to have reached the United States until the nineteenth century. Yale accessioned two Japanese woodblock-printed books in 1868 and began collecting Japanese books in the early 1870s,

8. Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 306–12, and idem, "Collecting Japanese Books in Europe from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 8 (2004): 21–23.

well before any other American university was interested in collecting Japanese books.[9] There can be no doubt, though, that when the ships of Perry's expedition returned to America in 1855 a number of individuals had Japanese books in their possession. This is clear from the official *Narrative of the Expedition*.

Francis Hawks, who was the author of the *Narrative*, had not accompanied Perry to Japan but he evidently had access to Perry's manuscript journal and official correspondence as well as the journals and diaries of several other officers, including the diary of Samuel Wells Williams, who had acted as Perry's interpreter in Japan. Hawks claimed to have read every word of his *Narrative* aloud to Perry and stated that the text had had Perry's approval before being passed to the printer. His anonymous preface was followed by a statement signed by Perry:

> The Narrative here presented of the Japan Expedition has been prepared under my supervision and at my request, from materials furnished by me, and is authentic. I present it as my official report, and am alone responsible for the statement of facts it contains.[10]

Since some of those materials no longer survive and the rest are dispersed, we have no choice but to take Hawks's account on trust.[11]

The prime purpose of the Perry expedition was, of course, to come to an understanding with the Japanese government. Nevertheless, Perry also had other purposes in mind. While Perry was in Canton, he issued new orders to his squadron, which included "Departments for observation," in other words, aspects of Japan to be carefully observed by the squadron's officers and men; these included scientific matters such as botany as well as "philology and ethnology."[12] In addition, there was a hunger for souvenirs from Japan. Perry's first visit in July 1853 was a brief one. The New York merchant Thomas Walsh, who was trading in Canton, met Perry and his officers on several occasions there and noted with disappointment in a letter home that, "There was only one landing, the one of ceremony, and very little communication—so no curiosities were obtained."[13] The second visit in March 1854, however, was a different matter. Three weeks of negotiations resulted in the signing of the Convention of Kanagawa and Perry's fleet withdrew to visit the two ports that had been opened to American ships, Shimoda and Hakodate. On April 18, 1854, Commodore Perry in the USS *Powhatan*, accompanied by the USS *Mississippi*, arrived off Shimoda, which other ships in the squadron

9. On the Yale collection, see Ellen H. Hammond, "A History of the East Asia Library at Yale University," in *Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868–2008*, ed. Peter X. Zhou (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2010), 3–20, and two articles by William D. Fleming: "Subaraya Mohei no Goshoseki mokuroku to Iēru Daigaku Nihon shoseki korekushon seiritsu no hiwa" 須原屋茂兵衛の『御書籍目録』とイェール大学日本書籍コレクション成立の秘話, in *Iēru Daigaku shozō Nihon kanren shiryō kenkyū to mokuroku* イェール大学所蔵日本関連資料研究と目録, ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 東京大学 史料編纂所 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2016), 15–28, and "Japanese Students Abroad and the Building of America's First Japanese Library Collection, 1869–1978," *JAOS* 139 (2019): 115–41.

10. Francis L. Hawks, *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, United States Navy, by Order of the Government of the United States* (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson, Printer, 1856), iv–v. A commercial edition of the *Narrative* was published by D. Appleton & Company of New York later the same year but there are some differences between the two editions.

11. On the extant manuscript sources, see Samuel Eliot Morison, *"Old Bruin": Commodore Matthew C. Perry 1794–1858* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 461–62.

12. Log of the USS *Supply*, following the entry for April 12, 1853, order no. 2 issued by Perry on the USS *Mississippi* on December 23, 1852. The original log is still held by the Bureau of Naval Personnel but there is a microfilm (T1094) in the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC.

13. J. Welles Henderson Archives & Library, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia: Walsh family papers, Letters home, vol. 2, Thomas Walsh to his father, May 2 and October 23, 1853 (the quotation comes from the October letter).

had already reached a few days earlier. Hawks provides a description of the town, which includes mention of the habit of mixed bathing, and then he comments as follows:

> Apart from the bathing scenes, there was enough in the popular literature, with its obscene pictorial illustrations, to prove a licentiousness of taste and practice among a certain class of the population, that was not only disgustingly intrusive, but disgracefully indicative of foul corruption.[14]

From this it appears likely that Perry and his companions had encountered some *shunpon* (erotic illustrated books) during their stay in Japan, but they were evidently too disgusted to purchase any of them, or at least did not mention doing so. There were, however, shops in Shimoda, and Hawks furnishes this description:

> In the shops this passage way [leading through to the back of the house] is crowded with baskets, stands, and trays, laden with various merchandise; and the walls on either side are provided with shelves, upon which goods are also heaped. In the best establishments articles for sale are seldom displayed beyond turning the opened ends of the boxes which contain them towards the street.[15]

Another account of Shimoda, by Master's Mate John R. C. Lewis, mentions a bazaar set up there for the Americans and describes how it operated; from this it is clear that lacquerware was much sought after.[16] There were books available too. In one of the reviews of *Japanese Botany*, Joseph Wilson is reported to have "busied himself in procuring such native books as it was possible to obtain" in Shimoda, reflecting his statement in *Japanese Botany* that, "I have obtained, altogether, eight dictionaries from Simoda [*sic*]" and his reference to "some small schoolbooks, ballads, etc., procured at Simoda."[17]

In Hakodate, too, Perry's officers and men were enthusiastic shoppers: "A lively and in some cases rather a furious desire to purchase Japanese curios and works of art broke out among the officers of the squadron, some of whom had to be disciplined for brutal conduct toward the shopkeepers before the trade could be put upon a conventional basis of cash payment for goods received."[18] Kojima Matajirō, who ran a general goods and sake store in Hakodate and was also a *nanushi* (village headman), took an interest in this phenomenon, and presumably derived some profit from it too. He states that many officers and sailors landed and purchased *makie* boxes, children's parasols, chinaware, silks, sweet potatoes, pears, tobacco pouches, and picture books, but noted that Perry only bought high-quality goods. He noted with surprise that the Americans all paid for the goods they bought![19]

John Glendy Sproston, USN (1828–1862), was one of many who went ashore at Hakodate to visit the shops and he provided a detailed description:

> The most valuable and bulky articles, such as cotton and silk in the natural or manufactured form, oil paper for rain cloaks, Japanese fancy goods and groceries, are contained in moderate-sized boxes piled one upon the other in regular tiers and opening at the side. Under these and

14. Hawks, *Narrative*, 469.

15. Hawks, *Narrative*, 468.

16. Henry F. Graff, ed., *Bluejackets with Perry in Japan: A Day-By-Day Account Kept by Master's Mate John R. C. Lewis and Cabin Boy William B. Allen* (New York: New York Public Library, 1952), 154.

