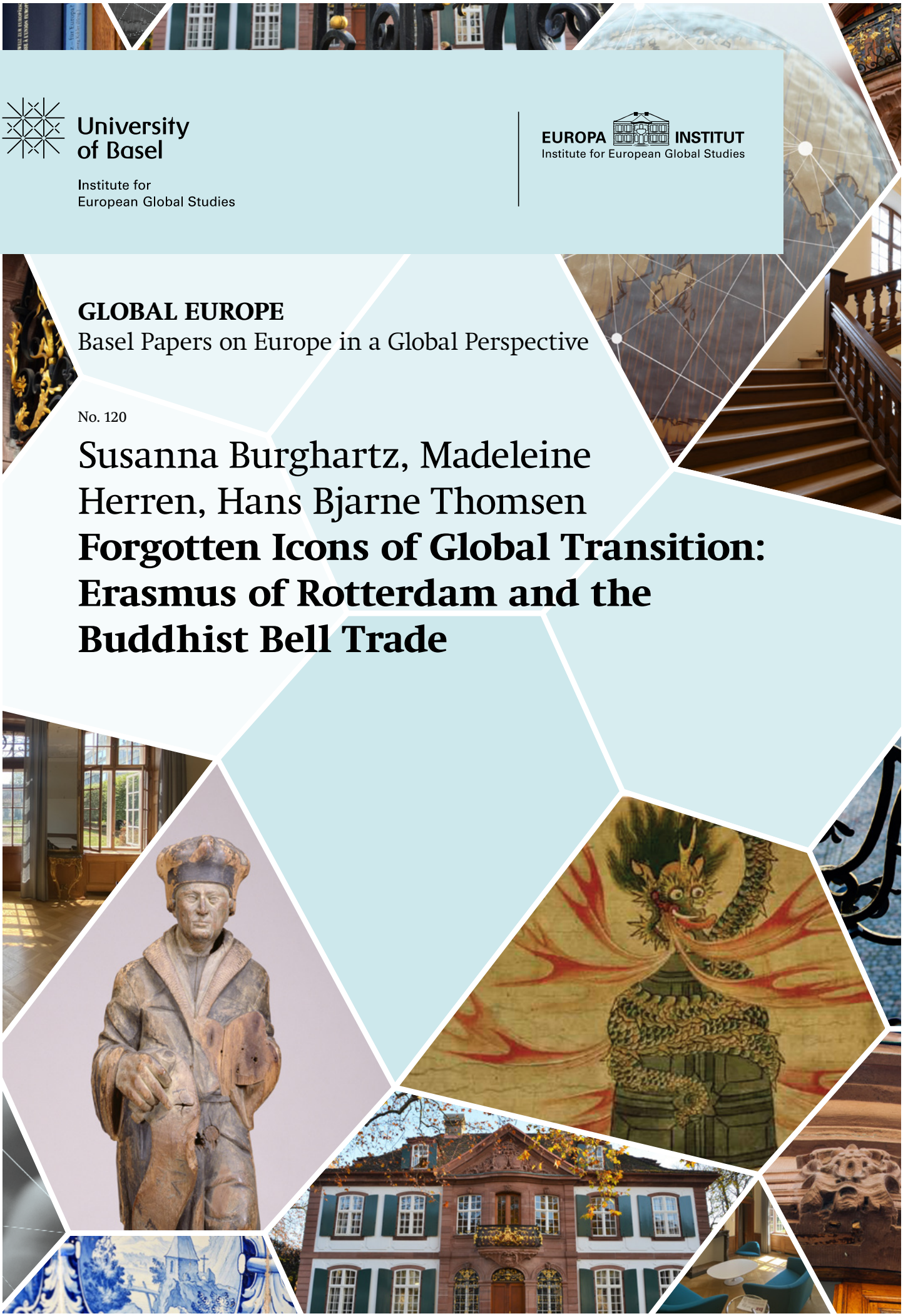

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GLOBAL EUROPE
Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective

No. 120

Susanna Burghartz, Madeleine Herren, Hans Bjarne Thomsen

Forgotten Icons of Global Transition: Erasmus of Rotterdam and the Buddhist Bell Trade

"Global Europe – Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective" is an academic e-journal showcasing the excellent research of graduates as well as other young and senior scholars interested in analyzing Europe and the EU in a global context. The journal is published in two issues per year by the Institute for European Global Studies at the University of Basel. It is available via the websites www.europa.unibas.ch/en/global-europe and https://eterna.unibas.ch/index.php/global_europe. In addition, readers can subscribe to it by sending an e-mail to europa@unibas.ch.

The **Institute for European Global Studies** is an interdisciplinary research institute of the University of Basel. It conducts research on the development of Europe in a global context. The Study Program offers the Bologna-style Master of Arts (MA) in European Global Studies. The Institute for European Global Studies was established in 1992 and is funded by the University of Basel. It is supported by personalities from the fields of economy, politics, and culture. Director of the Institute for European Global Studies is the historian Prof. Madeleine Herren-Oesch.

Publisher

Prof. Dr. Madeleine Herren, Director
Lisa-Marie Zoller-Blundell, Editor
Europainstitut der Universität Basel | Institute for European Global Studies
Riehenstrasse 154, CH-4058 Basel
www.europa.unibas.ch

ISBN-13: 978-3-905751-45-1
ISBN-10: 3-905751-45-3
ISSN: 2571-8118

Cover Pictures:
Katekisama-Statue: Erasmus, Collection of Ryūkōin Temple, Tokyo National Museum, TNM Image Archives.
Tempest Dragon: The Illustrated Tale of the Dōjōji Temple. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed June 2, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dojo-ji_Engi_Emaki.jpg.
Close up of the world with digital social media network diagram: https://www.123rf.com/photo_38155153_close-up-of-businessman-hand-showing-texture-the-world-with-digital-social-media-network-diagram-con.html.

Introduction
A New Global in Times of Transition?

This issue of *Global Europe – Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective* has been written and designed under the conditions of the COVID regime – the changed appearance of our *Basel Papers* is therefore more than an editorial coincidence. These special circumstances have delayed publication but they were also an incentive to focus our intellectual attention on processes of transformation well beyond the imprints of the pandemic. Transformation periods are dynamic, fast, confusing, and they rarely evolve from a singular incident, but from a bundle of mutually reinforcing developments at the most diverse levels. Transformation processes raise the questions of why, when and with which social, political and economic consequences changes acquire structural significance, who benefits and who suffers from them. The reading, interpreting and understanding of transformation processes are core interests and competences of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). Encompassing a variety of disciplines, methodologies and conceptual frameworks, SSH do not seek to trade in narrow or mere short-term solutions but offer more substantial insights into options for action in ways that transcend the specific topic addressed.

Another SSH-related specificity to mention is disciplinary self-reflection, which critically examines methods and theories in the light of the changing profiles of the societies analyzed. In the case of the Institute for European Global Studies, the mission statement understands globality as a challenge embedded in asymmetrical power relations and sociopolitical tensions, although without alternatives: "The globalized world of the 21st century is simultaneously shaped by profound dichotomies, multi-faceted entanglements and dis-entanglements. It is a world of reduced distances, more closely connected than ever before through the global mobility of individuals, objects, goods, and ideas. It is also a world that witnesses increasing calls for partition, separation and exclusion. The construction of a strong nation state, defined by alleged linguistic, cultural and religious authenticity, deeply affects ideas of identity. At the same time, processes of globalization have profoundly influenced the construction of identities and forms of democratic decision-making hitherto based on ideas of territorial organization."[1] And while the mission statement remains useful in the most recent challenge presented by the pandemic, the methodological and disciplinary question how to adapt research designs to shifting concepts is still an unsolved problem engaging and occupying the research community.

1 "Aims and Profile: European Global Studies," Institute for European Global Studies, accessed June 9, 2021, https://europa.unibas.ch/en/research/aims-and-profile/.

Have the two main features of the Institute's research approach, the global focus and the interdisciplinary methods, remained stable in the ongoing transformation process? Are they helpful in understanding and steering the world? At first glance, not really: COVID-19 has a territorializing impact, and the limitation of border crossings posed by the health crisis has been reinforced in June 2021 by the decision of the Swiss government to break off negotiations on the institutional framework agreement with the European Union. This development is fed by the idea that there is something so characteristically Swiss that it is indivisible, non-negotiable and inaccessible to pragmatic approaches across borders. Obviously, there is an increasing gap between global health regulations and national containment, a trend to overestimate cultural and political differences, a tendency to overvalue territoriality and locality. It is generally known that globality is a predominant characteristic of today's world, but the presence of the global has shifted from a well-visible program which is at best cosmopolitan and humanitarian to an undercurrent, difficult to grasp, hidden behind diverse labels, although present in everyday life in pragmatic ways.

The latest scientific debates react to this challenge in different ways. Within global history as an interdisciplinary field of historiography, there is an obvious trend to overcome Eurocentric periodizations with transtemporal approaches.[2] This perspective is often combined with the aim to transcend methodological nationalism by a regional focus. In recent research literature, the new regional is the new global present that shows global influences in their local and sometimes transnational dynamics.[3] Driven by the question of how SSH can analyze dynamic transformation processes, the greatest challenge is probably not the thematic orientation and the choice of the 'right' topic, but the methodological sea change. The need for a new methodological understanding emerges from a positive development, namely the increasing accessibility of digitized source material. Although indispensable for global history and interdisciplinary cooperation on a global scale, digital humanities are still far from developing into an intrinsic element of SSH methodologies. Under the premise of artificial intelligence and the advancement of machine

2 As examples see Tirthankar Roy and Giorgio Riello, eds., *Global Economic History* (London et al.: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); Martti Koskenniemi, *To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power 1300 – 1870* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021 (forthcoming)); Raphael Schäfer and Anne Peters, eds., *Politics and the Histories of International Law: The Quest for Knowledge and Justice*, Studies in the History of International Law, vol. 50/18 (Leiden/Boston: Brill/Nijhoff, 2021 (forthcoming)).

3 For the interplay and connectivity of regional, national and international agencies, the most recent as well as the newly announced publications about the League of Nations have a paradigmatic character at least for the history of the 20th century: Carolin Liebisch-Gümüs, *Verflochtene Nationsbildung: Die Neue Türkei und der Völkerbund 1918 – 38*, Studien zur Internationalen Geschichte, vol. 48 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020); Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatly, eds., *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, The History and Theory of International Law Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Harumi Goto-Shibata, *The League of Nations and the East Asian Imperial Order, 1920 – 1946*, New Directions in East Asian History Series (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

learning, new and fascinating forms of modelling are emerging. With that, in the spirit of the above-mentioned disciplinary self-reflection, SSH increasingly require a systematic approach to the question of what is put forward and what is marginalized under these conditions, and to what extent modeling mirrors and patterns tagged facts, materials, events, but misses to extend the empirical evidence required for this purpose. This is especially crucial for periods of transition.

With that in mind, the contributions presented here do not begin with events and objects, but with their oblivion and the specific forms of rediscovery and transformation. In Katekisama Susanna Burghartz has discovered a figure that can almost be understood as a focal point of transcultural misunderstandings. Katekisama is the name of a statue that is actually owned by a Japanese Buddhist monastery and kept as national heritage in the National Museum in Tokyo – but this figure, understood as Japanese national heritage, is none other than Erasmus of Rotterdam, coming to Japan as a ship figure more than 400 years ago, and has shifted, accumulated, and merged identities for centuries. The other two articles in this issue of the *Basel Papers* deal with the curious stories of objects that should be very hard to miss: massive metal Buddhist bells and Japanese fire bells. And yet, taking up the case of Japanese bells preserved in Swiss collections, the two authors, Hans Bjarne Thomsen and Madeleine Herren, have faced an unexpected problem for their respective disciplinary expertise, East Asian Art History and Global History: big, heavy bronze bells should have been easy to trace on their way from Japan to Swiss collections and their journey should have been easy to document – all the more so as the bells' inscriptions were telling. Their travelling, however, left no paper trail and no documents that allowed to bring the bells preserved in Swiss collections into context with the well-documented history of ethnographic collections. In his contribution, Hans Bjarne Thomsen argues that the original belongings of the bells are unusually well documented, with dates, places, contexts cast into the bell itself, sometimes mentioning the temple where they were placed. He explains that, in terms of the original Japanese documentation, these objects function within spaces that are very different from oblivion – in terms of documentation in texts and inscriptions, but also in terms of being visibly and audibly part of the community and belonging to the temple. They had a real presence, which then was stripped from them in their move to Switzerland – and into oblivion. Madeleine Herren locates the globality of the bells outside their respective religious and cultural functions, and assumes that the materiality of the bells had a transformative and globalizing impact. This approach leads to the result that their recognition as a work of art was literally overwritten with the rules of a worldwide commodity trade under which the bells became part of a global scrap metal market. In both cases, the statue of Erasmus and the bells from Japan, the objects' respective function has been fundamentally reinterpreted and transformed

over the course of history, leaving imprints and patterns in which their respective role as global icons of transformation becomes visible only under the condition that they are brought to speak outside their original context and outside the rules and norms of their respective origin.

Susanna Burghartz

Mr Kateki and *Love* – the History of a Global Object

Key Words: Kateki Sama; Erasmus of Rotterdam; Material Culture; Early Dutch-Japanese Relations; Global History and Global Hybrids

Susanna Burghartz is Professor of Early Modern History at the Department of History and at the Institute for European Global Studies of the University of Basel. Her research focuses mainly on early globalization, the history of urban societies and consumption, material culture and gender history. Among her forthcoming publications are a co-edited volume on *Materialized Identities: Objects–Affects–Effects in Early Modern Culture, 1450–1750* (AUP, 2021) and the co-authored book *Building Paradise. A Basel Manor House and its Residents in a Global Perspective* (CMV, 2021).

