

XAVIER'S SACRIFICE AND VISION FOR INTRODUCING CHRISTIANITY TO JAPAN. DISSENSIONS AND SIMILITUDES BETWEEN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL INTERRELATIONS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE JESUITS IN JAPAN

POR

EFRAÍN VILLAMOR HERRERO¹
Yamaguchi Prefectural University

ABSTRACT

Missionaries first arrived in Japan in 1549 with a local interpreter who favored the use of Buddhist terms. This assisted in the rapid integration of the missionaries, as Xavier intended with his acculturation plan. Consequently, the Japanese considered them to be a modern sect of Buddhism. Regardless of the priority of adaptation, from the outset Xavier aimed to triumph over the powerful local religion, Buddhism, principally by criticizing idolatry and sodomy. Everything of the Xavier's accommodation plan was a temporary approach for first clearing the path of the mission in Japan.

KEY WORDS: first dissensions; Jesuits' Japanese learning; cultural-linguistic gap; debates of Yamaguchi; interaction with the new believers.

EL SACRIFICIO DE JAVIER Y SU VISIÓN PARA INTRODUCIR EL CRISTIANISMO EN JAPÓN. LAS DESAVENENCIAS Y SIMILITUDES EN EL INTERCAMBIO FILOSÓFICO Y RELIGIOSO DE LOS JESUITAS EN SUS PRIMEROS DÍAS EN JAPÓN

RESUMEN

Los misioneros llegaron a Japón en 1549 junto con la presencia de un intérprete local, el cual tradujo el credo utilizando numerosos términos budistas. Esto permitió la rápida adaptación de los misioneros en Japón, tal como Javier había planeado para la aculturación de la comitiva. Por consiguiente, los japoneses consideraron a los jesuitas como una escuela budista innovadora. A pesar de haber priorizado su adaptación, Javier desde el comienzo llevó a cabo una moción para derrotar a la religión local más influyente, el budismo, criticando abiertamente la idolatría y sodomía. Todo en el plan de aculturación de Javier era temporal, para lograr afianzar el camino que introduciría el cristianismo en Japón.

PALABRAS CLAVE: primeras disensiones; japonés de los Jesuitas; brecha lingüístico-cultural; debates de Yamaguchi; interacción con los nuevos creyentes.

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¹ aimurakaji@gmail.com / ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8274-3750>

THE "NEW" INDIAN BUDDHIST SCHOOL: CHRISTIANITY

Bringing various expectations concerning what he believed would be a prosperous land for preaching, Xavier (Francisco de Jaso y Azpilicueta, Francisco de Javier, 1506-1552) arrived in Kagoshima on August 15, 1549. On November 5 of the same year, Xavier wrote from Kagoshima to the Jesuits in Goa (Letter 90, Paragraphs 40-41):

... if we could speak [Japanese], we would receive much more (...) here people are not reticent to become Christians, and because most of them can read and write, they quickly learn the prayers. (...) Now, it is as if we are many statues among them, since they speak and talk much about us, while we, not understanding their language, are mute. We are now learning the language like little children, (...) we are forced to take ways, and we are prepared to be as they, as in the case of learning the [Japanese] language.¹

The Jesuits were not alone on this journey. After leaving India, they brought with them a Japanese native of Kagoshima, who became their first Japanese interpreter.² His name was Anjirō (アンジロー or Yajirōヤジロウ・弥次郎), and the Jesuits baptized him as Paulo de Santa Fe (henceforth Paulo) in India.³ The Jesuits did not waste time and quickly set to work on the urgent mission of evangelization. Xavier recalled this period in his letter from Cochín to the fellows in Europe dated January 29, 1552 (Letter 96, Paragraph 13):

Now I will explain to you what happened in Japan. Firstly, we arrived in Paulo's land (...) In this [first] year (...) we worked on teaching new believers, learning the language [Japanese], and writing a lot of things about the Law of God in the Japanese language (...) this book, which we wrote after a tremendous effort, was redacted in Japanese and written in our alphabet; then we read it out loud to the people who converted to Christianity.⁴

After their arrival in Kagoshima, the Japanese population unexpectedly welcomed the Jesuits with open arms, as seen in the words of Xavier in his Letter 90, Paragraphs 38-39. It may be that Xavier did not fully expect this reception and had instead been preparing to engage in a heated confrontation with the locals. Xavier foresaw this kind of repression in Kagoshima after his first contact with Ninshitsu,⁵ expecting

¹ "(...) si nos supiéramos hablar, ya tuviéramos hecho mucho fruto. (...) acá no extrañan hasta agora el hacerse cristianos, y, como grande parte de ellos saben leer y escribir, presto aprenden las oraciones. (...) Agora somos entre ellos como unas estatuas, que hablan y platican de nos muchas cosas, y nosotros, por no entender la lengua, nos callamos; (...) Forzado nos es tomar medios y disponernos a ser como ellos, así acerca de aprender la lengua (...)" (Zubillaga 1968: 364-365).