17. "A Curious Book," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2; *Japanese Botany*, xii.

18. Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, LL.D.: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889), 219–20.

19. Kojima Matajirō 小嶋又次郎, *Amerika ichijō utsushi* 亜墨利加一条写, facsimile, transcription and English translation by Alice Cheney (Hakodate: Hakodate kyōdō bunkakai, 1953), 1: 60, 63; 2: 26, 28.

> on each side are ranges of small drawers containing tobacco perfumery, musk, paper, books, pictures, India ink . . . .[20]

Hawks also refers to "an unpretending, illustrated child's book, purchased in Hakodadi [*sic*]."[21] He states that there were no printing establishments in either Shimoda or Hakodate, but he notes that "books were found in the shops." "These were generally cheap works of elementary character, or popular story books or novels, and were evidently in great demand, as the people are universally taught to read and are eager for information."[22] Summing up the encounter of members of Perry's expedition with Japanese books, Hawks was clearly impressed by book production in Japan:

> There are immense numbers of cheap, easy books continually issuing from the Japanese press, which are designed for the instruction of children or poor people; so it will be seen they have their "cheap literature." Books innumerable of a higher order are provided for the rich, and all, of both kinds, are profusely illustrated with wood-cuts, engraved on the same block with the type. Some of these books, which we have examined, show also that an art but recently introduced in Europe and America is very old in Japan, viz: that of printing in colors. So that in our modern inventions of stereotyping and printing in colors, and in our manufacture of cheap literature for the people generally, Japan has anticipated us by centuries. Their books consist of works of science, history, biography, geography, travels, moral philosophy, natural history, poetry, the drama, and encyclopedias.[23]

He clearly saw some of these books:

> In examining into the character of art exhibited by the Japanese in the illustrated books and pictures brought home by the officers of the expedition, of which several specimens are now before us, the same surprising advancement of this remarkable people, as they have shown in so many other respects, is strikingly observable.[24]

It appears, then, that familiarity with Japanese book production was one of the unintended benefits of the Perry expedition.

Unfortunately, very few of the items acquired on the voyage can now be identified. One of the few exceptions is a pair of books in the Smithsonian that bear the following inscriptions: "Thomas C. Dudley/U.S.S. Powhatan/Hakodadi Japan/May 1854," "The orphans of Mount Tsuruga/or the cruel uncle Vol 2," "[Sold?] by 'Sohaveriso'/bookseller & trader/main avenue Hakodadi/near the Custom house;" they also contain the impression of the seal of a Hakodate bookseller named Yoshizakiya.[25] These volumes are not the work of fiction that Thomas Cockrane Dudley, who was purser's clerk on the USS *Powhatan*, was evidently led to suppose, for they are in fact the second and third volumes of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200)

20. Shio Sakanishi, ed., *A Private Journal of John Glendy Sproston, U.S.N.*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Sophia Univ., 1968), 47. See also J. Willett Spalding, *The Japan Expedition: Japan and Around the World. An Account of Three Visits to the Japanese Empire, with Sketches of Madeira, St. Helena, Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, China, and Loo-Choo* (New York: Redfield, 1859), 301, 307, 323–26.

21. Hawks, *Narrative*, 462.

22. Hawks, *Narrative*, 463.

23. Hawks, *Narrative*, 58.

24. Hawks, *Narrative*, 527.

25. Chang-Su Houchins, *Artifacts of Diplomacy: Smithsonian Collections from Commodore Matthew Perry's Japan Expedition (1853–1854)*, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology, vol. 37 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Books, 1995), 132–33. Some of Dudley's other purchases are also illustrated in this book, including a *kawaraban* showing the arrival of Perry's squadron in 1853 (p. 93). I have been unable to examine Dudley's unpublished journal and letters from the Japan expedition in the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

edition of *Mencius* with *kunten* glosses provided by Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657) in the seventeenth century (in a reissue printed around 1800).

What happened to all the books acquired in Japan? During the year ending August 1855, a number of Japanese books were donated to the American Oriental Society. Some were identified as having been bought in Japan by members of Perry's expedition, but this was almost certainly true of the others as well. Charles William Bradley (1809–1865), acting American consul in Singapore, donated "A Japanese illustrated book, with illuminated cover; brought from Hakōdādi [*sic*] by the U.S. Expedition to Japan" and "A Japanese painting, representing the native idea of female beauty; brought from Samūdi [Shimoda] by the same." Rev. W. J. Johnson of Hong Kong donated "A Japanese book, presented by a school-boy to an officer of the U. S. Expedition to Japan" and "Two Japanese books, in the character used only by women." And Joseph Wilson, the author of *Japanese Botany*, presented "Fourteen small books printed in Japan."[26] These books are described, albeit with many errors, in the printed catalogue of the Society's Library, which was published in 1930; by that time the books were already housed at Yale University.[27] In the catalogue, twelve books are identified as having been printed before 1855, a further twenty items are said to be undated but printed in Edo; listed in addition are some Japanese prints by Toyokuni and Kuniyoshi, and one manuscript described as *Tōkaidō narabi ni Kiso dōchūki* transcribed by Joseph Wilson.