I am not sure how many people are familiar with Mr Kateki, although he has been present for 415 years, namely in the Ryūkōin temple in Tochigi Prefecture. Kateki Sama (or Katekisama), as he is reverently called in Japanese, landed at the bay of Usuki on Kyushu on 19 April 1600. That was the beginning of a long relationship between the Netherlands and Japan.[1]

Together with the ships *Blyde Bootschap (The Gospel)*, *Hoope (Hope)*, *T'geloove (Faith)*, *Trouwe (Loyalty)*, Kateki Sama set sail from Rotterdam on *De Liefde* (the *Love*) on 27 June 1598 to circumnavigate the globe and trade in spices in southeast Asia.[2] With the permission of the Estates General and the states of Holland, the ship owners Johan van der Veken and Pieter van der Haegen had capitalized and equipped the fleet for half a million guilders for the perilous voyage through the Straits of Magellan to Japan. This was no easy undertaking, since Dutch ships were engaged at this time in a veritable race to Asia. Three other expeditions with a total of thirteen ships had set sail at the same time as the *Liefde*. And although the *Liefde's* dangerous route had been kept secret before it left port, the recruitment of a crew had proved difficult, and the crew was correspondingly motley. The pilots Dirck Gerritszoon Pomp and Jan Outgherszoon, both natives of Enkhuizen, worked together with the Englishmen Timothy Shatton and William Adams. Shatton was, by the way, the only one with any experience of the Straits, about whose complicated geography reliable information was scarce. The fleet carried a total of 107 cannon and pieces of artillery, and 200 of the 507 crew members had military training.[3]

The voyage proved extremely difficult from the outset. Fierce military engagements with the Portuguese were already fought on the Cape Verde Islands and the coast of Guinea; in their desperate search for provisions, the Dutch made a disturbing acquaintance with the locals, who could not solve their food problems. Nevertheless, this was just a foretaste of the nearly insurmountable difficulties and anxieties that would accompany them on the onward voyage through the Straits of Magellan and beyond. Of the five ships, only the *Liefde* succeeded in landing in Japan after 662 days of travail and desperation. Five months before, it had set sail for the Pacific

1 Marike Klos and Leon Derksen, *Shared Cultural heritage of Japan and the Netherlands* (Amersfoort: Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed/Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, 2016).

2 William de Lange, *Pars Japonica: The First Dutch Expedition to Reach the Shores of Japan* (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2006). De Lange provides also ample information on sources and further literature. J. W. Ijzerman, ed., *De reis om de wereld door Olivier van Noort 1598 – 1601, Linschoten Vereniging Werken, vols.* 27, 28 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1926); Tadashi Makino, *The Blue-Eyed Samurai William Adams* (Ito: Ito Tourist Association, 1983); Charles R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in Japan, 1600 – 1817. Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in Japan and Formosa* (Tokyo/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Charles R. Boxer, *Portuguese Merchants and Missionaries in Feudal Japan, 1543 – 1640*, Collected Studies Series, vol. 232 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986).

3 Ibid., esp. chap. 3; Thomas Rundall, ed., *Memorials of the Empire of Japan in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Hakluyt Society Works, series 1, vol. 8 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1850).

from Santa Maria on the Chilean coast, allegedly because the crew believed they could sell woolen cloth better in Japan than in the Moluccas, which after all lay in the torrid zone.[4]

On the sixth day of the third month of the fifth year of the Keichō period, that is, 19 April 1600, the ship reached the Japanese coast at Kyushu with an utterly exhausted, decimated crew of just 24 men. Curious local people came on board and carried away everything that was not nailed down. Japanese officials soon took over the ship and its crew, detained the pilots and provided them with food and water. A short while later the men received a visit from the Jesuit provincial Padre Joao Rodríguez, who informed them that they had landed in the province of Bungo.[5]

Kateki Sama (fig. 1), the one-meter-high wooden figure dressed in the robe and cap of a learned cleric, was taken off the ship and some 14 years later installed at the temple of Ryūkōin as a gift of the son of the temple's founder Shigesato Makino. At first apparently venerated as a Chinese inventor of shipbuilding, Mr Kateki, kept in a dark corner of the temple intended for the Buddhist goddess of compassion, later mutated into Kateki Baba, Old Kateki, an obscure bogeywoman used to frighten disobedient village children. [6]

After landing in Japan, the fortunes of the *Liefde's* crew also proved changeable: Because Captain Quaeckernaeck was gravely ill, the second officer William Adams was brought to Tokugawa Ieayasu in Osaka for questioning in the presence of a Portuguese interpreter. There the shogun was mainly interested in why the *Liefde*, purportedly a merchant vessel, carried an extensive cargo of weapons. After six weeks in captivity, which Adams spent in a state of great uncertainty, he was allowed to return to his crew. A few crew members then served Tokugawa Ieayasu well as military instructors, especially for the artillery in inner-Japanese conflicts, and integrated into Japanese feudal society. Adams himself initially transported goods with the *Liefde*. After the ship had to be scrapped in 1603, the ruler commissioned Adams to build the first European-style ship on Japanese soil. That year he succeeded in gaining the shogun's trust, eventually earning him the position of *hatamoto*, or standard bearer, at court and making him the first European landowner in feudal Japan.[7]

4 Frederick, C. Wieder, *De reis van Mahu en de Cordes door de Straat van Magalhaes naar Zuid-Amerika en Japan 1598–1600*, Linschoten Vereniging Werken, vols. 21, 22 (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1924).
5 See de Lange, *Pars Japonica*, chap. 10.
6 Senkichirō Katsuma, *Gleams from Japan*, Routledge Revivals (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2011) (first published in 1937), 318–326.
7 William Corr, *Adams the Pilot: The Life and Times of Captain William Adams, 1564–1620* (Folkestone: Japan Library, 1995), esp. chap. 13.

After his recovery, the Dutch captain Jakob Quaeckernaeck also conducted inner-Japanese transport voyages for several years with William Adams and a Japanese crew. In 1604, the shogun even granted him permission to sail to the Dutch settlement of Patani in Malaysia to boost trade between the Dutch and the Japanese. He left Japan in the autumn of 1605 with a red-sealed Japanese trade privilege for the Dutch and reached Patani in December with a bundle of letters from the survivors of the *Liefde* to their relatives at home. More than half a year later, in August 1606, before Malacca, Quaeckernaeck met his cousin Matelieff, who had been besieging the Portuguese there since May. With the aid of his cousin he took over command of the *Erasmus*, a Dutch ship, which had lost its captain shortly before during the siege. In doing so Quaeckernaeck returned to a ship that bore the same name as the one that had brought him to Japan, since the *Liefde* had originally been called *Erasmus* before its name was changed for its circumnavigation of the globe. But this time, too, the *Erasmus* would prove unlucky for the Dutchman. Quackernaeck, captain of the first Dutch ship to reach Japan, died of a head wound incurred in the fierce naval battle of 22 October 1606 in the Straits of Malacca, in which the Dutch vanquished the Portuguese.[8]

But this was by no means the end of the story of Mr Kateki and *De Liefde*. More than three centuries later, Gempachi Maruyama discovered the wooden figure and saw in it a Christian missionary. A few years later, Kateki Sama was finally recognized as Desiderius Erasmus, who had circumnavigated the globe as the figurehead of *De Liefde*, carved in the style of Holbein. Not long afterwards, a photo of the wooden Erasmus was displayed as part of an exhibition on missionary propaganda in Rome, organized by the Japanese education ministry. Dutch visitors to the exhibition then demanded the return of the figure as a precious relic of early Dutch overseas trade activities. But this soon aroused protest in Japan.[9] And so the original Kateki Sama can still be admired to this day as an important part of the national cultural heritage in Tokyo's National Museum, while a plastic replica is on display at the Dutch Royal Library.[10] The reconstruction of the convoluted history of Kateki Sama can be read in the 1937 book *Gleams from Japan*. In itself a truly interesting project of transcultural efforts, it merges cosmopolitan and patriotic perspectives by showing tourists from abroad a specific selection of things Japanese and their cultural meaning. There, the text on Kateki Sama is found right next to the Buddhist temple bell from Ariana Park in Geneva, another global object that was the target of national heritage and restitution issues at the time. As the book shows, such global objects were the subject of intense patriotic efforts as early as 1937, at a time when, on the eve of the Second World War, the heyday

8 De Lange, *Pars Japonica*, 190–194.
9 Katsuma, *Gleams from Japan*.
10 Klos and Derksen, *Shared Cultural heritage*, 19.

of cosmopolitan enthusiasm for the establishment and expansion of international organizations was clearly cooling down despite growing globalization. It is this tension between cosmopolitanism and a patriotic or even national construction of identity that bothers global history today once more in the form of restitution debates.

Fig. 1. Katekisama-Statue: *Erasmus*. Collection of Ryūkōin Temple, Tokyo National Museum. Image: TNM Image Archives.

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Hans Bjarne Thomsen, University of Zurich

Japanese Bronze Bells in Switzerland: Global Travel and Local Interpretations

Abstract: Western museums hold numerous Japanese objects, typically gathered by collectors during travels in Japan and then donated to local institutions. This simple scenario is by no means always the case, as can be seen with the numerous Japanese bronze bells in Swiss museum collections. The story of how the bells changed from holding significant functions within Japanese monastic and secular communities to being sold for their materiality and sheer weight as they travel across the globe tells a complex story of how objects change in meaning as they travel. As the bells were eventually relegated to museum archives, their stories help to shed light on global transfers, interculturality, and cultural misunderstandings, as they narrowly escape destruction. Their stories show the futility of claiming global understanding of art when, despite globalization, we are in the end products of our own localized traditions and understandings.

Key Words: Temple bells, intercultural art, global transfer, materiality of art, museum surveys

Hans Bjarne Thomsen holds the chair of the Section for East Asian Art at the Institute of Art History, University of Zurich. He received his PhD in Japanese art history and archaeology from Princeton University on a dissertation on the intercultural art of the Japanese artist Itō Jakuchū (1716 – 1800). After teaching at the University of Chicago and other universities in the USA, he received the present position in 2007. Since then he has engaged in a series of museum surveys throughout Switzerland and southern Germany, culminating in numerous publications and exhibitions. For his services in spreading awareness of Japanese culture, he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun by the Japanese Emperor in 2017.

Introduction

For reasons first noted by Madeleine Herren, large numbers of Japanese bronze bells can be found in Swiss museums, reflecting a striking intersection of the global and the local: global in terms of their travels across the globe and modes of transport, and local in the distinctly different way that they were received in the places of their departure and arrival.[1] The focus in Switzerland has been on their materiality and, in the case of one specific bell, on symbolizing international cooperation. As we will see, the bells underwent a series of changes in meaning through their travels, and have come to reflect the local cultural background. In order to properly understand the changes undergone by these bronze bells, it is necessary to have a closer look at the functions and meanings in their country of origin, Japan.[2]

History and function of bells

From the very beginning, bronze bells were a fundamental part of East Asian Buddhist temple planning. Temple bells were used to ring out certain ceremonies and the times of the day, for the monks as well as for the surrounding communities. Japanese traditions surrounding temple bells originally came from China and the Korean peninsula in the 6th century. According to research by Shinya Isogawa 五十川伸矢, the oldest Japanese examples, based on examples from the Asian mainland, were made in the 7th century. In the following centuries, temple bells were made across East Asia, in a creative cross-cultural exchange of styles, techniques, and inscriptions; Japanese receptions of other traditions can readily be seen in early examples.[3]

The oldest extant dated Japanese example is the Myōshinji Temple 妙心寺 bell, which is inscribed with the year 697.[4] However, archaeological evidence of earlier bronze bell castings has been found in several Japanese locations. While specialists agree that Japanese casting did not predate the 7th century, there are documentary records of early importations of bells, such as the entry in

1 See Madeleine Herren, "'Very Old Chinese Bells, a Large Number of Which Were Melted Down.' Art, Trade, and Materiality in the Global Transformations of Japanese Bells," Global Europe – Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective, no. 120 (2021): 37–54.

2 The acknowledged scholar of Japanese bronze temple bells is Ryōhei Tsuboi 坪井良平 (1897–1984), who published extensively on bronze bells across East Asia. Especially well known are his *Nihon no bonshō* 日本の梵鐘 (1970) *Nihon koshōmei shūsei* 日本古鐘銘集成 (1972), *Chōsengane* 朝鮮鐘 (1974) as well as his posthumous *Bonshō to kōkogaku* 梵鐘と考古学 (1989) and *Bonshō no kenkyū* 梵鐘の研究 (1991). Among living scholars of East Asian bronze bells, the most notable is Shinya Isogawa 五十川伸矢 (see footnote 3).

3 See Shinya Isogawa, *Higashi Ajia bonshō seisanshi no kenkyū* 東アジア梵鐘生産史の研究, Tokyo: Iwata Shoin 岩田書院, 2016. For a western-language text, see his "Casting Sites of Bronze Bell and Iron Kettle in Ancient and Medieval Japan," *ISIJ International* 54, no. 5 (2014): 1123–1130, https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/isijinternational/54/5/54_1123/_pdf.

