

Preface

Japanese mineral specimens collected during the first half of the nineteenth century are stored in the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden, the Netherlands. In those days Japan had been closed to foreigners except the Dutch and the Chinese. A German medical doctor, Philipp Franz von Siebold, collected these specimens as a Dutch surgeon of Dutch East India Army. These specimens are highly unique in terms of modern Japanese mineralogy.

P. F. Siebold arrived in Japan in 1823 and left Japan in 1829. In those 7 years, he produced enormous collections, such as botanical, zoological, mineralogical and ethnographical collections, and he introduced modern science to Japan. Before Siebold, mineralogy was not considered as a field of science in Japan but a part of herbalism, which was originally the old Chinese pharmacy to mainly study the effects of mainly botanical materials as medicines.

Siebold's mineral collection is important to the historical investigation of science in Japan during the first half of the nineteenth century. Tracing each specimen, we intended to uncover how modern mineralogy was introduced to Japanese people as science.

Our research on the mineral collection of Siebold at the museum in Leiden took place at least once a year and it has been over six years. Since the number of publications about Siebold's mineral collection is limited, our investigation process was like putting pieces of puzzle together, which required knowledge of mineralogy, labeling and reading in both German and Japanese. The mineralogical investigations of specimens along with historical investigation of Siebold's collecting and labeling show how Siebold and Bürger collected and sorted out the collection as well as some aspects of mineralogy of Europe and Japan at that time. This research performed in both the Netherlands and Japan confirms that the Siebold's collection consists of minerals collected in Japan during his visit. This collection was the original resource for his book "Lapidographia Japonica." This report shows an overview and some details of our investigations.