² In fact, it seems that there were two more Japanese, known by the missionaries as Antonio and Juan. (Letter 96 of Xavier, dated January 29, 1552, from Cochín to the Jesuits in Europe) (Zubillaga 1968: 384).

³ For further information about Paulo, see Kishino 2015, 2001, 1998.

⁴ "Ahora diré lo que nos sucedió en Japón. Primeramente llegamos a la tierra de Paulo, (...) En este año (...) nos ocupamos en doctrinar a los cristianos, en aprender la lengua, y en sacar muchas cosas de la ley de Dios en lengua de Japón, (...) el cual libro, con mucho trabajo, lo pusimos en la lengua de Japón y lo escribimos en letra nuestra; y por él leíamos a los que se hacían cristianos, (...)" (Zubillaga 1968: 388-390).

⁵ In Japanese it is written 忍室, but Xavier's transcription was 'Ninshitsu'. The full name of the reverend and head of the Zen school Sōtō (曹洞) of Kagoshima at the time was Ninshitsu Monshō (忍室文勝? -1556). This text uses the nomenclature 'Ninshitsu'.

became the aim of the Buddhist priests' arguments and also a persecution.⁶ However, the reason for the friendliness of the Japanese locals lay in the translation of the Christian doctrines, in which the Japanese translator had established equivalences with local Buddhist terms such as Dainichi (Sk. Vairocana, Mahā-vairocana, 大日如来) and Kannon (Sk. Avalokiteśvara 観音菩薩). This is also why the feudal leader Shimazu Takahisa (島津貴久 1514-1571) had allowed the Christians to stay during their early period in Kagoshima: they were viewed as a "new sect from Chenxiu",⁷ the Latin transcription of the term *Tenjiku* (天竺), the archaic name for India in ancient Japanese.

Even though Paulo was unable to locate the region referred to as *Tenjiku* on the map, Xavier and the Company knew before arriving in Japan that Buddhism and the teachings of *Xaqua* (Sk. *Sākyamuni*, Jp. 釈尊・世尊) had been imported from this land (Letter 71, Paragraph 9). It has been discussed before that the use of Buddhist terms in preaching conveyed a meaning different to what the Jesuits had intended.⁸ However, since the beginning, Xavier was aware of the risk of being misunderstood by the Japanese due to the lack of the cultural support for the meaning of the Japanese terms and their theology.

Xavier was conscious of the limitations of the native translators' understanding of the Creed. However, when they first began to preach in India, there was nothing to do for the Jesuits, because they could not understand the Tamil language (Kishino 1998: 93). As Kishino discusses, Xavier corrected terms in Tamil, which prompted criticism, and from then on he was aware of the risk of adopting terms from a native translator (Kishino 1998: 181-184).

Nonetheless, the Gospel was again first introduced in Japan by a native interpreter. Xavier must have considered this a risky decision. However, in the eyes of a man with an urgent mission to complete, it was probably an inevitable measure of adaptation for the Jesuits at the time, as Paulo was the only person with the knowledge of Japanese needed for translation.

THE ACCULTURATION PLAN FOR JAPAN

Transferring the responsibility for translation to the native translator Paulo was risky. However, Xavier was in a hurry to carry out the mission, and therefore in Japan he again used this as a provisional measure until the European missionaries achieved the fluency in Japanese necessary for preaching. In addition, after his arrival in Kagoshima, Xavier continued to consider the need to educate the Japanese to become translators for the new Jesuit arrivals. In a letter to Father Pablo of Goa on November 5, 1549 (Letter 92,

⁶ (Letter 90 Paragraph 47) [And it will not be a big deal, because we and they differ in how we feel about God and how to save people; we will be pursued by them, and not only by arguing]. "Y no será mucho, por ser ellos y nosotros tan contrarios en las opiniones de sentir de Dios y de cómo se han de salvar las gentes, ser de ellos muy perseguidos, más que de palabras" (Zubillaga 1968: 367).