4 This bell was not originally made for this temple, but arrived from the no longer existent Pure Land temple Jōkon Gōin 浄金剛院.

the annual *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, dated 562, that describes the return of a Japanese warrior from the Goguryeo kingdom on the Korean peninsula with spoils of war that included, among other objects, three bronze bells.[5]

Careful studies have been conducted on the techniques used to cast the bronze bells and in the cross-cultural receptions across the centuries. Needless to say, highly advanced techniques were required, not only for the bells to deliver sounds with the perfect pitch, but also to create aesthetically pleasing bells, complete with inscriptions and decorations.[6] The peak of Japanese bronze bell production occurred during the Edo period (1615 – 1867), during which time an estimated 30,000 large bronze bells were made for temples in locations across the country.[7] Early modern advances in casting techniques led to a proliferation of motifs and forms.

As can be guessed by the sheer number of bells, there was a wide range of terminology and functions. For the purposes of this paper, we will divide the bronze bells into two groups; the *bonshō* 梵鐘 and the *hanshō* 半鐘.[8] Both types were made of cast bronze, using the lost wax method and made in foundries specializing in the manufacture of bells. Ornamentation on the bells include a variety of knobs, raised bands, decorative borders, and a handle in stylized dragon form.[9] Inscriptions were often included in the casting, including dates, addresses, names of sponsors and temples, and special circumstances of their production. Sections of Buddhist texts were also sometimes included in some temple bell inscriptions, and in early modern examples, the decoration came to include elaborate images, typically of Buddhist deities.

The *bonshō* were large bronze bells, placed outside in architectural structures within the temple precincts, [10] and were used to mark time and significant occasions. They were struck with a large wooden beam that was suspended by ropes. Ringing the bells resulted in deep, sonorous sounds

5 The bells were described as「銅鏤鐘三口」. See Hiroshi Sugiyama 杉山洋, *Bonshō* 「梵鐘」, Nihon no bijutsu (Shibundō)『日本の美術』355 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1995), 19 – 23. The oldest non-Japanese bronze temple bell in a Japanese collection is a Chinese bell from the Southern Chen dynasty (557 – 589), dated 575. It is presently located in the Nara National Museum, see ibid, 17.

6 Japanese temple bells have been extensively studied in terms of their musical values and acoustics. See, for example, Takuji Nakanishi, et al., "Influences of the Shapes of a Temple Bell's Parts on Acoustic Characteristics," *Acoustical Science and Technology* 25, 5 (2004): 340 – 346.

7 Sugiyama, *Bonshō*, 72 – 74.

8 Numerous other names were given for each type, for example, the *bonshō* was also called *konshō* 昏鐘, *gyōshō* 晩鐘, *tsurigane* 釣り鐘 or *ōgane* 大鐘 and the *hanshō* was also called *kanshō* 喚鐘 or *denshō* 殿鐘.

9 Dragons have long featured as functional elements in East Asian arts, appearing often as handles in various types of vessels. In this respect, contemporary Swiss records show that the foundry possessed a Japanese bronze "Sturmdrache" ("storm dragon"), of which the exact identity and present whereabouts are still unknown.

10 Buddhist bell towers were called *shōrō or shurō* 鐘楼 or *kanetsukidō* 鐘突堂.

that reverberated over long distances. The tolling of the bells was intended to function as signals to a wider population and not just for the temple inhabitants. In other words, they functioned as a projection of Buddhist authority across adjoining communities.

The *hanshō*, on the other hand, were smaller bronze bells that were originally used within the temple halls to mark times for monastic observances and rituals. Over time, however, they took on their other – and more widespread – function as municipal fire bells. These bells were usually less than 65 centimeters in height and were also made of bronze, but gave sounds of a much higher pitch note when struck. These bells were publicly displayed in tall fire towers (*hinomi yagura* 火の見櫓) and became an essential feature of cityscapes. In Edo, for example, fire bells were placed in all city wards, and were used to signal not only fire but other important events for the community. Different striking patterns were used to ring the bells, depending on the proximity of fires or other calamities; for example, the pattern would be different depending on whether the fire was close by fire or far away.

Religious and Cultural Connections

As befitting such public and visible – as well as aural – objects, bronze bells have found wide levels of resonance within Japanese culture and have become key elements in narratives, legends, and stories of heroes. This is true of both bell types, both the *bonshō* and the *hanshō*.

As for the former, the *bonshō* bell can be seen in the story of the warrior monk Benkei (1155 – 1189), a hero of the 12th century Taiheiki war narratives, about whom it is told that he single-handedly carried the huge *bonshō* bell of the Miidera Temple 三井寺 up the side of Mt Hiei, only to become so angry with the complaints from the bell that he sent it rolling down the mountain side, down to the temple (Fig 1).[11] Or in the famous medieval tale of the Dōjōji 道成寺, which has been celebrated in various formats: as historical epics, illustrated handscrolls, and as plays in *nō*, *bunraku*, and kabuki plays. In this narrative, a monk who had entered into a romantic relationship with a young girl regrets his actions and runs away from her. As she chases him through the countryside, divine powers respond to her plight by turning her into a ferocious dragon. The monk attempts to hide within the *bonshō* bell of the Dōjōji Temple, but to no avail, as the dragon

11 According to the legend, the bell kept pleading to be taken back to the temple. The Miidera Temple was also called the Onjōji Temple 園城寺. It is a Buddhist temple of the Tendai sect and located at the foot of Mount Hiei in Ōtsu City. The large scratches on the bell are explained as the damage received by the bell, as it rolled down the mountainside.

senses his presence and coils itself around the bell, burning him to a crisp (Fig. 2).[12] In addition, the bells became the stuff of poetry, such as the *bonshō* bell of the Ishiyamadera Temple 石山寺 that became part of the *Eight Views* tradition of poetry.[13] In addition *bonshō* bells appear in the visual arts,[14] popular songs,[15] and classical literature.[16]

Fig. 1. Katsukawa Shuntei (Shōkōsai) 勝川春亭, Japanese, 1770–1824. *Musashibō Benkei* 武蔵坊弁慶. Japanese, Edo period, 1811 (Bunka 8), 7th month OR 1812 (Bunka 9), 7th month. Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper. Vertical ōban; 37.4 × 25.5 cm (14 3/4 × 10 1/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Source unidentified. 2009.5008.15. Photograph © [undated] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Fig. 2. Anonymous. *The Illustrated Tale of the Dōjōji Temple* 道成寺縁起絵巻. 16th century. Handscroll section, ink and colors on paper. (Dōjōji Temple 道成寺) . Wikimedia Commons. Accessed June 2, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dojo-ji_Engi_Emaki.jpg.

12 For more on the tale, refer to: Susan Blakeley Klein. "When the Moon Strikes the Bell: Desire and Enlightenment in the Noh Play Dōjōji." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 291–322. Some versions of the tale refer to the dragon as a large snake.

13 Based on the Chinese poetic tradition of the *Eight Views of the Xiaoxiang* 瀟湘八景, which was transferred to eight views around the Biwa Lake in Japan, the idea of the *Eight Views* was endlessly repeated in visual and poetic culture of Early Modern Japan. The Ishiyamadera Temple 石山寺 bell was originally the bronze bell of the Qingliang Temple 煙寺. The woodblock print series by Utagawa Hiroshige *Eight Views of Omi* 近江八景 is particularly famous.

14 For example, Benkei and his bell became a popular topic for Japanese woodblock print artists, and numerous examples exist by artists such as Utagawa Kuniyoshi, who created numerous versions over his lifetime. This motif also became popular in Japanese folk art, such as the Ōtsu-e painting tradition.

15 A famous example being *Yūyake koyake* 夕焼小焼, a popular children's song written in 1919.

16 As examples, we may mention the famous war tale *Tales of Heike* 平家物語, which starts with the tolling of the great Gion *bonshō*, and the section on temple bells and their sounds in the "Essays in Idleness" (*Tsurezuregusa*, 徒然草), a collection of essays written between 1330 and 1332 by the monk Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好. The latter text includes a description of the above-mentioned *bonshō* in the Myōshinji Temple.

An important historical *bonshō* temple bell event is that of Hōkōji Temple 方広寺, a Kyoto temple that was constructed in 1610 and commissioned by Toyotomi Hideyori 豊臣秀頼 (1593–1615) in memory of his father, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉. The temple construction included the casting of a large *bonshō* temple bell in 1614, complete with an elaborate inscription. A clever misreading of the inscription of the temple bell became the excuse for a military attack on Hideyori by Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543 – 1616), resulting in the defeat and death of his potential rival and the consolidation of power that inaugurated the long-lasting Edo period (1615 – 1868).[17]

In addition, the *bonshō* temple bells took on supernatural properties, since the sounds of temple bells were believed to be heard in the underworld. Thus, the important Buddhist ceremonies of Obon お盆 (the welcoming back of departed spirits) and New Year (marking the rebirth of the temporal world) include the ringing of the temple bells with their connections to the supernatural world.

The *hanshō* bells have likewise become important elements of Japanese popular culture. Here, the story of Oshichi お七 is particularly famous. Her story was based on the real story of a grocer's daughter in Edo who fell in love with a young monk in a nearby temple. Spurred on by passion, she climbed up a nearby fire tower and rang the *hanshō* fire bell in the hope of seeing her lover rush out of his temple. Although she was burned at the stake as punishment, she gained immortality with her story that became one of the standard topics in Japanese theater. Her story was transformed into numerous *bunraku* and *kabuki* theater plays, and scenes of her climbing a bell tower (constructed on the theater stage) and striking the *hanshō* bell became greatly popular with audiences. In such theatric adaptations, she would again be punished with death for setting off a false alarm and causing general panic. The story was endlessly embellished and became one of the most famous narratives of the *kabuki* stage as well as in popular literature.

Interestingly, all *bonshō* and *hanshō* related stories seem to straddle the divide between the monastic and secular worlds – there seems to have been an inherently Buddhist connection to the bells, even when they were used as fire alarms.

In short, Japanese bells – of both types – should not just be seen in their basic roles as markers of time and fire. They not only became fixtures of daily life, whether in blissful peace or in dire

17 For more information on this historical event, refer to Masayoshi Kawauchi 河内将芳. *Hideyoshi no Daibutsu zōritsu, shiriizu kenryokusha to bukkyō* 秀吉の大仏造立・シリーズ権力者と仏教. Kyoto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 2008.

emergencies, but contained deeper religious and cultural meanings that carried over into theater, literature, and popular entertainment of the period. In this way they became essential parts of the lives and contexts of early modern Japanese citizens, in terms of both visual and aural culture, and, additionally, in terms of the popular imagination. Whether in the cities (for both types) or in the countryside (for the *bonshō*) the bells carried a whole range of meanings that would have been intelligible to most Japanese at the time.

Examples in Switzerland

In order to get a clearer impression of what the bells brought to Switzerland can tell us, let us look at two examples. One is housed in a Swiss museum collection, and another we can see on a photograph from the 1870s.

The museum example is a *bonshō* bronze bell in the collection of Museum der Kulturen in Basel (Fig. 3).[18] The bell is dated the 21st day of the twelfth month of 1732.[19] It was made for a no longer extant Zen Buddhist temple, Konzenji 金禅寺, located in Edo in the present-day Shibuya ward.[20] The bell is inscribed with a Buddhist verse, the so-called *Meijōge* 鳴鐘偈 verse, which stems from a Chinese Song-period commentary that was traditionally chanted while striking the *bonshō* bell, just before the daily assembly of monks. Thus, the verse can not only be read on the bell, it can also be heard in a chanted form by the monk who strikes the bell. The chant and the bell's inscription are read as follows:

> May all Buddhists enter the
> same place for Buddhist services.
> May all suffering people leave the world of suffering
> and enter Paradise at the same time.
> 願諸賢聖 同人道場 願諸惡趣 俱時離苦[21]

18 The museum accession number is Ild 408. The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Stephanie Lovasz.
19 「享保十七年臘月二十一日」.
20 The full name of the temple was: Rei'inzan Shūchōzan Konzenji 霊隠山就鳥山金禅寺 and the address was Lower Shibuya, Toyohiro District, Bushū Province 武州豊鴻郡下渋谷. The latter is described as a busy market area during the mid-Edo period. See: Noriyuki Shimizu 清水教行 and Takasuke Watanabe 渡辺貴介, "A Study of the Characteristics and Transformation of Market Places in Edo 江戸における広場的空間の特性と変遷に関する研究," *Historical Studies in Civil Engineering* 土木史研究 10 (1990): 103 – 112, https://doi.org/10.2208/journalhs1990.10.103.
21 The source of the text is the *Si Fen Lu Xingshi Chao Zi Chi Ji* 四分律行事鈔資持記, A commentary on the *Dharmaguputaka Vinaya* by the Song-dynasty monk Yuanzhao 元照. Junjirō Takakusu 高楠順次郎, ed., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, vol. 40, no. 1805 (Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Kankōkai, 1988), http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T40n1805.

Fig. 3. *Japanese Bronze Bells*. Museum der Kulturen, Basel. Photograph by author.

Fig. 4. *Detail of* bonshō *bell, showing the jō* 上 *character*. Museum der Kulturen, Basel. Photograph by author.

Fig. 5. *Detail of* bonshō *bell, showing Roman numerals*. Museum der Kulturen, Basel. Photograph by author.

Interestingly, in addition to the above inscriptions, the bell comes with several later marks, which were likely added both before and after its arrival in Switzerland. On its very top, the bell is marked with the Japanese character *jō* 上, which in this context probably means "good quality" (Fig. 4). In addition, the Roman numeral XXXIII has been carved into the bronze, using a mechanical tool (Fig. 5). This was likely done after its arrival in Switzerland, perhaps at the foundry, as it was numbered in

preparation for being melted down. There are also Arabic numerals brushed in white paint on the inside of the bell.[22] Thus the bell carries numerous inscriptions and marks, added by different persons in different countries and at different times, attesting to the complex biography of this object.