Some of the books listed in the catalogue were donated to the Society later, for instance, *Shinji andon* 神事行灯, the second volume of *Hokusai manga* 北斎漫画, and Kanagaki Robun's *Tōkaidōchū kurige yajiuma* 東海道中栗毛弥次馬, which were donated by Charles Bradley in 1860, *Myōtozake kawaranu nakanaka* 夫婦酒替奴中仲, donated by Bradley in 1861, and a work described as "*Masomi no kagami*, i.e., Grammatical tables of Japanese verbs and auxiliaries," written by Nakazo ai-shu [*sic*] and published in Nagasaki in 1845, which was donated by Dr. Divie Bethune McCartee (1820–1900) in January 1868.[28] This latter work is *Masomi no kagami* 真曽美の鏡 by Nakazone Chikatane 中園愛種, of which only two copies are known in Japan.

Of the eighteen books known to have been donated to the Society before August 1855, a handful can be identified today. One is described as a "Map for pilgrimage to the thirty three kannon in central Japan," published by Ezuya Shōhachi of Nara in 1831. This seems to be *Kanzeon sanjūsansho reijōki* 観世音三十三所霊場記, of which no printed examples appear to be extant in Japan; the Society's bookplate in this item bears the date October 1854, so it was probably donated by somebody on the USS *Saratoga*, which reached Boston in September 1854, or possibly by Commander Henry Allen Adams (1800–1869), Perry's second-in-command, who reached Washington on July 12, 1854, with the American copy of the treaty.[29]

26. William D. Whitney, "Additions to the Library and Cabinet of the American Oriental Society: August, 1854–August, 1855," *JAOS* 5 (1855–56): viii, xii, xxi. One of the books donated by Johnson was a *jōruri* chant book entitled *Kantō Koroku nochi no hinagata* 関東小六後雛形; the extant copy in the AOS collection at Yale contains a pencil note to the effect that Johnson donated it through Bradley.

27. Elizabeth Strout, ed., *Catalogue of the Library of the American Oriental Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Library, 1930), 217–20. Some of the Society's books can be found on Orbis, the Yale OPAC, by searching for "American Oriental Society" and specifying the language as Japanese, but at the time of writing this only yields eighteen results.

28. McCartee donated many Chinese and Japanese books to the University of Pennsylvania. See Jidong Yang, "The McCartee Library and the East Asian Collection of the University of Pennsylvania," in Zhou, *Collecting Asia*, 54–64.

29. Hawks, *Narrative*, 449, 458, 564, 586–87.

A few of the books donated by Wilson can also be identified: a *jōruri* recitation book entitled *Koi to chūsha hatsune no tabi* 恋中車初音の旅, of which only one copy is known in Japan; a work described as "Dō-zhō zhi Hidaka-gawa = A play of An-chin and Kiyohime, composed for Tokiwadzu singers," which is probably *Dōjōji Hidakagawa no dan* 道成寺日高川の段, of which only one copy seems to be extant in Japan; another *jōruri* chant book, *Yaoya Oshichi koshō naresome no dan* 八百屋お七小性馴始段; and a work described as "Midzugaki Shō-gan, Illustrated story of the 'Sendai-hagi' . . . Edo, 1842," which was in fact *Hanamomiji nishiki no dategasa* 花紅葉錦伊達傘, a *gōkan* written by Mizugaki Egao 美図垣笑顔 and illustrated by Utagawa Yoshitsuya, of which three copies are extant in Japan.

These were the first Japanese books received by an American institution of learning, thirteen years before Yale acquired its first two Japanese books. Perhaps because they were all acquired in shops in Shimoda and Hakodate, where the market for books was probably limited, they seem mostly to have been ephemeral works that have survived in Japan in only one or two copies at the most. In all likelihood they had no impact after their arrival in the United States and were not consulted for decades, if at all.

JAPANESE BOTANY AND JOSEPH WILSON

Japanese Botany consists mostly of a reproduction of the whole of volume five of *Ehon ōshukubai* 画本鶯宿梅, an illustrated book by the Osaka artist Tachibana Morikuni, which was first published in 1740 and then reprinted from the original blocks on several subsequent occasions. While the other volumes focus on literary or military figures from the past, mountains, buildings, and city views, volumes four and five focus on nature—birds in their natural settings in volume four and more detailed images of plants in volume five. Thus, it is only volume five that could reasonably bear the title *Japanese Botany* given to the reproduction by Wilson. It is worth emphasizing that Wilson chose not to reproduce one of the contemporary ephemeral works he presented to the American Oriental Society but instead a rather older work prepared for a more sophisticated readership with an interest in painting.

The reproduction is presented in Japanese order, with the reproduction commencing at what would normally be the back of a Western book: as Wilson explains in his introduction at the front of the book, "The beginning of a Japanese book is at the other end of it."[30] *Japanese Botany* was published with dark-blue cardboard covers that approximated those of Japanese books in thickness and appearance. On the back cover, that is to say, the front cover from the Japanese perspective, a lithographed title slip was affixed with decorative borders following Japanese practice, though the title slip is rather wider than the Japanese norm (fig. 1). The title given is simply *Sōka* 草花 (Plants and Flowers), which appears in the table of contents of the fifth volume of *Ehon ōshukubai* to indicate that this volume constitutes *Sōka no bu* 草花之部, the section of the book concerned with plants and flowers.[31] Turning the cover in Japanese order, readers encountered the reproduction, beginning with the table of contents and continuing with pages of botanical illustrations with accompanying text. At the other end the book begins with a title page, and an introduction evidently written by Wilson, which includes tables of hiragana and katakana (fig. 3) and sections on Japanese numerals, measurement of time, and measurement of distance, all with Japanese text written probably by Wilson himself. However, in his introduction Wilson does not explain where he acquired his copy of *Ehon ōshukubai* or what his purpose was in publishing this book. The remainder

30. *Japanese Botany*, iii.

31. For details, see Suzuki Jun 鈴木惇, "Tokai sekiban *Ehon ōshukubai*: Sekai o kakemegutta Nihon ehon" 渡海石版『絵本鶯宿梅』：世界を駆け巡った日本絵本, *Bungaku* 2.3 (2001): 93–107.