⁷ App (1997) summarizes the different spellings used by the Japanese for naming Jesuits as Buddhist priests from India (p.214) and also affirms that the missionaries were seen as rival Buddhist reformers rather than pioneers of a new religion (pp.220-221).

⁸ Higashiba 2001: 11.

Paragraph 4), Xavier wrote about two converted monks who were sent to Malaca to receive missionary education. "To there went two bonzos, they will arrive in Malaca this year. (...) they [the future missionaries in Japan] need them to be their interpreters".⁹

This was the vision and acculturation strategy of Xavier, who trusted Paulo as the pioneer translator but also as the Japanese teacher of Torres (Cosme de Torres 1497-1570) and Fernandez (Juan Fernandez 1525-1567) at Goa. The first step to completing his demanding mission in an unknown land was based on trust that the native translator Paulo could pave the way for the Jesuits. After their arrival in Kagoshima, Xavier (Letter 90, Paragraph 59) said: "Paulo, our dear brother, will translate accurately all that would be necessary to the save their souls".¹⁰ Whether Paulo could write in Japanese is questioned, probably because Jesuits thought that he was illiterate. Before travelling to Japan, Xavier explained the need to verify Buddhist scripts, because Paulo could not read them (Letter 72, Paragraph 4).¹¹ However, even though Paulo could not read the Buddhist scripts, he was the person the Jesuits needed to explain the Gospel to the Duchess of Kagoshima in writing, as Xavier described in Letter 90, Paragraph 58.¹² Of course, this writing would not have been in Roman letters, because in that case the Duchess would not have understood it. Xavier continued by confirming that the duke had been satisfied with the books in which the law of the Christians was written and underscored the importance of the proliferation and wide distribution of the books¹³ (Letter 90 Paragraph 58).¹⁴ As mentioned above, Paulo translated the

Gospel using Buddhist terms. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify Xavier's report, which adds that for the Japanese, at this time Christianity was probably only a "new and atypical" school of Buddhism.

One of the most contentious terms involved in this cultural gap, which Xavier knew would be contentious and risked using due to the desire to acculturate the Jesuits as quickly as possible, was the word for describing the Christian God.

THE MOST CONTENTIOUS TRANSLATION TERM: *DAINICHI*

Initially, regarding the perception of the Christian God, the Jesuits in Japan utilized the term *Dainichi*. This case was previously considered a misunderstanding of the first Japanese translator Paulo, caused by his poor knowledge of Christian theology and his lack of Portuguese skills that prevented him from faithfully translating certain Christian and Buddhist concepts. Nevertheless, as has been demonstrated recently, this translation was first introduced by the Jesuit Lancilotto, who was responsible for the transcription of the *Japan Report* (日本情報) at Goa, and thereby he distorted Paulo's explanation with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁵

Under no circumstances could Xavier consider a deity of another religion comparable to the Christian God. Therefore, it is unlikely that Xavier adopted *Dainichi* to represent their unique and omnipotent God, The Creator, due solely to the similitude that the Italian Jesuit Lancilotto misunderstood based on Paulo's explanation in India. As an extension of Xavier's strategy of acculturation, Paulo chose Buddhist terms for his translations. Consequently, Paulo was frequently criticized by the next generation of missionaries.¹⁶ After the prohibition of Christianity in Kagoshima, having lost his faith, he returned to his previous life as a pirate (倭寇) abandoning his mission to look after the new believers in Kagoshima¹⁷ presumably in January of 1551. Subsequently, the Jesuits continued to debate and argue in philosophical and religious exchanges without the aid of a Japanese translator, relying instead the new Spanish interpreter Fernandez.

However, Xavier did not mention the problematic term *Dainichi* in his letters, and he was of course aware that *Dainichi* was the term used during the entire period in which he was preaching in Japan. Thus, Xavier initially gave permission for *Dainichi* to be used, in a land where Paulo was the missionaries' only Japanese-speaking ally. As Kishino discovered, the letters written by Almeida (Luís de Almeida 1525-1583) on October 25, 1562 and Camillo Costanzo (1572-1622) on December 25, 1618 confirm that

⁹ "Si allá fueron dos bonzos, que este año van a Malaca, (...) pues tienen necesidad de ellos para intérpretes" (Zubillaga 1968: 375).

