



G.F. Meijlan
Japan:
voorgesteld in schetsen over de
zeden en gebruiken van dat ryk,
byzonder over de ingezetenen der stad Nagasaky
Amsterdam, 1830

Born in the Dutch city of Leiden, the author Germain Felix Meijlan (1785-1831) traveled to the East Indies in 1803. After holding various official positions, he was appointed the head of the Dutch Trading House in Dejima, Nagasaki, in 1826.

In that period, trade between Japan and the Netherlands was sluggish, and personal dealings by members of the Trading House were becoming an issue. During his tenure, Meijlan faced numerous challenges and problems, such as the Siebold Incident occurred in 1828, when P.F. von Siebold attempted to leave for Europe with a map of Japan, a banned item. As the head of the Dutch Trading House, however, Meijlan spared no effort to improve the situation and solve the problems he faced.

This book was completed in Dejima in 1829 and published in Amsterdam a year later, in 1830. It consists mainly of descriptions of Nagasaki and Dejima. In 15 chapters, the author provides a general observations and speculations on the Japanese social system, religion, folklore, language, art, industry, and academics. The book contains two illustrations of a soya bean throwing ceremony performed on Setsubun (the festival that celebrates the coming of spring) and a funeral.

After completing his term in Japan, Meijlan passed away in Batavia, the Dutch East Indies, in 1831, at the age of 46. Another book he wrote in 1827, *Geschiedkundig overzicht van den handel der Europezen op Japan*, was published posthumously in Batavia in 1833.