The other *bonshō* bell can be seen on right side of the photograph of the Rüetschi Foundry (Fig. 6), featuring the Shinagawa Bell at the time of its discovery by Gustave-Philippe Revilliod (1817 – 1890). Whereas the Shinagawa bell survived being melted down, the fates of the other two bells in the photograph are still unknown. In fact, this photograph might be the only trace of their existence. The inscription on the photograph in the Staatsarchiv Aarau is especially informative: "724a. Ancient Chinese [sic] Bells, a large numbers of which were melted down in the bell-foundry Rüetschi in Aarau (1873). No. 16. The biggest [bell] is presently in the Museum Revilliod in Geneva (Museé Ariana)."[23] The bell to the right is interesting, however, from the inscription that we can see in the photograph (possible inscriptions on the back side of the bell are unfortunately unknown).

The *bonshō* bell is interesting for its connection to a noted Edo temple and a specific historical person. Next to the central band with the Buddhist mantra "Hail to the Amida Buddha 南無阿弥陀仏," we see the inscription: "38th abbot of the Zōjōji Temple 増上寺三十八主," and the phrase: "[Made] at the request of the great *sōjō* Byakuzui 大僧正白隨意."[24] Significantly, on the extreme left we see a prominently placed cipher (*kakihan* 書判), or signature, of the monk Byakuzui.[25]

Enyo Byakuzui 演誉白隨 (1656 – 1730) was a leading Japanese monk of the eighteenth century. Born in the Ise province, he became one of the more influential Pure Land Buddhist monks of the early Edo period. After serving in a variety of positions in the Zōjōji Temple in Edo, he became its *gakuto*, the monk in charge of the education of the temple's monks. Eventually he became the 38th abbot of the Zōjōji Temple in 1717 and retired nine years later in 1726. During his rule, he firmly established the primacy of the temple in Edo by cementing the connections between the temple and the Shogunate by successfully orchestrating the first and third death anniversary ceremonies of the departed Shōgun Tokugawa Ietsugu (1709 – 1716), resulting in the donation of

22 Similar marks (the "good quality" mark, the Roman numeral, and the interior paint mark) feature on several of the extant bells in Swiss museum collections. One may conclude that they were all part of the same batch of bells brought to Switzerland at the same time.

23 "724a. Uralte chin. Glocken, von welchen eine grosse Anzahl in der Glockengiesserei Rüetschi in Aarau eingeschmolzen wurden. No. 16. Die grösste befindet sich in Museum Revilliod in Genf (Museé Ariana)." Anonymous photographer, *China, Uralte chinesische Glocken, 1890*, photograph on albumin paper, F.MG/2320, Staatsarchiv Aargau. See also Herren, "Japanese Bells," 43.

24 The *sōjō* 僧正 was one of the three highest ranks for Buddhist monks.

25 Although admittedly unclear from the photograph, there appears to be a Roman numeral on the top of this bell.

large land holdings to the temple from the following Shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684 – 1751). Byakuzui was important in the institutional history of the temple and was also engaged in reconstructing the great gate of the temple, in addition to other buildings within the Zōjōji Temple and in other associated temples.

Fig. 6. The Shinagawa Bell and Two Other Bells at the Rüetschi Foundry, Aarau. Anonymous photographer. *China, Uralte chinesische Glocken*, 1890. Photograph on albumin paper. F.MG/2320. Staatsarchiv Aargau.

He was also a promoter of the arts and sponsored an elaborate embroidery made in the form of the famous Taima Mandara. This embroidery has been designated a Cultural Property of Meguro City and is presently located in the Yūtenji Temple. The donation by Byakuzui of the embroidery is dated 1728, two years after retiring from his temple post.

The fact that Byakuzui's cipher appears on the bell indicates that it was created during his lifetime, perhaps soon after his retirement.[26] As he ordered the aforementioned embroidery to be made after his retirement, this likely became a time of involvement in the arts. In this way, the bell is significant for the information it provides on one of the most influential Buddhist monks of his time. The bells brought from Japan were not merely discarded bells, on the contrary, many were of high technical quality and exquisite craftmanship and carried cultural significance.

Movement across the World

So why were they let go? Why were these culturally significant objects, some of which had been part of local communities over centuries, sent overseas? The most famous bell, namely the so-called Shinagawa Bell, might be instructive in understanding this question. A number of more or less plausible explanations have been given for the disappearance of the bell from its Japanese temple, the Hōsenji Temple in Shinagawa, where it had rung since the seventeenth century, but there have been no definitive answers. The main explanation issued by the temple suggests that the bell disappeared after being shown at the World Exposition in Paris (1867) or Vienna (1873).[27] As Madeleine Herren has pointed out, a publicly displayed object weighing over a ton does not simply disappear without notice. Nor would the government of Japan have sent a prominent Buddhist object to represent the country at the highpoint of Buddhist suppression in Japan. The removal of the bell remains a puzzle, since this was no minor object, but one that had kept the time for the surrounding populace over centuries. The more likely explanation for the disappearing *bonshō* seems rather to have been, as least in part, financial; that is, the bell was let go in order to gather funds at a difficult time for Japanese Buddhist temples. As James Ketelaar has described, during the early Meiji years, ca. 1868 – 1874, Japanese Buddhism experienced severe suppression in contrast to the Shinto religion, which

26 *Bonshō* bells were usually dated and the date of this bell was likely inscribed on its (unseen) back.

27 This is the explanation in the temple's homepage, yet there is no evidence of their being shown at either of these occasions. Other explanations have also been given, such as a fire burning down the bell tower, or (in a *kamishibai* theater piece aimed at children) that the bell suddenly disappeared one night. That the bell might have been sold for badly needed funds does not appear as a possible reason on any of the sites associated with the temple.

was declared the national religion of Japan.[28] This turn of events led to the disappearance of political and financial support for Buddhist temples, a process that was further aggravated by the ongoing restructuring of Japanese society and the resulting loss of funding from the now powerless *daimyō* warlords and the recently abolished samurai class. This was also the time when Buddhist statuary, paintings, and other ritual objects flowed in large numbers to western institutions such as the Musée Guimet in Paris and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It should be noted, however, that western founders of museums, such as William Sturgis Bigelow and Émile Étienne Guimet, did not import temple bells together with their statues and other Buddhist objects.[29] Nevertheless, the suppression led to the closing and consolidation of temples, which in turn led to bronze bells appearing on the domestic art market – above all, in antique shops. As for what happened to them afterwards, the author refers the reader to the article by Madeleine Herren, who suggests that they were exported as scrap metal to be melted down for their metal value in Switzerland, with an intermediary function as ballast for ships.[30]

And there were certainly bells that seem to have been brought to Switzerland in order to be melted down, for example the damaged bell in the collection of the Naturmuseum in Winterthur[31] (Fig. 7). The bell has traces of misfiring, and has several holes in its body. It seems logical to conclude that this piece was not purchased in order to be shown in museum exhibitions, but for its material value. How it arrived here is not known, other than it was donated by the Historisch-antiquarische Verein Winterthur, an organization that was established in 1874 as one of the many societies that sprang up in late nineteenth-century Switzerland for the promotion of local industries and the arts.

But what of the *hanshō*, bells that would have seemed essential for the prevention of fire in Japanese metropolitan centers? Surely this was unrelated to the suppression of Buddhism. Here, we may notice that all the *hanshō* that have been discovered so far in Swiss museum collections stem from the city of Edo. Edo saw a massive change in the make-up of its municipal structure following the Meiji regime change, as hundreds of *daimyō* and *hatamoto* residences in the center of the city were dissembled, leaving open spaces in the city where the warlords and the merchants and other persons catering to them had previously lived. Two *hanshō* examples in

28 James Ketelaar, Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). See also Martin Collcutt, "Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication," in Marius Janson and Gilbert Rozman, eds., Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 143 – 67.

29 The large number of Japanese bronze bells in Swiss museums makes them stand out in global contexts.

30 Here it should also be noted, as Madeleine Herren points out, that Japanese metalwork enjoyed a very high reputation in nineteenth century texts on metallurgy. See Herren, "Japanese Bells," 46.

31 The museum was renamed from its earlier manifestation as the Ethnographische Sammlung Winterthur ("Ethnographic Collection of Winterthur"). The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Natalie Chaoui.

Switzerland (in Basel Museum der Kulturen and Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel) stem from such Edo city wards (Tatamichō 畳町 and Udagawachō 宇多川町) where the disappearance of a large share of the local population likely led to the disassembly of fire towers and sale of the fire bells to Japanese art dealers, who then sold them to foreign buyers.

Fig. 7. *Japanese bronze bell.* Naturmuseum Winterthur. Photograph by author.

Swiss Receptions

So, what did the Swiss in Yokohama see in these bells? Let us briefly take a look at a seemingly very different example – namely, the Kamakura Daibutsu 鎌倉大仏 (Fig. 8). This monumental bronze sculpture of the Amida Buddha has become world famous and is often used as a representation of Japanese Buddhist sculpture in western popular literature on Japan. Yet this is not only a modern phenomenon. During the late nineteenth century, the Daibutsu held an enormous appeal for the westerners in Yokohama, partially through the proximity to their home, but also due to what Prof Hiroyuki Suzuki has described as its similarity to European objects.[32] In Europe, large bronze statuary in public places was commonplace and could be found in all metropolitan centers, where they have long celebrated famous personages, historical rulers, legendary and religious figures, among many other subjects. It made sense for the westerners to think of the Daibutsu in similar terms; this can also be seen in the way they treated the Buddhist figure in early photographs. Ironically, the present appearance of the Daibutsu as a figure in the open was due to a tsunami in 1498, which washed away the enclosing building and left the figure exposed without its original architectural enclosure. The decision not to rebuild the structure ironically became a key reason for the resulting popularity of the figure in the nineteenth century, as well as into the present. As a result of a historical accident, the appearance of the exposed sculpture was accepted as being quite normal in Western eyes.

Fig. 8. Anonymous photographer. *Kamakura Daibutsu With Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ziegler of Winterthur*. Photograph on albumin paper, 1870s. University of Zurich, Section for East Asian Art.

32 Hiroyuki Suzuki, "The Buddha of Kamakura and the 'Modernization' of Buddhist Statuary in the Meiji Period," *Transcultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 140 – 158, https://doi.org/10.11588/ts.2011.1.7332.

In general, we tend to respond to objects from other cultures based on our own cultural backgrounds. This can be seen in the abovementioned case of the Daibutsu and also in the other objects collected by the Swiss merchants in late nineteenth-century Japan. As I have argued elsewhere, the Swiss museums possess a remarkable wealth of Japanese objects, taken home by Swiss merchants who had been active in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[33] The Swiss were typically long-time residents of Japan who often knew the language, were aware of the arts and culture of Japan and collected accordingly. What then did they bring back and which of these objects have been exhibited? First of all – weapons. The Swiss have had a long fascination with weapons of all kinds as aesthetic objects and have often shown them in museum exhibitions, with a large range of examples from western and non-western cultures.[34] Japanese weapons were especially popular, as they matched a general fascination with the Japanese samurai.[35] Likewise the *tsuba* sword guard has been a consistently collected and exhibited object in Swiss museums.

Or we may look at the Buddhist statuary that has consistently taken the place of representing Japan in museums. And not just older statues from the Heian and Kamakura periods, but also from more recent periods, as can be seen in the displayed examples from the late Edo period at the Historical Museum of Bern. The western attraction to Buddhist sculpture may be explained through the long-time fascination for Japanese Buddhism, ranging from the fantastical descriptions of Buddhism in early western books by Montanus, Kaempfer, and others to more recent appreciations through the widespread interest in Zen Buddhism.

Or we may look at the fascination for *nō* and *kyōgen* masks, deposited and exhibited in a wide range of Swiss museums, especially the notable Reinhart collection in the Museum Rietberg.[36] The interest in Japanese masks echoes a wider appreciation of masks from various cultures; exhibitions

33 Hans Bjarne Thomsen, "Japanese Collections in Switzerland," in *Siebold's Vision of Japan: As Seen in Japan-Related Collections of the West*, ed. National Museum of Japanese History (Sakura: National Museum of Japanese History, 2015), 89 – 98 and 273 – 280.

34 The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a great interest in modern western-made weapons from the Japanese side, as pointed out in a recent article by Harald Fuess ("The Global Weapons Trade and the Meiji Restoration," in *The Meiji Restoration: Japan as a Global Nation*, eds. Harald Fuess and Robert Hellyer (London: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 83 – 110; or online: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108775762.005). The difference here is that the Japanese interest focused on actual warfare, while the Swiss enjoyed the aesthetic aspects of weapons. I thank Madeleine Herren for pointing my attention to this article.

35 For example, in the recently re-installed exhibition of the Burgdorf Castle Museum, a large glass case displays weapons from various cultures, with an emphasis on medieval Switzerland and the Japanese samurai – as evidenced by the life-sized figures of a medieval knight in armor, and a samurai, likewise clad in a full set of amour. See "Cabinets of Curiosities and Thematic Rooms," Schloss Burgdorf, accessed April 6, 2021, https://schloss-burgdorf.ch/en/museum/exhibitions/.

36 Brigitt Bernegger, *Nō-Masken im Museum Rietberg Zürich: Die Schenkung Balthasar und Nanni Reinhart*, (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 1993) – see also: Hans Bjarne Thomsen, "Nō Masks in Japanese Culture," in *Fliessende Welt, verborgene Schönheit: Schätze aus Japan*, ed. Jeanne Egloff (St Gallen: Historisches und Völkerkundemuseum St Gallen, 2014), 46 – 57.

of masks from various places in the world have been a constant feature of western museum exhibitions – for example, the Rietberg Museum in Zurich shows not only Japanese masks but also those from African cultures and even Swiss carnival masks in its permanent exhibitions. Around the time of the early Swiss settlers in Japan, a clear interest in Japanese masks could also be seen in publications from western dealers and scholars.[37] Masks are universal, easily displayed, and easily explained – at least superficially in terms of their materiality and their formal aspects.