4. THE JAPANESE ALPHABET.

Hirakana.	Katakana.	Names of Letters.	Hirakana.	Katakana.	Names of Letters.	Hirakana.	Katakana.	Names of Letters.
	イ	i		レ	re		ユ	ku
	ロ	ro		ソ	so		エ	e
	ハ	ha		ツ	tsu		テ	te
	ニ	ni		子	ne		ア	a
	ホ	ho		ナ	na		サ	sa
	ヘ	he		ラ	ra		キ	ki
	ト	to		ム	mu		ユ	yu
	チ	tsi		ウ	wu		メ	me
	リ	ri		ヰ	wi		ミ	mi
	ヌ	nu		ノ	no		シ	shi
	ル	ru		オ	o		ヱ	ye
	ヲ	wo		ク	ku		ヒ	hi
	ワ	wa		ヤ	ya		モ	mo
	カ	ka		マ	ma		セ	se
	ヨ	yo		ケ	ke		ス	su
	タ	ta		フ	fu		ン	n

Fig. 3. *Japanese Botany*, iv. Table of hiragana and katakana in *iroha* order written by Wilson. (Private collection)

of the book, sandwiched between the introduction and the reproduction, consists of a partial transcription of the original text with transliteration and translation.

As several of the reviewers pointed out, a novel technology was used to produce *Japanese Botany*, anastatic printing. This was a new kind of lithography that seems to have been developed in Germany in the 1840s as a means of making an exact reproduction of a text or image.[32] Although now forgotten, it was "a process thought of in its day as a great innovation and now interesting as an example of the Victorians' passion for technological advance."[33] It was introduced to the United States by Edgar Allan Poe in an essay published in the *Broadway Journal* in 1845 in which he suggested that "this invention may possibly lead, in the course of time, to some rather remarkable results."

> We dampen the leaf [i.e., page of text] with a certain acid diluted, and then place it between two leaves of blotting-paper to absorb superfluous moisture. We then place the printed side in contact with a zinc plate that lies on the table. The acid in the interspaces between the letters, immediately corrodes the zinc, but the acid on the letters themselves, has no such effect, having been neutralized by the ink. Removing the leaf at the end of five minutes, we find a reversed copy, in slight relief, of the printing on the page;—in other words, we have a stereotype-plate, from

32. According to the *Scientific American* 8.14 (December 18, 1852): 106, one Joseph Dixon of Mystic, Conn., had made the discovery in or before 1841 but had not patented it.

33. Geoffrey Wakeman, *Victorian Book Illustration: The Technical Revolution* (Newton Abbot, UK: David & Charles, 1973), 51. On the details of the process, see pp. 51–57.

> which we can print a vast number of absolute facsimiles of the original printed page—which latter has not been at all injured in the process.[34]

Anastatic printing was thus a technology that it made it possible to reproduce every quirk of the original. The process was granted a US patent in 1845, so it was still a new technology in 1855. Without it, the reproduction of volume five of *Ehon ōshukubai* in *Japanese Botany* would not have been so exact that it includes even the breaks in the marginal lines seen in extant copies of the 1740 edition. Although the process was chemical, it had a similar effect as the Japanese technology of reproduction, *kabusebori* 被せ彫り, which involves carving a new set of blocks using sheets of a previously printed book to make a *fukkokuban* 覆刻版. In this sense, the anastatic facsimile of volume five of *Ehon ōshukubai* achieved what printers in East Asia had been able to do for centuries.

The only alteration Wilson made to the original text was to add Western pagination to the table of contents and to the top of each page, adding these elements to the original before it was subjected to the treatment required for anastatic printing. However, Wilson did add a title page and imprint page, which include excerpts from several illustrations taken from volume four of *Ehon ōshukubai*, so it is obvious that he had access to at least two volumes of the original. There was also an introduction in English, and a number of pages containing transcriptions of the Japanese text of *Ehon ōshukubai* into *katakana-majiri* with a romanized transcription on the right and on the left a literal translation following the Japanese order and then a more polished translation (fig. 4). Wilson ignores the two pages of text following the table of contents, and the transcriptions and translations cover only up to the first line of p. 16, leaving more than half of the fifth volume of *Ehon ōshukubai* untranslated. Included in the transcriptions and in the introduction are some small illustrations taken from unidentified other books.

Who was the Dr. Wilson who produced this book? He was born in Philadelphia in 1816 and graduated in medicine from the University of Pennsylvania in 1837. In 1842 he was appointed an Assistant Surgeon in the Navy and remained in the Navy, retiring with the rank of captain in 1878; he died in 1887.[35] His name does not appear in the list of officers and surgeons who took part in Perry's expedition nor does it appear in Hawks's *Narrative*; however, his name does appear briefly in other records of the expedition, and at a meeting of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in February 1855, "An interesting letter was read from Dr. Joseph Wilson, Jr., Surgeon of the U.S. Navy from U.S. ship *Supply*, on Chinese horticulture."[36] The omission of his name from the list of officers and surgeons is probably due to the fact that he was not attached to one of the warships on the expedition but to the USS *Supply*, a supply ship assigned to the Perry expedition; it returned to New York in February 1855.

As already mentioned, Wilson bought a number of books in Japan, but what is not clear is how he learned sufficient Japanese to be able to read the *hentaigana* and *kuzushiji* of *Ehon ōshukubai* and to translate part of the text. It is certain that he could not have acquired these skills in the United States before departing for Japan. The review of *Japanese Botany* in the *Daily National Intelligencer* states that "by the diligent study of these [books] on the

34. "Anastatic Printing," *Broadway Journal* 1.15 (1845): 229–31. There were also accounts in *The New World*, March 1, 1845, 140, the *Southern Literary Messenger* (June 1845): 383, and other contemporary American journals.

35. Obituary in *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, March 12, 1887, 532; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 4, 1887, 5.

36. Roger Pineau, ed., *The Japan Expedition, 1852–1854: The Personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968), 226–32, Appendix C; Samuel Wells Williams, "A Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan (1853–1854)," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 37 (1910): 39; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 22, 1855, 1, col. 5.

Fig. 4. *Japanese Botany*, 58, showing Wilson's handwritten Japanese and the printed illustrations excerpted from other sources. (Private collection)

voyage homeward and since he has been enabled to prepare the translations that accompany the book."[37] Since the homeward voyage took only six months, that would be a remarkable achievement, if true.