But let us come back to an example that does not fit so well into this rubric, namely the temple bells of Japan. As Madeleine Herren has pointed out, her present research has shown that many of these were imported into Switzerland during the 1870s onwards as ship ballast and with the intention of being melted down, until an awareness of the fine craftmanship apparently stopped the process. The so-called Shinagawa Bell from the Hōsenji Temple is an interesting case in point, as seen in the famous 1872 photograph from the Rüetschi Foundry (Fig. 6).[38] As a result of a rescue operation by still unknown persons or institutions, a significant number of these finely constructed, exquisitely made objects are now stored in Swiss museum collections.

But why did the Swiss in Japan choose to not send back temple bells with their prodigious collections of Japanese art? The early Swiss Japanese residents were of course aware of these objects – how could they ignore them, living in Japanese cities and hearing the sounds every day and viewing the bells in temples? We also know that they recorded their visits to large and significant Japanese temple bells in their writing and photographs, for example, the monumental Chion'in temple bell in Kyoto (Fig. 9).[39] And, just as with the Kamakura Daibutsu or with the *nō* masks, there must have been an immediate sense of cross-cultural recognition for the foreigners, as they compared the temple bells with the church bells of Europe that also rang out over western congregations and marked time and significant occasions. The comparison between East Asian bronze bells with European church bells is also not just a 19th century phenomenon. See for example the comparison between the great bronze bells of Beijing with the church bell in "Erford," Germany ("the largest in Europe") in Kirchner's 1667 book.[40]

37 See for example, the Parisian dealer Siegfried Bing's journal *Le Japon artistique* (1888 – 1891) and the groundbreaking research by Friedrich Perzynski in his two-volume text, *Japanische Masken*. (Berlin/Leipzig: De Gruyter, 1925).

38 See photograph taken at the foundry in 1872 (Fig. 6 here and fig. 1 in Herren, "Japanese Bells," 41.) Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, ed., *Le bouddhisme de Madame Butterfly: Le japonisme bouddhique*. (Milan/Geneva: Silvana MEG, 2015), 81. Photographs of this scene can be found in a number of archives, including the Rüetschi Foundry and the Staatsarchiv Aarau.

39 Or the Daibutsu temple bell in Kyoto, ibid., 37.

40 See Athanasius Kirchner, *China illustrata*, 1667. It seems that Erfurt was intended.

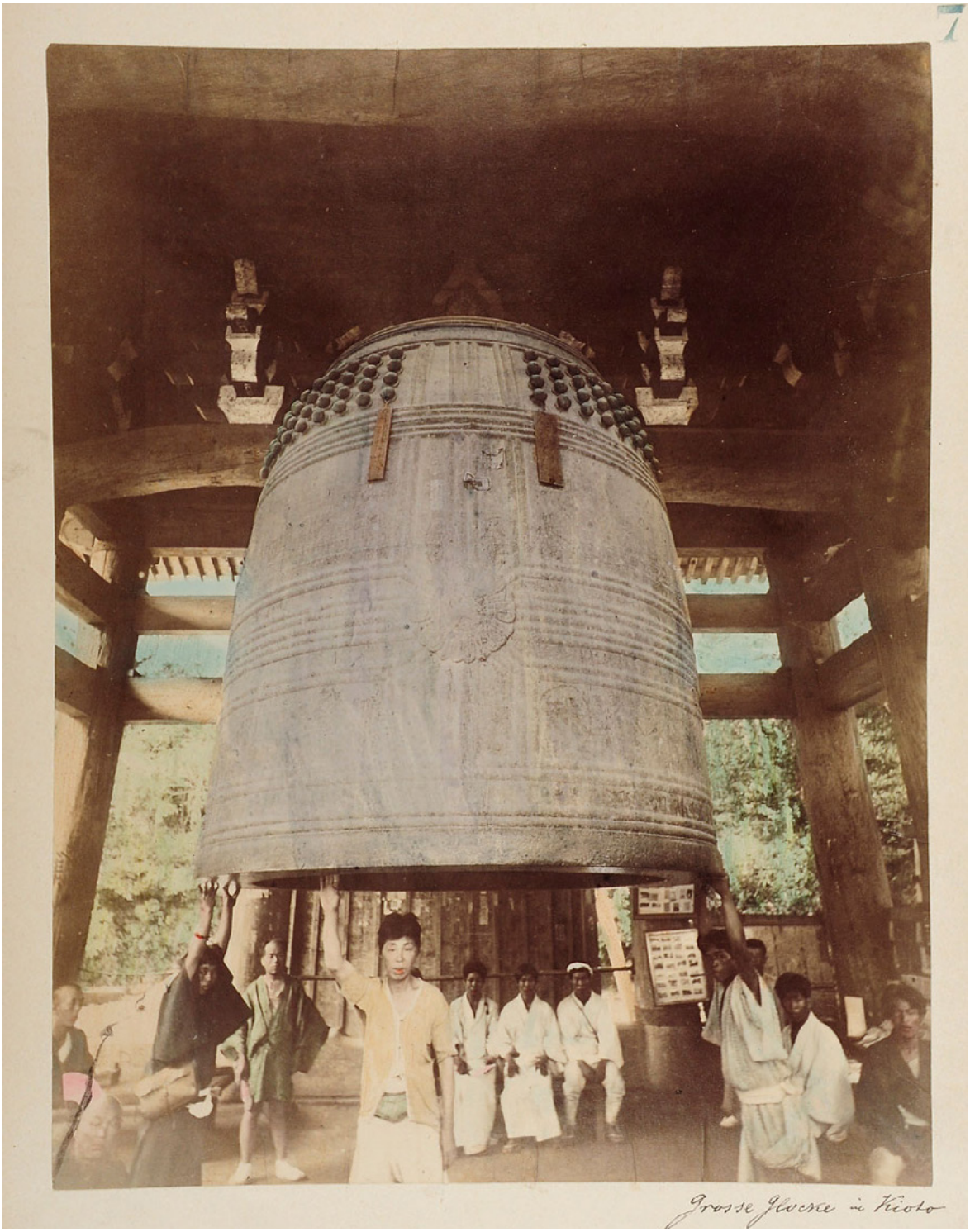

Fig. 9. Anonymous photographer. *Grosse Glocke in Kioto*. Photograph on albumin paper, 1893. P1984.447. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

But despite the awareness of Japanese bells and an understanding of their function (at least on the surface), there is no indication that the bells were actually exhibited in Swiss museums, next to the swords, Buddhist sculpture and masks. And this was in spite of the large numbers of bells in Swiss museum storage and the obvious care with which the bells had been made. And, in addition, despite the many cultural and religious connections that the bells had in Japan. I would argue that the lack of a display history is partly due to the fact that there were no western traditions of exhibiting church bells in museums.[41] That is, unlike statuary, masks and weapons, there were no local traditions of displaying bronze bells.[42] This might also have been a factor that discouraged the Swiss from collecting the bells in Japan, despite their appearance in antique shops. Although the Swiss residents of Yokohama no doubt strove to live up to international vogues, such as the fascination with Buddhism, they still tended to understand Japanese culture in a personal and/or domestic way, based on their own cultural perspectives. And although discussions about globalization often assume that human reactions are basically similar from place to place and from time to time, we see that this is not always the case.

And here we might remember that although Gustave-Philippe Revilliod famously saved the Shinagawa Bell from being melted down, he did not take smaller bells back with him to Geneva, nor did he treat the Shinagawa Bell as an art object by placing it within his museum, but placed the large bell outside, in a public park, in the tradition of western public sculpture. Although he surely recognized the great craftsmanship of the Shinagawa Bell, it was still categorized within his own cultural upbringing: the proper place for such an object was in a public outdoor display, one that the bell would hold in common with western public statuary as well as with the Daibutsu of Kamakura.

41 Likely also related to the fact that disused church bells were melted down for their metal value. This was especially so in the two world wars. See, for example: "Glockenfriedhof," Wikipedia, accessed April 20, 2021, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glockenfriedhof. See also: Paul Clemen, ed., *Kunstschutz im Kriege* (Leipzig: E.A. Seeman, 1919), 18 – 221, https://archive.org/details/kunstschutzimkri02clem/page/221/mode/2up. I thank Madeleine Herren for this information.

42 The cracked Philadelphia Liberty Bell being the exception that proves the rule. "The Liberty Bell," National Park Service, accessed April 20, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/stories-libertybell.htm. Recently, an exhibition at the new extension of the Kunsthaus Zürich has provided another exception. The artist William Forsythe, in his exhibition "The Sense of Things," has installed two old church bells in the still-empty rooms. The aural reception of the periodic tolling of the bells creates different tonalities, depending on one's location in the large building. According to the artist, the ringing of the bells should bring forth thoughts of war and the many German church bells melted down for the war effort: "Die Glocken sind für mich wie Geister der Geschichte europäischer Konflikte." ("For me, the bells are like ghosts of the history of European conflicts.") Lilo Weber, "William Forsythe am Kunsthaus Zürich: 'Glocken sind für mich wie Geister der Geschichte europäischer Konflikte.'" *Neue Zürcher Zeitung Online*, April 22, 2021, https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/william-forsythe-am-kunsthaus-zuerich-so-klingen-chipperfields-raeume-ld.1613138.

Postscript

Stories from the aftermath of the Second World War form some interesting parallels with the events in Switzerland during the 1870s. As in many premodern wars, the melting down of metals became necessary for the war effort and for the construction of airplanes, cannons, and other weapons of war. This was also the case in Germany, where a large number of objects, including church bells, were collected, not only from German cities, but also in the conquered regions (Fig. 10). In Japan, a stupendous number of metal objects, from cooking pots to temple bells, were collected throughout the country from 1941 onward. One expert estimates that 45,000 *bonshō* bells were collected and melted down during the period of just four years.[43] A poignant image of a bonsho bell being lowered down into molten metal can be seen in a Japanese war-time journal (Fig. 11). The irony is that the bronze bells that had been sent to Switzerland in order to be melted down but were instead saved, would likely have met their end in the foundries of Japan a good half century later, had they not been shipped to Switzerland for their scrap value.

Fig. 10. German bells at Hamburg harbour, to be melted down in the war effort. Anonymous photographer. *Hamburg, Glockenlager im Freihafen*. 1947. Bild 183-H26751. Deutsches Bundesarchiv. Accessed June 2, 2021. https://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de/dba/de/search/?query=-Bild+183-H26751. License: Creative Commons CC-BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/de/legalcode).

43 Sugiyama 杉山洋, Bonshō『梵鐘』, 75. The number of German church bells taken to be melted down during WWII was also 45,000, in addition to the ones taken from conquered territories.

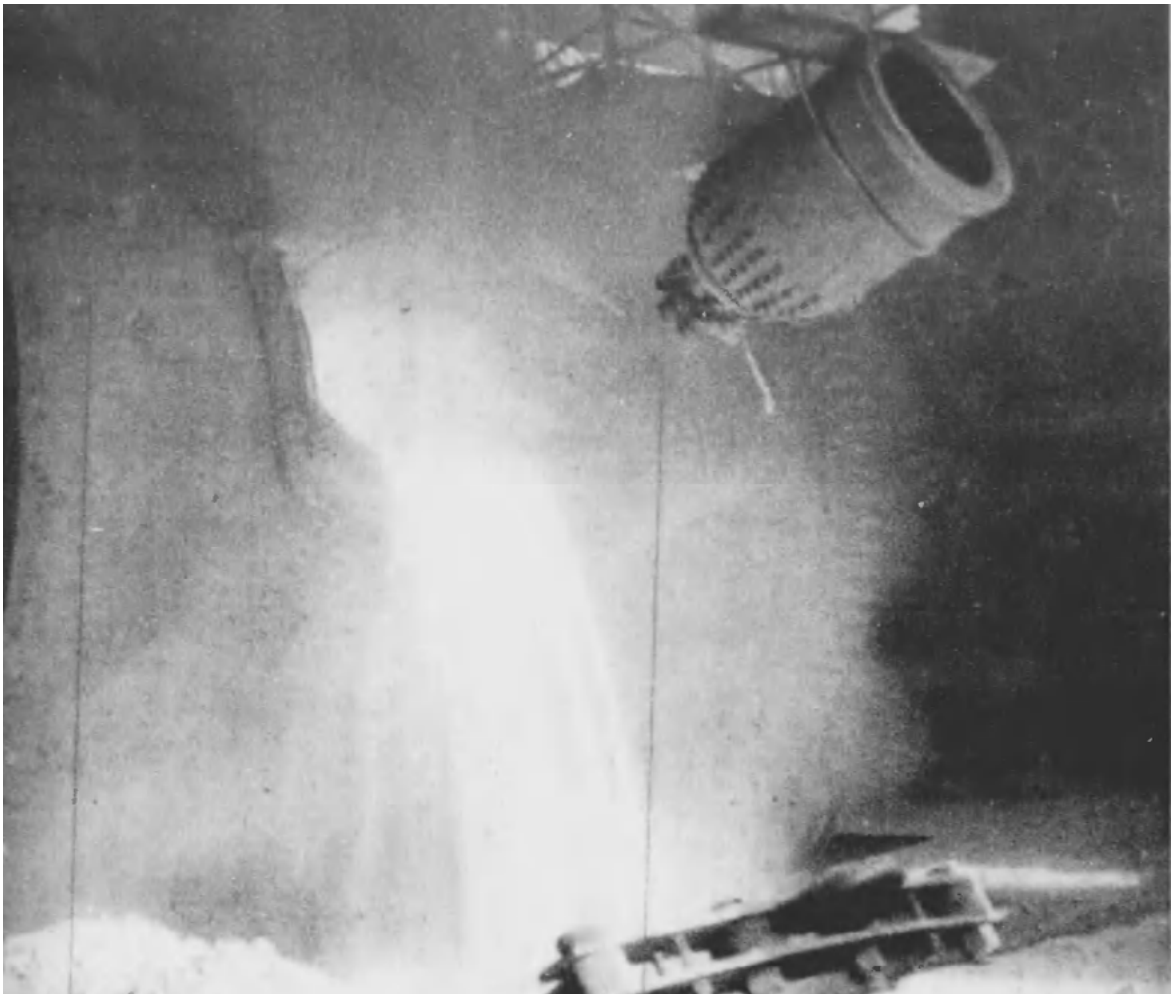

Fig. 11. Anonymous photographer. Bonshō *temple bell being lowered into molten metal at a Japanese foundry*. Source: *Shashin Shūhō* 写真週報 255 (Jan 20, 1943), 17. National Archives of Japan, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records.

The logistics for this wartime collecting action were remarkable, with train cars arriving filled with temple bells, destined to be melted into tanks, aircraft, and an array of other weapons, in a reversal of making swords into plowshares. Numerous photographs exist of local communities, often showing monks and abbots clad in festive gear, standing proudly in front of temple bells and other bronze ritual objects that were marked for destruction (Fig. 12). The Japanese military claimed to be aware of the cultural value of the bells and declared that certain bells were exempt, namely bells made prior to the last year of the Keichō era (1596 – 1615) as well as culturally important bells.[44] The Shinagawa Bell, which had returned to Japan and had escaped destruction during the war, presumably fell into the latter category due to its patriotic background, namely as a Japanese object that had been brought back from the west.

44 Ibid. This was the "Kinzokurui kaishūrei" 金属類回収令 ("Law on the Collection of Metals") issued by the Japanese government on August 30, 1941.

Fig. 12. Anonymous photographer. *Donation to the War Effort by a Local Japanese community*. Date: 1943. Accessed June 2, 2021. https://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~un3k-mn/hondo-kinzokubon.htm.

Of special interest are two groups of people that entered the abandoned foundries directly after the end of the war. One was a group of temple bell specialists, including the aforementioned scholar Ryōhei Tsuboi who visited a foundry[45] in Osaka and found a prodigious number of bells, prepared to be melted down.[46] The above-mentioned military guidelines had apparently often been ignored, as among these bells were important pieces made in the early Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). After careful detective work, Tsuboi and his associates succeeded in returning the bells to their temples – the ones that had come from defunct temples were, for example, donated to nearby temples. It was a painstaking act of restoration to original functions, where bells were placed in temples that had lost their bells due to the war effort.[47]

The other group that entered the foundries at the war's end were American sailors who took Japanese bronze bells back with them as spoils of war. The bells were loaded onto navy ships and ended up in display at public sites in the USA, for example, the *bonshō* temple bell that stemmed from the Manpukuji Temple in Sendai was taken back by Capt. Marion Kelley of the USS Boston, who brought

45 The name of the foundry was Kinzoku Tōsei Kaishū Kaisha 金属統制回収会社.
46 Similar images can be seen in German sites after the war, for example, the Glockenfriedhof ("Bell Graveyard") in Hamburg Harbor. See fig. 10.
47 These efforts are detailed in ibid, 75 – 76.

it back with him in 1946 and donated it to the city of Boston. It became the Temple Bell of Boston and was placed in the Back Bay Fens. And the *bonshō* temple bell that stemmed from the Nishiarai Daishi Temple in Tokyo was taken to the USA by the sailors of the USS Pasadena, who donated it to the city of Pasadena. Most of the bells were eventually discovered and, in a similar way as with the Shinagawa Bell, requests for restoration subsequently came from the Japanese. As a result, the above examples were mostly given back to grateful temple communities in Japan.[48] An exception was the Boston Bell, which the Manpukuji Temple decided to give to the city of Boston as a gesture of goodwill.[49]

A striking aspect of the examples seen in this article is the movement of Japanese bronze bells, from Japan to Switzerland and from Japan to the USA; we see them as global commodities, moving from place to place and valued primarily for their materiality. Being saved from being melted down in foundries in both the east and the west, they came to take on new, culturally significant roles in their new countries of adoption.[50] Through their travels and placement in new contexts, the bells underwent a series of significant changes in meaning, and have come to reflect the local cultural background. Although material objects can travel freely around the globe, local traditions and meanings connected with objects often have, in the end, little or no mobility.

48 Another interesting case that spanned centuries was the *bonshō* temple bell cast in 1690 for the Genkakuji Temple 源覚寺 in present-day Tokyo. The bell was in use at the temple until 1844, when the bell tower burned down. From then it remained unused until 1937 when it was given to the Nanyōji Temple 南洋寺 in Saipan, on an island chain that had been given to Japan in 1919 and which housed a significant Japanese population. During the ferocious Battle of Saipan in July 1944, the temple burned down and the bell suffered bullet holes and shrapnel damage, and disappeared shortly thereafter, only to reappear in the USA. After its discovery, the original temple in Tokyo, where the bell had last rung in 1844, asked for its "return," which occurred through a donation in 1974. ("For Him the Bell Tolls," *The Rotarian* (May, 1976), 50) A new bell tower was built in 1982 and the bell is now called "The Pan-Pacific Bell" 汎太平洋の鐘.

49 The narrative of the Boston Peace Bell, produced in 1675, is not without drama. In 2004 the bell was taken off its stand and rolled through the streets of Boston in an attempted theft. The bell was restored in 2011 by Japanese craftsmen and securely placed on a newly refurbished stand and can be seen today in the Boston Park.

50 Other global movements of Japanese bronze bells include the bells that were used as diplomatic presents – a large bronze temple bell was, for example, among the gifts presented to Commodore Matthew Perry during the exchange of presents in Japan. This bell can be found in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. See: Chang-su Houchins. *Artifacts of Diplomacy: Smithsonian Collections from Commodore Matthew Perry's Japan Expedition (1853 – 1854)* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995). Giving a *bonshō* as a present was a significant gesture by the Shogunate, as it demonstrated how temple bells were understood by the Japanese as being deeply representative, vis-à-vis the foreigners, of their own culture. Modern expressions of the gifting of bronze bells can be seen in the so-called Peace Bells that were given to various countries across the world by the Japanese World Peace Bell Association. The most famous being the bell placed in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York and the controversial Peace Bell placed in Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee, the birthplace of the atomic bomb. For the latter, see Jasmine Lar Tang, "Atomic Hospitality: Asian Migrant Scientist Meets the U.S. South" (Unpublished PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2013).

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Madeleine Herren

"Very old Chinese bells, a large number of which were melted down." Art, Trade, and Materiality in the Global Transformations of Japanese Bells

Abstract: In the second half of the 19th century, Buddhist bells from Japan began to arrive in Switzerland. The fact that these were objects listed in the so-called ethnographic collections is not surprising and the history of collecting has been a subject of postcolonial research. However, remarkably, the travel route of these bells, some of which weighed over a ton, could not be documented. Until now, the way how the bells were imported into Switzerland was unknown, and the problem of their provenance unsolved. This article argues that a global history approach provides new insights in two respects: The consideration of materiality allows a new understanding of the objects, while the activities of local collectors, seen from a micro-global point of view, reveal the local imprints of the global. Within this rationale, a history of individual bells in the possession of individual art lovers and museums translates into a history of scrap metal trade, allows to consider the disposal of disliked objects at their place of origin, and opens up a global framing of local history. Using global history as a concept, the historicity of the global gains visibility as we look at the intersection of materiality and the local involvement of global networks. Ultimately, as we follow the journey of the bells, reinterpreting scrap metal into art has formed a striking way in which local history assimilates the global.

Key Words: Global history, Switzerland 19th century, Japan 19th century, Buddhist bells, bronze trade.

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der internationalen Ordnung (2009). Her most recent publications include 'Strength through Diversity? The Paradox of Extraterritoriality and the History of the Odd Ones Out', *Journal of the History of International Law 22 (2020)*, (https://doi.org/10.1163/15718050-12340153), and co-authored with Susanna Burghartz *Building Paradise, a Basel Manor House and Its Residents in a Global Perspective* (forthcoming 2021).

Introduction

In the late 19th century, the Geneva-based art collector Gustave-Philippe Revilliod added to his considerable collection of East Asian Art a Japanese temple bell, an old and fine work from the 17th century. The massive bronze bell sat with its heavy weight of almost a ton in the Ariana Park at the shore of Lake Geneva for almost half of a century, until the moment a member of the Japanese League of Nations' delegation rediscovered the bell as Japanese heritage after World War I. In 1930, shortly before the world fell apart, Revilliod's heir, the city and Canton of Geneva, gave the bell back to its spiritual owner, the Buddhist temple, who organized the bell's serene return to Tokyo. This event was orchestrated with extended media coverage presenting both an active Swiss multilateralism and an East Asian great power, adding globality to the transcultural fabric of Geneva. In the 1990s the history of the bell once again attracted the attention of the public, when the temple offered to the Canton of Geneva a replica, which now also resides at the Ariana Park, today literally the focal point of global internationalism, sharing the space with the building of the United Nations and the ICRC.[1] Since the bell survived the war undestroyed and was neither contaminated by colonial looting nor misused as prey of war, the object obviously offers a consolidating message: Globality offers a material consistency, and objects made from a substance which is detached from the temporal limits of human lives almost confirms the existence of transboundary exchange even beyond the conceptional weaknesses of international relations. With the increasing importance of global history in both in its theoretical and its

1 For today's interest in the bell, its presentation and journey see "The Park," Ariana Musée de la Céramique et du Verre, accessed April 26, 2021, http://institutions.ville-geneve.ch/en/ariana/discover/history/the-park/. Additional information is available from "Historique de La Cloche," Association d'amitié Genève-Shinagawa, accessed April 26, 2021, http://www.geneve-shinagawa.ch/cloche.html, for the exchange of the bell and its legal background see Raphael Contel, Anne Laure Bandle, and Marc-André Renold, "Affaire Cloche de Shinagawa – Ville de Genève et Temple de Shinagawa," Plateforme ArThemis (http://unige.ch/art-adr), Centre du droit de l'art, Université de Genève, accessed April 26, 2021, https://plone.unige.ch/art-adr/cases-affaires/cloche-de-shinagawa-2013-ville-de-geneve-et-japon.

methodological aspects,[2] the materiality-based past of the bell gives us reason to look more closely and to unravel new findings, although not without the acceptance of some uneasy insights:

First of all, the historicity of the Shinagawa bell is paradoxically based on ignorance. Both Japanese diplomatic correspondence and contemporary art history literature agrees that the bell's place of origin is well known, but its route to Europe remains obscure.[3] Although there is much speculation as to whether the bell was originally part of the World's fair in Paris in 1867 or in Vienna in 1873 and came to Europe as exhibit, neither those who sent the bell on its way nor those who received and bought it are known or even addressed in this narrative.[4] A comparable uncertainty characterizes the reasons why a centuries-old temple bell had to leave its traditional location: On one hand, a fire in the temple is mentioned as a possible explanation for the expatriation of the bell, on the other hand, the power shift to the Meiji regime explains the disempowerment of Buddhist monasteries in the second half of the 19th century. The inconsistency in the explanation and the gaps in knowledge are both remarkable, since we are not dealing with a delicate painting, a featherweight silk textile or a small statuette, but with a bronze object weighing more than a ton. Usually, an object of this size leaves its marks in the form of documents, if only because bronze has a considerable commodity value, which in the 19th century did not pass the many customs borders unnoticed. However, such a documentation could not be found until now. The lack of a paper trail may have many reasons – documents are lost, destroyed or simply forgotten. In this article, however, we assume that the established historiographical research methods will fail to find an answer in the case presented. We therefore presume that such a paper trail never existed, because the global journey transformed the object in a way that its specification as a bell literally disappeared. This assumption challenges central elements of global history, contributing to the ongoing debate about material culture and its connection to micro-global history.[5] With the example of the bell in mind (and remaining aware of the limits of this example), this contribution suggests reflecting on a different theoretical setting. This approach recommends

2 For the debate on micro-global history and material culture see Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds., *Writing Material Culture History*, 2nd ed. (London et. al.: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021); Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds., *The Global Lives of Things. The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London/New York: Routledge, 2016); Maxine Berg et. al., eds., *Goods from the East, 1600 – 1800. Trading Eurasia*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

3 JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records), Ref. B04012326800, Miscellaneous Documents Relating to Antiques and Treasures/ 8. Documents Relating to Great Bell of Buddhist Temple at Musee Ariana in Geneva (I-1-7-0-8) (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) About the disappearance of the bell from archival documentation see Didier Grange, "Quand l'histoire rencontre la légende," in *Genève-Shinagawa Shinagawa-Genève*, ed. Eric Burkhard et al. (Geneva: Association d'amitié Genève-Shinagawa, 1996), 31 – 40.

4 F.C., "Cloche japonaise de l'Ariana," *Bulletin de La Société Franco-Japonaise de Paris* 71 (1930): 108 – 109, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9682009t.texteImage.