In the introduction Wilson states that he made use of the following books of reference to assist his work on the text:

1. Walter Henry Medhurst, *An English and Japanese and Japanese and English Vocabulary* (Batavia, 1830)

2. Medhurst, *Translation of a Comparative Vocabulary of the Chinese, Corean, and Japanese Languages* (Batavia, 1835)

3. A work described as "文字引モンジビキ *Monzhihiki*, a Japanese Dictionary of Common Literature. Jedo" (which may have been *Daikōsei shisho zenbun jibiki* 大広正四書全文字引 or *Gyokuhen monjibikiyō* 玉篇文字引様)

4. A work described as "Monzen zhihiki" (which was probably *Zōho monzen jibiki* 増補文選字引, published in 1848).[38]

It is conceivable that he obtained the two books by Medhurst in the United States, though they were probably more easily available in Canton and Hong Kong, but the two Japanese dictionaries he must have obtained in Shimoda, for the USS *Supply* did not travel to Hakodate.

37. *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2.

38. *Japanese Botany*, xi–xii.

It goes without saying that these various reference works would not have sufficed to enable him to translate the text, but let us leave that problem aside for one moment and consider what other evidence there may be for his knowledge of Japanese. At some time in 1860 the American Oriental Society was given "A Japanese Fan, inscribed with a traveller's Guide. Accompanied with a manuscript notice, transcription, and partial translation, by Dr. J. Wilson."[39] Further evidence can be found in a manuscript he wrote later entitled "Notes on Polynesia, Its People and Languages." From this it is clear that he took a serious interest in language: he wrote some words in Japanese and Korean in katakana and *han'gŭl* (fig. 5), he lists the spoken numerals he encountered at Shimoda and at Naha in the Ryūkyū kingdom, and he states that "In Japanese scarcely a line is to be found without its アル aru . . . at Lew Chew [Ryūkyū] where the same books are in use as in Japan, they pronounce the アル aru as if written ayūng."[40] It seems likely from all this that Wilson had taken an interest in spoken Japanese and had to some extent acquired the ability to read and translate handwritten Japanese.

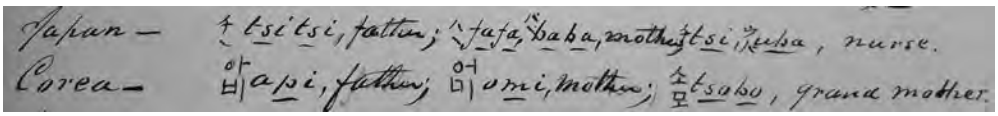

Fig. 5. Extract from Joseph Wilson, "Notes on Polynesia, Its People and Languages," Joseph Wilson Papers Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 2. Image courtesy of Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Nowhere in *Japanese Botany* is there any information about the Japanese book it reproduces or about its author: not even the title is given. According to the review in *JAOS*, Wilson had translated "a botanical work brought by him from Japan."[41] *Ehon ōshukubai* is not, however, listed among the books donated to the American Oriental Society and none of the surviving copies of *Ehon ōshukubai* in the United States appears to be associated with Wilson.[42] The only copy that can tenuously be associated with Wilson was in fact in Canton and was in the possession of Samuel Wells Williams, to whom we must now turn.

SAMUEL WELLS WILLIAMS AND JAPANESE

In 1837 the merchant ship *Morrison* sailed from Canton to Japan in the first unsuccessful American attempt to establish relations with Japan. On board were Samuel Wells Williams

39. "Additions to the Library and Cabinet, October, 1856 – May, 1860," *JAOS* 6 (1858–60): 604; see n. 26 above.

40. J. Welles Henderson Archives & Library, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia: Joseph Wilson papers, Box 1, Folder 10, "Notes on Polynesia, Its People and Languages" (undated manuscript), 2, 6, 8. Wilson's knowledge of Ryūkyūan may have come from the missionary Bernard Bettelheim (1811–1870), who had been living in the Ryūkyū kingdom since 1846 and who provided some members of Perry's expedition with vocabularies of Ryūkyūan while the squadron was at anchor off Naha. See John S. Sewall, *The Logbook of the Captain's Clerk: Adventures in the China Seas* (Bangor, ME: Chas H. Glass & Co., 1905), 127. The collection of Joseph Wilson's papers at the Independence Seaport Museum is incomplete; any diaries or notes made during his time on the *Supply* are missing and either preserved elsewhere or lost. Consequently, it is not clear when he was in Polynesia or how he learnt some Korean.

41. *JAOS* 5 (1855–56): 274.

42. I have not examined them and rely upon catalogue descriptions. They are (omitting copies of the 1856 and Meiji editions) to be found at Smith College, Columbia, Yale (vols. 1 & 6), Princeton (vol. 1), New York Public Library, and Essex Peabody Museum (both vol. 5 only).

and Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851), a German Lutheran missionary in China, and seven Japanese castaways living in Macao. The castaways went back to China, for it became apparent that returning to Japan might be dangerous: two remained with Gützlaff and two worked in Williams's printing office in Macao. As Williams explained, "we have cultivated their acquaintance, begun to learn to speak their language, and read the books which had so long been sealed"; "these four aided us in getting some knowledge of their language, so that between us the books of Genesis and Matthew, and the Gospel and Epistles of John, were done into Japanese for their instruction."[43]

In 1840 Williams had progressed so far as to be able to publish a translation of a Japanese account of copper smelting, *Kodō zuroku* 鼓銅図録, which, he said, "was a gift to a friend from M[onsieur] Brüger [a typographical error; Williams is referring to Heinrich Bürger (1804–1858)], surgeon of the Dutch factory at Desima, who visited Canton in 1828, and brought with him a few Japanese books, among which was this identical volume."[44] By 1840 he had, it seems, acquired quite a few other Japanese books, some of which came from Batavia, having reached there in the hands of Philipp Franz von Siebold on his return from Japan, and others from the Japanese castaways in Canton and Macao. He provided in his article on copper smelting a list of the nine Japanese books he owned (or at least had access to) and this list includes the following:

> *Kwa-hon O shiyaku bai*, or Painting of the Nightingale roosting upon the plum-tree. Nine volumes, octavo. Genbon [*sic*, i.e., Genbun], 5th year. 1800 [*sic*, i.e., 1740]. This is a collection of odd stories, legends of heroes and demigods, illustrated with plates.

The details suggest that he had a complete copy of *Ehon ōshukubai*, although his description of the contents is misleading and his transcription of the title wrong.[45]

Samuel Wells Williams was in 1840 probably the only American with a knowledge of Japanese, but how much he knew is difficult to say. His translation of *Kodō zuroku* is largely accurate, so he evidently acquired a familiarity with the *hentaigana* and *kuzushiji* in which the printed text was written as well as with the structures of written Japanese. By 1851, if not before, he had already acquired some fame for his knowledge of the language.[46] A review in *JAOS* in 1851 described him as "one of the most successful of the few scholars who have as

43. "Ko Doü Dzu Roku, or, A Memoir on Smelting Copper, Illustrated with Plates," *Chinese Repository* 9 (1840): 86–88; S. W. Williams, "Voyages of the 'Himmaleh' and 'Morrison' in 1837," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 7 (1876): 396, quoted in Williams, *Life and Letters*, 99; from the account in the former on p. 391, it appears that the seven Japanese had reached Macao in or after 1836. See also Graff's introduction to *Bluejackets with Perry in Japan*, 34–42. On Gützlaff, see Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl F. A. Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 92–96.

44. "Ko Doü Dzu Roku," 86–101; the list of books with explanations appears on pp. 86–88. According to Elijah Coleman Bridgman and Samuel Wells Williams, *General Index of Subjects Contained in the Twenty Volumes of the Chinese Repository; With an Arranged List of the Articles* (Canton: Chinese Repository, 1851), xxxix, the author of this piece was Williams himself.

45. "Ko Doü Dzu Roku," 87. The other books listed were *Kashiragaki zōho kinmō zui* 頭書増補訓蒙図彙 (1789), *Kokon senka kagami* 古今泉貨鑑 (1790), *Onna daigaku takarabako* 女大学宝箱 (1807), *Onna gakusoku misaho kagami* 女学則操鑑 (1834), *Banka hyakunin isshu tokiwairo* 万花百人一首常磐色 (1791), *Tōyūki* 東遊記 (1795), *Tōyūki kōhen* 東遊記後編 (1797), and an unnamed dictionary of Chinese characters. The dates are those given by Williams himself and they refer to the dates of the editions in his possession, not the dates of their first publication.

46. By this time there was one man living in North America who spoke Japanese (but probably could not read it), Ranald McDonald (1824–1894), who spent ten months in Japan in 1848–49 and taught English to some of the Dutch interpreters in Nagasaki. See Frederik L. Schodt, *Native American in the Land of the Shogun: Ranald MacDonald and the Opening of Japan* (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2003).

yet devoted themselves to this branch of study."[47] Shortly after Perry arrived in Hong Kong in April 1853 he asked Williams to accompany him to Japan as his Japanese interpreter. Williams was reluctant to take on the position, both because of his responsibilities in Macao and because he was conscious of the limited knowledge he had of the language.[48] His wife wrote to an unknown correspondent as follows:

> Wells went with Com. Perry rather against his own (and much against *my*) will, in consequence of leaving his office of Chinese printers in unexperienced hands, and feeling his own want of preparation for such a position. His reputation as a Japanese scholar is based upon the slight ground of his having studied that language ten years ago, under a sailor teacher!—nor has he since that time had the opportunity to practice a word of it.[49]

And in his own journal Williams did not seem confident:

> I have been looking over the Japanese phrases I once wrote out with Giusaboro [*sic*, Jūsaburō?], but they do not easily recur to mind. I have forgotten almost all the phrases I once had at my tongue's end, and am afraid that nine years' cessation from using the language has obliterated most of it from my memory.[50]

Nevertheless, he seems to have acquitted himself to his satisfaction by the time he got to Hakodate.[51]

Let us now return to the question of how Wilson acquired enough knowledge of Japanese to be able to translate *Ehon ōshukubai*, and in this connection it is important to remember, first, that the USS *Supply* on which he was traveling reached Macau in September 1852 and returned to the United States in February 1855, and, second, that he must have completed his manuscript of *Japanese Botany* by June 1855, for the printed sheets were delivered to Lippincott on July 2 (see below). Consequently, he had less than three years in which to learn Japanese, translate the text, and prepare his edition for anastatic printing. How did he do it? By 1853 Gützlaff was dead, so Williams was perhaps the only Westerner in China with a knowledge of Japanese. He evidently knew Wilson, for he mentions going over to the *Supply* on June 25, 1853, to examine some corals with him, but that is the only mention in his journal.[52] The movements of the *Supply* during these years, however, make it clear that there was ample opportunity for Wilson and Williams to become acquainted (Table 1) before they set off for Japan.

It is no more than conjecture, but it seems likely that Wilson met Williams in Hong Kong or Canton before ever setting out for Japan and that it was from Williams and perhaps his Japanese assistants that he gathered some knowledge of the scripts and structures of Japanese. What is certain is that the dictionaries that he acquired in Shimoda would have been completely inadequate to enable him to understand and translate the textual sections of *Ehon ōshukubai*. Finally, while it is possible that Wilson acquired his copy of *Ehon ōshukubai* in Japan, as one of the reviewers suggested, it may well have been Williams' own copy that he brought back. This is because the books available at Shimoda seem from those that have survived to have been mostly recent and ephemeral imprints.

47. Turner, "Account of a Japanese Romance," 36.
48. Williams, "Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan," 1–3.
49. Williams, *Life and Letters*, 185.
50. Williams, "Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan," 6.
51. According to a quotation from his journal in Williams, *Life and Letters,* 220.
52. Williams, "Journal of the Perry Expedition to Japan," 39.