5 In our context of special interest: Zóltan Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello, eds., *Global Gifts, the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

contextualizing globality, materiality, and culture in new ways in reflecting on the impact of transitions and transformations on a global scale, including recycling and different forms of reusability. Globality is therefore rather an acting compound and not a mode of description. This approach separates the epistemological unity of materiality and culture while challenging the notion that connectivity and the permeability of borders are the key concepts of global history.[6] In this matter, we follow the recent developments in the history of migration, which in the social setting reflects the local changes of migration, but also increasingly raises the question of what forms of social coherence the migration process itself triggers. Going back to our example, the bell, the research context of material culture provides too few opportunities to observe the influence of the global on transition processes. If an object loses the context of its social connotation, why should it keep its attributes on its journey? The same question arises for the material: does a different use of the material point to new assignments of use, appreciation, functions? What do we gain from this? Connecting the travelling of an object with the potential of transformation, there is at least a certain enlargement of the research rationale: The autonomy of the transformation process presumes that culturally connoted objects can be transformed in such a way that they do not arrive at the museum as collectors' items. This leaves us with more possibilities to address gaps, unfulfilled expectations, the potential to ask what is actually missing in museums and whether there could be reasons other than the personal preferences of collectors, the availability of financial resources or supply mechanisms on the art market. During our research, we discovered that Japanese bells are found in large quantities in Swiss collections, while they are rather rare in museums in other countries.[7] Taking apart the triad of globality, materiality and culture, the history of the Shinagawa bell changes considerably: As presented below, bells which lost their functions in their Japanese environment left the country indeed in considerable numbers, but as part of a flourishing scrap metal trade. Their renaissance as artistic Buddhist bells was a consequence of changed production conditions and the varying demand for bronze. The transformation of the bell to scrap metal leveled out the significant differences between the bells and reconfigured and challenged the analytical framework of material culture. Their renaissance as bells and collector's items followed Western standards, in which the specification of the origin no longer played a significant role, while their significance as artifacts of a global form of historicism increased.

6 As mentioned e.g. by Sebastian Conrad, What is global history? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc779r7.

7 For the interest of Swiss collections in Japanese objects see Hans Bjarne Thomsen, "Japanese Collections in Switzerland," in *Siebold's Vision of Japan: As Seen in Japan-Related Collections of the West*, ed. National Museum of Japanese History (Sakura: National Museum of Japanese History, 2015), 89 – 98 and 273 – 280.

Fire and capitalism

Given the many uncertainties about the journey the Shinagawa bell has taken since it left Japan, the place where the Geneva art lover bought the bell is remarkably well known. Revilliod bought the bell from the Rüetschi Company, a long-established foundry which had been based in the small Swiss town of Aarau for centuries. In view of the globalized 19th century, it is only moderately surprising that a bell foundry had a Japanese bell to offer. However, focusing on its artistic and cultural significance, the scientific debate about the Shinagawa bell has neglected one surprising fact until now: there was not just one bell in Rüetschi's backyard – there were many.

Fig. 1. Of the two versions of the photo presenting Japanese bells in the backyard of the Rüetschi Foundry, one is part of the album of MGCG (see fig. 6 in Hans Bjarne Thomsen's contribution in this issue). Fig. 1 shows another print taken from the same picture, which was added to the Rüetschi company's photo collection. *Three Buddhist bells in the backyard of the Rüetschi Foundry.* With gratitude to G. Spielmann. Photo: courtesy of H. Rüetschi AG, Aarau.

Fig. 2. Roman numerals are visible on the shoulder of the middle and small bells. Enlarged detail of fig. 1.

In the company's picture collection (Fig. 1), a photo taken around 1873 shows three nicely arranged Japanese bells, the largest obviously recognizable as the Shinagawa bell. Interestingly enough, an identical picture is part of a large photo collection, once initiated and owned by the Mittelschweizerische Geographisch-Commercielle Gesellschaft (MGCG).[8] The MGCG asked their members to send pictures of commercial and ethnographic interest as a matter of course – the association even offered a corresponding membership to those sending pictures. Even though there is no proof that Rüetschi supplied an identical print of the photo to the association, the company is on the list of the MGCG members and donors, and even donated a Japanese temple bell in 1878 to a museum connected to MGCG, as stated below.

8 See fig. 6 in Hans Bjarne Thomsen's contribution in this issue. Hans Bjarne Thomsen, "Japanese Bronze Bells in Switzerland: Global Travel and Local Interpretations," *Global Europe – Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective*, no. 120 (2021): 13 – 36.

The MGCG version of the picture classifies the bells incorrectly as Chinese, although comments of unknown origins written by hand as a caption specify the tallest bell as the one Revilliod brought to his estate in Geneva, and whose Japanese origin was well known. But an additional and more general comment on the photograph is even more interesting, explaining the objects in the picture as "very old Chinese bells, a large number of which were melted down in the Rüetschi bell foundry in Aarau."[9] The "large number" mentioned is somewhat disturbing, but the temporal dimension is even more interesting. Why were "a large number" of bells melted down in the past, but similar objects now neatly arranged in the backyard were obviously spared the same fate? And why did the many apparently melted down bells go unmentioned, while the regional press documented the purchase made by Mr Revilliod, and even announced the arrival of four bells? In January 1873, the *Gazette de Lausanne* celebrated the imminent arrival of four Japanese bells. They were announced to be melted down, but also described as artistic works, "qui fait le plus grand honneur au génie japonais."[10]

In the following we consider the fact that, rather ironically, the bells appeared in Aarau only to make them disappear, quite literally, by melting them. Does this insight allow us to ask about their origin in a new and different way, involving different 'scales', as a paradigmatic concept in global history? The focus on Japan should help to sharpen our understanding of why the backyard of a Swiss bell foundry ultimately plays a paradigmatic role in better understanding the transformation process of turning sacred Buddhist art into a globally demanded scrap metal and once again into art, although the bells which emerged from this transformation were removed from their original function and newly defined in value by Western collectors.

The photograph from the Rüetschi Company showing three bells is at least in one additional case accurate enough to challenge the findings of the Sinagawa bell with another example, a bell whose inscription assigns the object to the Zōjōji temple. As mentioned by Hans Bjarne Thomsen in his translation of the bell's inscription, the bell was dedicated by the monk Enyo Byakuzui (1656 – 1730), a high-ranking actor in the temple's hierarchy.[11] As the abbot of the Zōjōji temple, Byakuzui was a leading figure in the political bargaining process between the Tokugawa shogunate and the Buddhist temple, which ended up dedicating the temple's political importance as a burial place and memorial for high-ranking members of the Tokugawa dynasty. Relating the

9 "Uralte chin. Glocken, von welchen eine grosse Anzahl in der Glockengiesserei Rüetschi in Aarau eingeschmolzen wurden (ca. 1873)," Anonymous photographer, *China, Uralte chinesische Glocken, 1890*, Staatsarchiv Aargau, F.MG/2320.
10 "Confédération Suisse. Argovie," *Gazette de Lausanne*, January 27, 1873, https://www.letempsarchives.ch/page/GDL_1873_01_27/1.
11 See Thomsen, "Japanese Bronze Bells," 21.

bell to the abbot for chronological analysis, this intricately decorated bell with extensive inscriptions on its surface was probably made in the 1720s and is therefore younger and less spectacular than the Shinagawa bell. But besides the different age and perhaps artistic value separating the Shinagawa bell from the Zōjōji bell, sometimes mentioned as the Shiba bell, both objects are connected to an astonishingly parallel narrative, at least according to Western literature:

Both were originally situated in quarters with access for foreigners (Shiba) and both were mentioned in Western travelogues. At least as a hypothesis we can state that the decline of the Buddhist temple bells was closely connected with the formation of a global public, all the more since the first foreign legations in Japan were located in Buddhist temples.[12] Both bells represent the premodern past of Japan in a moment, when a new regime followed the gospel of modernity. In both cases, contemporary narratives assigned a similar fate to the bells, starting with the destruction of their environment. In both cases the respective temple burned down – in the case of the Zōjōji temple even on New Year's Eve 1874.[13] The narrative tells us that neither political subversion in Japan nor Western looting, just that a major blaze rendered the bells useless. The bells had lost their surrounding temples in the fires and fell out of time in more ways than one. It remains unclear whether the fire was a real event or a metaphorical explanation. In any case, the newspaper report and the dating of the photograph are consistent – but the bell, whose inscription refers to the Shiba Temple, could not have been exposed to the fire. The disaster happened when the bell was already in Aarau. It can be stated that the uselessness of bells was pursued with a considerable discursive effort on a global scale. The metaphorical or real fire destroyed the cultural origin in a moment watches replaced bells as timekeepers. The new era of timekeeping, closely connected to Swiss companies, offers an even better explanation for the disappearance of the temple bells.[14]

The narrative of excessive uselessness obviously helps to justify the transformation of bells into scrap metal – the question is whether we can see any resistance against such a justification, and whether the presumed surplus value taken from the metal value has any historical foundation. The bad news of the burning of the Zōjōji temple indeed circulated globally. Foreigners who had previously visited Shiba's temple because the site was famous for its large bell continued to

12 For the history of the buildings see "History of U.S. Embassy Buildings," American Center Japan, accessed April 26, 2021, https://americancenterjapan.com/aboutusa/usj/4737/. The first American Legation opened in the Gyokusenji Temple, Shimoda, later a consulate was opened in Hongakuji Temple, Yokohama.

13 Theobald A. Purcell, *"Our Neighbourhood"; or, Sketches in the Suburbs of Yedo* (Yokohama, 1874), 107 – 113.

14 See Pierre-Yves Donzé, *Des Nations, des firmes et des montres. Histoire globale de l'industrie horlogère de 1850 à nos jours* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Livreo Alphil, 2020).

travel to this place even after the disaster. In their travelogues they mentioned that the site had turned into an immense market for Buddhist antiquities.[15] For methodological reasons however, the link between a disaster and the subsequent exploitation of cultural objects is neither particularly remarkable nor exceptional. In order to gain a solid methodological argumentation, the transformation of bells from a Buddhist work of art to the recycling of scrap metal would have to have left contradictory traces, one related to the scrap metal trade, another which becomes tangible as a critique of capitalism. While the importance of the scrap metal trade brings us back to the backyard of the Rüetschi Company as explained below, traces of the criticism of capitalism connected to the bells arose in Japan. Obviously, in the 1870s, Buddhist monks addressed the now missing bells in complaints to foreign visitors. In this way, the fate of the melted bells reached the literary documentation of a trip around the world, which attracted some attention in the 19th century. Under the title *A Voyage in the Sunbeam*, Annie Brassey launched a bestseller that has been reprinted no less than 96 times since its first appearance in 1876,[16] and translated into 17 languages. The considerable public attention was related to the book's author, Baroness Annie Brassey (1839 – 1887), married to a rich heir of British railroad money. Her husband, Sir Thomas Brassey, owned a famous yacht, the *Sunbeam*, which completed the first circumnavigation of the earth as a steamship of this class in 1876/77. Annie Brassey described in her best-selling travelogue the arrival of the *Sunbeam* in Japan, and disclosed her specific interest in temple bells within this context. During her visit which included the Nishi-Hongan-ji temple in Kyoto, she started in Gyokusen-ji, a Buddhist temple which served as the first quarters of the US consulate in Japan. Here, she mentions the Buddhist priests' complaints about the declining interest in Buddhism, adding she was told that "speculators are buying up their fine bronze bells, and sending them home to be coined into English pennies and half-pennies."[17] This rather casual remark electrified a reviewer of the book from missionary circles to some sharp, capitalism-critical remarks. In the *Evangelisches Missions Magazin*, published in Basel, the reviewer of Brassey's book – then already translated into German – mentioned the bell-trade, but first of all criticized the rich lady's travelogue and the fact she never spoke with missionaries at all.[18]

15 E. R. Hendrix, *Around the World*, Illustrated ed. (St. Louis, Mo.: L.D. Dameron, 1881), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100535843. For foreigners, the "owner of the American Legation building" was the best address for such antiquities.

16 "Brassey, Annie, 1839 – 1887," WorldCat Identities. http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n2002155037/.

17 Annie Brassey, *A Voyage in the Yacht "Sunbeam"; Our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months* (Chicago: J.W. Henry, 1880): 318, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100768343.

18 "Bücherschau. Eine Segelfahrt um die Welt," *Evangelisches Missions Magazin. Neue Folge* 23 (1879): 440, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100116874.

From earmarked bronze to East Asian art?

Shifting back to Aarau, the bell foundry allows the presumed capitalization of Buddhist temple bells as scrap metal to be examined more closely. As a starting point, a technical note from Rüetschi is important in assessing the cost issue: the transport of scrap metal exceeds the dimensions normal cargo. Empty ships or those with lightweight cargo need ballast; temple bells, especially the large ones such as the Shinagawa bell have an almost ideal format for ballast loading.[19] Therefore the question of transport costs is probably not the decisive problem, although the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 shortened the long journey considerably. Leaving aside the probably interesting question concerning the extent to which ballast should be an issue in a tripartite research strategy on globality, materiality, and culture, in light of the relative transport costs the quality of the material is indeed an important question. Japanese bells had an excellent reputation because *antique bronze* (that is to say bronze produced before the Meiji period) was of a particularly high quality compared to Western production. Published in *The Japan Weekly Mail* in 1880, an article about Japanese metalwork highlighted with reference to the Shiba bell the specific characteristics of Japanese bronze, pointing out that the exceptionally pure sound of the temple bell resulted from mixing the bronze with gold and silver according to a recipe not known in Europe.[20] Western literature was aware of the sophisticated specificities of Japanese metal alloys, and the quality of Japanese bronze works was mentioned in almost every Western encyclopedia.[21] In Western metallurgical and chemical literature published in the 19th century, the admiration for old Japanese bronze is evident as well; typically, the high quality of Japanese alloy and metal processing, coloring, and the precision of workmanship are mentioned – regardless of whether the object is a sword, a mirror, or a richly decorated temple bell. If especially old bells had a high metal value and the temples were ready to sell bronze from the remains of a fire catastrophe, and if such objects indeed became part of a global scrap metal trade, how can we demonstrate that materiality has detached itself from the cultural connotation of the bell? The question first requires the abandonment of the idea that the temple bells are unique works of art whose winding paths can be traced more or less well, as in the example of the Shinagawa bell.