Table 1. The movements of USS *Supply* in 1852–1855

Dates	*Places*	*Notes*
September 16, 1852	Arrives Macau	The next seven months are spent in Macau, Hong Kong, Whampoa, and Canton.
April 26, 1853	Leaves Hong Kong	Two months are spent off Naha in the Ryūkyū kingdom (Okinawa).
August 29, 1853	Returns to Hong Kong	Three months are spent in Hong Kong.
December 29, 1853	Leaves Hong Kong	Some time is spent in Naha and Shanghai before reaching Edo.
March 20, 1854	Arrives Edo bay	
April 16, 1854	Arrives Samodi [Shimoda]	
June 26, 1854	Leaves Shimoda	
August 1, 1854	Arrives Hong Kong	
September 3, 1854	Leaves Hong Kong	Proceeds via Singapore and the Cape of Good Hope
February 7, 1855		The microfilmed log comes to an end with the ship back in New York.[53]

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Seventeen copies of *Japanese Botany* can now be identified in public collections.[54] The copy in the New York Historical Society Library formerly belonged to Francis Hawks, and before that to Perry himself, and it is inscribed "Commodore M. C. Perry from your obt. sert. [obedient servant] Joseph Wilson Jr. M.D. U.S. Navy," while the copy at the Academy of Natural Science of Drexel University was originally presented by Joseph Wilson to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.[55] What is significant is that six of the four-

53. The information concerning the movements of the *Supply* are taken from the ship's log; see n. 12.

54. They are, with accession dates in parentheses where known: the British Library (1855); the Linnean Society, London; the Bibliothèque centrale du Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris; the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (1859); the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto; the New York Botanical Garden Mertz Library (1926); the Sterling Morton Library, Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL (1963); the New York Historical Society Library (1867); the Library of Congress; the University of Kansas Kenneth Spencer Research Library (1953); Morris Arboretum, University of Pennsylvania; the Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania; Cincinnati History Library; Lloyd Library and Museum, University of Cincinnati; Cleveland Public Library; the Academy of Natural Science of Drexel University, Philadelphia (1856); and the Harvard University Yenching Library. No copy is listed in Strout, *Catalogue of the Library of the American Oriental Society*, so if the Society owned a copy it had been lost or disposed of by 1930. There is a copy listed in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Board of Trade* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1866), 251, but its current whereabouts are unknown. At the University of Pennsylvania, the Morris Arboretum copy was originally donated by the Bartram Memorial Library at Bartram's Garden, and the Rare Book Collection copy was donated by Louis DuPont Syle (1857–1903), who lived with his father in Tokyo for three years in the 1870s and donated several other Japanese books in 1918 to the University of Pennsylvania, where he had taught English literature earlier in his career. See the University of Pennsylvania library accessions records for February 19, 1918, and the biography in Frederick Wells Williams, *A History of the Class of Seventy-Nine, Yale College* (Cambridge, MA: Univ. Press, 1906), 416–23.

55. *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* 8 (1856), vi. Wilson was elected a member of the Academy in 1856; see ibid., 4.

teen are in public collections that are devoted to botany or science in general. This raises the question of how this book was to be seen, as a contribution to botanical knowledge or to the study of the Japanese language.

The *Horticulturalist* took an understandably partisan view:

> When the Japan expedition was first proposed, no class of our fellow citizens felt a greater interest in its success, apart from national considerations, than did we as horticulturalists. Japan had been so long something of a sealed book, that our curiosity was excited at the prospect of a peep at the inside. By the prying of some enterprising Dutch botanists we had already been delighted with a Paulownia, some fine Clematises, Hydrangeas, and many other acquisitions; we hoped that our friend Perry, and others of his command, would be able to minister still to our desires.[56]

Other reviews, too, focused on the botanical illustrations and the fact that the book looked much like a Japanese book, and even the *JAOS* reviewer had nothing to say about the linguistic information provided.[57] But is this so very surprising? After all, botany was one of the topics that the members of the expedition concerned themselves with and "there were many specimens obtained of their various fabrics and of their natural productions, particularly of their botany, which have been brought to the United States for the investigation of the scientific and the interest of the curious."[58] Hawks's *Narrative*, Perry's journal, and the journal of Dr. James Morrow, who was attached to the exhibition as a naturalist, all make it clear that plant collecting and botanical observation were an integral part of the expedition.[59]

It is not going too far to say that the interest in both the books and the plants of other societies represented by the publication of *Japanese Botany* already had a very long pedigree. In the case of Japan, in the seventeenth century Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716) and Andreas Cleyer (1634–1697), who both spent several years in the Dutch outpost on Deshima, and Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), who was mayor of Amsterdam but never visited Japan, all showed a great interest in the books and plants of Japan; much later in the mid-nineteenth century, von Siebold wrote both *Flora Japonica* and his famous description of Japan, *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan*.[60]

In mid-nineteenth-century America, too, the flora of Japan was of great interest. The reviewer for the *Horticulturalist*, who was surprised by the quality of the drawings, found several of the plants illustrated unfamiliar. The reviewer for *JAOS*, who described *Japanese Botany* as "a very valuable illustration of what the anastatic process is capable of in the way of multiplying copies of works which would not be printed among us, or perhaps even in Europe, at present," considered that "it will interest the student of natural science who is

56. *The Horticulturalist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* 5 (1855): 568.

57. *De Bow's Review and Industrial Resources, Statistics, Etc. Devoted to Commerce, Agricultural, Manufacturers, Internal Improvements, Political Economy, General Literature, Etc.* 18 (October 1855): 492; see also *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2; *JAOS* 5 (1855–56): 274.

58. Hawks, *Narrative*, 371.

59. Hawks, *Narrative*, 191, etc.; Allan B. Cole, ed., *A Scientist with Perry in Japan: The Journal of Dr. James Morrow* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1947); Pineau, *Japan Expedition*; A. Hunter Dupree, "Science vs. the Military: Dr. James Morrow and the Perry Expedition," *Pacific Historical Review* 22 (1953): 29–37.