Instead, we will pursue the question of whether their transformation from bells to scrap metal can be traced as a result of their worldwide journey. In fact, the search for similar bells in Swiss collections shows a fascinating similarity. In the photograph from the Rüetschi collection, signs engraved on the shoulder of the bells are visible. Reference examples in the Museum der

19 Many thanks to Mr Spielmann, H. Rüetschi AG, Aarau, for this information.

20 "Japanese metalwork," *The Japan Weekly Mail*, March 20, 1880.

21 Meyers Grosses Konversations-Lexikon even had an article about the city of Kanazāwa, famous for its bronze production, see "Kanazāwa," in *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, vol. 10, 6th ed (Leipzig/Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1907), 555, http://www.zeno.org/Meyers-1905/K/meyers-1905-010-0555.

Kulturen, Basel, show similar signs. Three bells of different, although Japanese origin bear the same markings, consisting of Roman numerals on one hand, and the Japanese character for "good quality," as discovered by Hans Bjarne Thomsen.[22] As a working hypothesis, we are currently assuming that the brands in question were those which concerned the quality of bronze and prepared the objects for transport. The signs clearly have nothing to do with a bell used in any way, but defined the objects in new ways.

Since the Roman numerals have even been stamped over the original inscriptions on the bell in an almost rude way, the question arises again: why do these 'things' become collectibles? The separation of materiality and culture, for example the detachment of social connotation from the object and a re-evaluation of its materiality, at least opens up some new assumptions: here we once again follow the trail of the World's Fairs. This time, however, we do not expect to find that Japanese temple bells were exhibited. Although no Buddhist bells are mentioned, neither for the exhibition in Paris in 1867 nor in Vienna in 1873 despite Japanese participation, the reports and catalogues present valuable information about a crucial shift in the use of the material the bells were made of – bronze. We can note that the Western century of historicism was expressed in an increasing demand for monuments. The urban construction boom, which catapulted cities like Paris from the Middle Ages to the Paris of the boulevards, left their traces in the metalworking industry. Rüetschi not only cast the first equestrian statue in Switzerland, the company also participated in the decoration of the Swiss Federal building. Rüetschi moved slowly away from the centuries-old tradition of transforming bronze from bells into cannons and established an increasing reputation in the production of monuments. The world exhibitions show that the hunger for monuments has been increasingly satisfied with cheaper materials. The reports of the Paris industrial exhibition of 1867 celebrated art casting as a new method for material processing. Art casting allowed the production of opulently decorated large objects, suitable for public spaces – for example as candelabras for gas lighting – but also ideal for balcony grilles and interior decoration of houses in the now dominant style of historicism. Based on iron, art casting started replacing the expensive production of bronze, still present but decreasing in its importance.[23]

The Rüetschi Company almost certainly sent someone to the large international industrial exhibitions, which increasingly became platforms of global competition for industrial products. It will therefore not have gone unnoticed by visitors from Aarau that historicism increased the

22 See Thomsen, "Japanese Bronze Bells," 20.

23 *Illustrirter Katalog der Pariser Industrie-Ausstellung von 1867* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1868), 275, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.1331#0283.

demand for monuments made of metal alloys to a degree that exceeded the demand for bells by far. In addition, the Rüetschi Company had other reasons to expand their production, due to a substantial change in the weapons industry. As was common for bell foundries of the time, Rüetschi manufactured both, bells and cannons. In the second half of the 19th century, however, the centuries-old procedure of recasting bells into cannons underwent a significant change due to a shift in technology, ultimately ending the old practice. From the middle of the century until the 1860s, the modification of gun barrels provided the company with increasing orders, which consisted in re-casting the existing bronze barrels. Ten years later, however, the German company Krupp had developed cast steel cannons, which were clearly superior to the bronze cannons.[24] In Switzerland, the re-equipment of the army relied on newer guns with iron barrels starting in the 1860s and continuing in the 1870s with the purchase of guns from Krupp. Even if bronze did not disappear completely from weapons production, the process of melting down bells was no longer a promising business model – parallel activities in casting works of art certainly made it seem wise to transform the now useless Japanese bronze back into works of art.

"Exploratio Mundi Liberat Animum:" education based on global trade

The transformation from scrap metal to a work of art requires a cultural concept, which in our example was characterized, supported and performed by an association typical for the period of imperialism and colonial expansion, the Mittelschweizerische Geographisch-Commercielle Gesellschaft (MGCG), mentioned above. At second glance, the MGCG had a specific global aim and profile. Although it was a rather short-lived association, founded in 1884 and dissolved in 1905, the MGCG expanded its activities substantially, made its collections available to the public and published its own journal. The journal's front page is decorated with the Latin logo "Exploratio Mundi Liberat Animum" and shows in golden imprints a premodern ship sailing towards the East. The title of the journal, *Fernschau* (distant viewing),[25] presented the specific global openness of an association located in a small Swiss commercial town in unusually systematic and remarkable ways. The association brought together almost every business involved in export, from the established silk ribbon industry to the bell foundry, from scholars to traders, and – what is

24 Verena Naegele, "Ein Traditionsunternehmen mit vielen Facetten: Die Glocken- und Kunstgiesserei Rüetschi," *Aarauer Neujahrsblätter* 83 (2009): 110 – 129, http://doi.org/10.5169/seals-559215.

25 *Fernschau. Jahrbuch der Mittelschweizerischen Geographischen-Commerciellen Gesellschaft in Aarau* (Aarau: H. R. Sauerländer, 1886 – 1894), https://kbaargau.visual-library.de/periodical/pageview/3187.

even more remarkable – covering a space across cantons, where the well-known Swiss hubs of global trade were explicitly left out. Instead of Basel, Zurich and Geneva, the membership linked Aarau, Basel-Land, Lucerne and Solothurn. The concept of the commercial museum combined the goal of broad education of the population with the requirements of the global market – objects from distant countries served as illustrative material and at the same time were intended to ensure global expertise in the expanding export industry. Members of associations attached to such educational aims crossed the boundaries between trade, science and industry. In the understanding of MGCG, a corresponding member gained this title by delivering photographs and/or objects, independent of whether they were located in the neighboring village or in East Asia.[26]

The connection between the bells and the MGCG seems obvious – but no clear provenance can be deduced for the bells, due to the large gaps in the documentation. The missing links result from seemingly plausible facts: the MGCG had large holdings but a short life span, so the collected objects were divided up and merged into different collections. Since the dissolution of the MGCG occurred during the lifetime of one generation, donors could also have withdrawn their gifts after the dissolution of the association.[27] Although the Basel Museum der Kulturen took over at least some parts of the MGCG collection, the acquisition occurred more than ten years after the association was dissolved. The respective correspondence in the museum's files documents the transfer of the objects to different institutions, with the cantonal Commercial Museum of Aarau (Gewerbemuseum) being their first destination. In December 1917 this Gewerbemuseum offered the non-European objects of the former MGCG to the Basel Museum for sale.[28] Johann Ludwig Meyer-Zschokke, who as founding director of the Gewerbemuseum was still in charge at the time, explained the history of the collection offered for sale in a letter dated February 11, 1918 to the Basel Museum Commission.[29]

The letter's main message was that no catalogue, invoices, receipts, or purchase books had been preserved. At this point, historical provenance research would come to an end, with only the assumptions offered by Meyer-Zschokke as an explanation. With an approach that considers globality, materiality and culture as intertwined but occupying different levels of action,

26 Mitgliederverzeichnis, ibid., XIVff. As corresponding members in Japan were mentioned: Wilh. (Wilfried) Spinner, Tokio, Donators: F. Wagen Frères, Yokohama.

27 Two of the three bells, IId 914 and IId 1767, from the holdings of the Museum der Kulturen were acquired indirectly through inheritance and as deposits. Many thanks to Alia Özvegy from Museum der Kulturen for helping us with the provenience of the bells.

28 The reason was restricted space and expansion plans. See Staatsarchiv Aargau, ZwA 2007.0042, Kantonales Gewerbemuseum mit Gewerbeschule, 1868 – 1961 (Bestand), https://www.ag.ch/staatsarchiv/suche/detail.aspx?ID=1634.

29 Museum der Kulturen Basel, Dokumentenarchiv 05-0037-ID 865.

Meyer-Zschokke's explanations are more than an educated guess. Beyond all expected facts, the Meyer-Zschokke's narrative explains why the bells constantly escape a research approach which understands the bells as collectors' items. In Meyer-Zschokke's narrative, the MGCG was less an institution than a living organism, a community in which travelling Swiss nationals connected with the broad community of expats and Swiss traders working outside Europe. Groups with diverse social and local backgrounds communicated with each other through real objects and photographed items. Both objects and images refer to this social context. The activity of collecting creates far more than a contemplation of the world through an exhibition. Rather, we see that a Swiss society, formed across cantonal borders, makes a contribution to the global, thus legitimizing itself as a global actor. This approach overstepped institutional boundaries in many ways. While the MGCG was the initiator and holder of the bells' photograph in the Rüetschi backyard, a Japanese bell donated by Rüetschi is mentioned in the catalogue of the Argovian Antiquarium, a collection in which some of the MGCG objects were integrated.[30] Among the objects added in 1878 to the Antiquarium collection was a bronze representing a mythological animal described as "tempest dragon" (*Sturmdrachen*) – and a temple bell, both from Japan and both provided by Emanuel Rüetschi, the owner of the bell foundry.[31] In both cases the objects share the same materiality, a fact mentioned in the museum catalogue.[32] When Meyer-Zschokke wrote his letter to the Basel museum as the director of the still existing Aarauer Gewerbemuseum, he represented an institution composed of the remains of various collections. Their intentions, contexts and aims were far apart from each other, but the analytical patterns of globality, materiality and culture are still clearly visible: many years after the MGCG had disappeared, the association's global approach remained of importance. In his short outline of the collection history, Meyer-Zschokke even brought in one of our usual suspects, the World Fairs: a number of objects owned by MGCG allegedly came from the holdings of world exhibitions. This assumption does not lead to the location of further objects, but allows insights into the communication networks, established and used by the charismatic secretary of MGCG, Karl Wilhelm Bührer (1861 – 1917). Bührer is better known as the initiator of standardized advertising cards and of the Internationale Monogesellschaft.[33] However, Meyer-Zschokke's somehow mysterious reference to the World

30 Later the Antiquarium was merged with the Aarau Gewerbemuseum. Inventar, ibid.

31 Historische Gesellschaft des Kantons Aargau, "Vereinschronik," *Argovia: Jahresschrift der Historischen Gesellschaft des Kantons Aargau* 10 (1879): IX. https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000520176. For the dragon see Madeleine Herren, "Ein 'Sturmdrache' im globalen Bronzehandel," in Materialized Histories. Eine Festschrift 2.0, eds. Tina Asmussen, Eva Brugger, Maike Christadler, Anja Rathmann-Lutz, Anna Reimann, Carla Roth, Sarah-Maria Schober, Ina Serif (15/07/2021), https://mhistories.hypotheses.org/?p=4249.

32 E.L. Rochholz, *Katalog des Kantonalen Antiquariums in Aarau* (Aarau, 1879), 40f.

33 The Swiss National Library has archived examples of such advertising cards by the Monogesellschaft. Helvetic Archives, Archivdatenbank der Schweizerischen Nationalbibliothek. GS-Mono, Internationale Mono-Gesellschaft: Mono-Ansichten, 1922 G. 3895; K-12 G 40, accessed April 26, 2021, https://www.helveticarchives.ch/detail.aspx?ID=628119.

Fairs indirectly unveils Bührer's close contacts to Justus Brinkmann in Hamburg, the founding director of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (MKG). Opened in 1874 and following the respective examples in Kensington and Vienna, the MKG was the very example and model of the Swiss intentions. Brinkmann did indeed buy the first MKG holdings from the collections of the world exhibitions. From the very beginning, the huge Hamburg museum had an East Asian collection focusing on Japan.[34] But even more importantly, the MKG provided a visible, sustainable and consistent implementation of a concept of culture in which the promotion of a global export industry required the introduction of a training course on global objects.

Conclusions

It may seem unfortunate if the storm dragon and the bell survive merely because they are both made of a certain alloy. However, this disillusioning observation also opens up new possibilities for search strategies and research questions. Thus, the separation of materiality and cultural connotation has led to the insight that Switzerland became a collection point for ancient Japanese bells, which are quite rarely found in the collections of other Western states. The complex transformation of things into scrap metal and its reassessment as teaching pieces for the educational reasons a Gewerbemuseum was based on, allows us to test different assumptions and questions. Is a bell designated as scrap metal still a bell fitting for a museum collection? Are such objects helpful as a challenge to established collections and museum histories? Does the chaotic migration of bells through the institutions point to a different 'life of things', where the process of collecting oversteps the institutional rationale? At least, we may consider new research strategies: objects rejected by museums, or loans remaining in legal limbo for years, or pieces devalued by transport stamps are possibly suitable for opening up a corner of global history that has so far been ignored.

34 "Permanent Collection: East Asia," Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, accessed April 26, 2021, https://www.mkg-hamburg.de/en/collection/permanent-collection/east-asia.html.

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