60. See Wolfgang Michel, "Glimpses of Medicine and Pharmaceutics in Early Japanese-German Intercourse," in *The Dawn of Modern Japanese Medicine and Pharmaceuticals: The 150th Anniversary Edition of Japan-German Exchange*, ed. International Medical Society of Japan (Tokyo: International Medical Society of Japan, 2011), 72–94; idem, "Medicine and Allied Sciences in the Cultural Exchange between Japan and Europe in the 17th Century," in *Theories and Methods in Japanese Studies: Current State and Future Developments. Papers in Honor of Joseph Kreiner*, ed. Hans Dieter Ölschleger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 285–302; Marion Peters, *De wijze koopman: Het wereldwijde onderzoek van Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), burgemeester en VOC-bewindhebber van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2010).

curious to learn how far the Japanese have advanced in botanical knowledge."[61] Nonetheless, the fact is that *Ehon ōshukubai* had been published in 1740, more than one hundred years earlier, and it was in fact very far from being a good representative of current botanical knowledge in Japan. This the reviewer for the *Daily National Intelligencer* realized:

> Upon asking Howqua, learned in Chinese phraseology, what is the meaning of the title of the book as expressed in Chinese characters on the side, he said, "Grasses and Flowers." It is, therefore, not a systematic dissertation on the plants of Japan, but descriptions of a few rather common plants, making a promiscuous little bouquet.[62]

Contemporary botanists such as Iinuma Yokusai (1782–1865) and Itō Keisuke (1803–1901) were much further ahead, and when the former's survey of the flora of Japan, *Sōmoku zusetsu* 草木図説,was reissued in 1875 with Latin botanical names added, Western botanists had a much better guide to turn to.

Even if Wilson had been assisted by Williams, it was certainly no mean feat to produce *Japanese Botany* and in so little time. The result was a book designed to look like a *wahon* (block-printed book in Japanese fashion) and to appeal both to botanists and to orientalists. The translations, as will be clear from fig. 4, are largely accurate, although there are some mistakes, but they represent a remarkable achievement given the lack of good reference materials. Wilson did understand the language of the original, it seems. Nevertheless, after 1855 he had nothing further to do with Japan or Japanese, apart from the fan mentioned earlier and the references to Japanese in his manuscript on the languages of Polynesia. He resumed his career as a naval surgeon and his only subsequent publications concerned hygiene and sanitation.[63]

Japanese Botany was, unfortunately, not a commercial success. The reviewer in the *Daily National Intelligencer* remarked that, "it is to be hoped that a sufficient number of copies will be sold to at least repay his pecuniary outlay,"[64] and the lack of any printing costs in the Lippincott ledger suggests that Wilson did indeed meet the costs himself. On July 2, 1855, Lippincott received the printed sheets for five hundred copies, of which he then had two hundred bound at a total cost of $25. By December 31, 1855, only thirty copies had been sold, twenty-five sent to editors of newspapers and magazines, and thirty-four sent to Wilson; in 1857, six more sent to Wilson and five more were sold; there are no more entries until 1860, when eighteen were sent to Wilson, twenty-two sent to editors, and twelve to embassies and others, and no further entries after that. Thus, of the two hundred copies bound, only thirty-five were sold, and the receipts from these exceeded the binding costs by a margin of less than $2.[65] Wilson lost his money and Lippincott barely covered his costs.

It is perhaps no surprise that Wilson's efforts went unappreciated. The fact is that the study of Japan and Japanese in the West was still in its infancy, in spite of the earlier efforts of Isaac Titsingh (1745–1812), Julius Klaproth (1783–1835), and von Siebold, whose works

61. *JAOS* 5 (1855): 274.

62. The identity of Howqua is obscure; it cannot be Wu Bingjian 伍秉鑑 (1769–1843), who was known in the West as Howqua and was the leading merchant in Canton, for he was already dead. *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2.

63. *Naval Hygiene: Human Health and the Means of Preventing Disease, with Illustrative Incidents Principally Derived from Naval Experience* (Philadelphia: Linday & Blakiston, 1870); *Drainage for Health or Easy Lessons in Sanitary Science* (Philadelphia: Presley Blakiston, 1881).

64. *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 27, 1855, 2.

65. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, J.B. Lippincott Company Records, Collection 3104: V74, Copyright ledger, 146–47.

Perry appears to have read before setting out for Japan.[66] In 1855, the very year in which *Japanese Botany* was published, Johann Joseph Hoffmann (1805–1878) was appointed professor of Japanese at the University of Leiden, and in 1868 Léon de Rosny (1837–1914) became professor of Japanese at the École des langues orientales in Paris. They were the first professional japanologists, but neither of them ever set foot in Japan. The creation of the Asiatic Society of Japan in Yokohama in 1872 provided for the first time a forum for the serious study of Japan, but in the United States, after the first few articles on Japan in *JAOS* in the 1850s, it was not until 1910 that the next appeared, and that was the first of Asakawa Kan'ichi's articles on village society in the Edo period.[67] The simple fact was that, although Wilson and Lippincott had responded with ingenuity to the opportunity provided by the Perry Expedition, in 1855 there was nobody in America yet able or willing to take up the challenge of the Japanese language. Even in 1919, William Phillips (1878–1968), a diplomat who had served in China and who was then Assistant Secretary of State, lamented the lack of university courses in Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, or Arabic when urging the need for a school of Living Oriental Languages in the United States.[68]

In spite, then, of the initial enthusiasm of the American Oriental Society for Japan and the expectation that intellectual benefits would flow from engagement with Japan, Wilson's pioneering attempt to introduce, in one volume, Japanese printing practices, Japanese botanical illustration, and the Japanese language failed to make any mark. John Pickering, in his remarks at the inaugural meeting of the American Oriental Society in 1842, may have understood the value of studying the languages and cultures of East Asia, including Manchu and Korean, but he was perhaps ahead of his time in his global vision and all these fields of study were slow to take root. The explanation for this must perhaps be sought in the hold that Biblical Oriental Studies had over the study of the "Orient," in the geopolitical context that placed Asia at a disadvantage in its relations with the West, and in anxiety about the non-Christian world that later developed into "Yellow Peril" xenophobia, but that is for another occasion.

66. Hawks, *Narrative*, 4, 12–13, 26, 71, 74, 253.

67. "Notes on Village Government in Japan after 1600, I," *JAOS* 30 (1910): 259–300. Subsequently, right up to 1940, the few scholarly articles on Japan that appeared in the journal were by Sakanishi Shio (Shiho), who worked at the Library of Congress until she was repatriated after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and Chitoshi Yanaga, who was born in Hawai'i.

68. "The Need of an American School of Living Oriental Languages," *JAOS* 39 (1919): 185–88.