¹⁰ "Paulo, nuestro carísimo hermano, trasladará en su lengua fielmente todo lo que es necesario para la salvación de sus almas" (Zubillaga 1968: 371).

¹¹ [Asking Paulo why they write vertically in the Japanese language, he said to me: Why do you not write as we do? (...) When I disembark in Japan, I will inform you about what is written in his scriptures, because I have received nothing from Paulo, man without acquaintance, due to his inability to read books, which are written as in our case in an unshared language]. "Preguntando yo a Paulo, japon, por qué no escribían como nosotros, me respondió: ¿Por qué más bien vosotros no escribís al modo nuestro? (...) Después de allí os escribiré lo que se contiene en sus escrituras, pues no he podido saberlo de Paulo, hombre sin letras y que nada sabe de libros, los cuales, como entre nosotros los latinos, están escritos en lengua no común" (Zubillaga 1968: 280).

¹² [The duchess ordered that we send in a written notice that the Christians believe. Then, after a few days passed, Paulo worked on it and wrote many things about our faith in their language]. "Mandó pedir esta señora que por escrito mandásemos aquello en que los cristianos creen, y así Paulo se ocupó algunos días en lo hacer, y escribió muchas cosas de nuestra fe en su lengua" (Zubillaga 1968: 364).

¹³ As Obara (2016: 60) affirms, Xavier's plan was to go further in spreading the Creed to places even the Jesuits could not cover by printing and distributing the first book translated by Paulo as an introductory book for beginners.

¹⁴ [On the day of San Michael (September 29), we talked with the duke of this land and he honored us greatly, saying that we should carefully safeguard the books in which the law of the Christians is written (...) I think that this winter is when we will work on a declaration of the articles of the faith in the Japanese language, probably much more extensive to be printed, because people mainly can read and write, so our saintly faith can cover any place, because we cannot attend all]. "Día de San Miguel, hablamos con el duque de esta tierra y nos hizo mucha honra, diciendo que guardásemos muy bien los libros

en que estaba escrita la ley de los cristianos, (...). Paréceme que este invierno nos ocuparemos en hacer una declaración sobre los artículos de la fe en lengua de Japón, algún tanto copiosa para hacerla imprimir, pues toda la gente principal sabe leer y escribir, para que se extienda nuestra santa fe por muchas partes, pues a todas no podemos acudir" (Zubillaga 1968: 371).

¹⁵ Kishino 2015: 274.

¹⁶ After Xavier's departure from Japan, Balthasar Gago cited more than fifty Buddhism terms translated by Paulo as "pernicious words" or "false words" in a letter dated September 23, 1555 (Komei 1998: 152).

¹⁷ Kishino 2015: 249-250.

the Company adopted the term *Dainichi* before coming to Japan. Furthermore, Xavier used it even when he was in Yamaguchi after having left Paulo in charge of the Christians at Kagoshima.¹⁸ Xavier said that he was conscious of the dissimilar perception of God after his first meetings with the Buddhist priests of Kagoshima. However, he still preached the Gospel, suggesting the worship of *Dainichi*, until he found that this sacrifice made to accommodate the Japanese culture went too far.

Dainichi was one of the terms that produced friction, but there were other problems too. Xavier came to Japan with the objective of visiting the capital *Meaco* (Letter 90, Paragraph 53) —the name for Kyoto, the capital in that era— and obtaining permission to preach throughout Japan. Thus, Xavier adopted the acculturation plan for adaptation, solely in linguistic terms and never at the theological level, of which the Jesuits were oblivious at this point. However, at the same time, he was also determined to dismantle the arguments of the opponent religions by arguing with scholars at the Japanese universities. In other words, Xavier had great confidence in his faith, but his underlying obstinacy was a factor of discord with this “new” Buddhist school for the Japanese.

HELL, THE REDEMPTION OF THE SOUL, AND CULTURAL SHOCKS

The Company of the Jesuits remained in Kagoshima for one year. From this time onwards, Xavier was aware of the differences regarding the eternity of the soul following his first meeting with Ninshitsu. In public preaching, Xavier displayed his obstinacy concerning the thesis of the eternal permanence of the soul and the impossibility for souls that had descended to hell to return to heaven. Xavier mentioned this in his letters:

The bonzos [priests] are upset with us because we unveiled their falsehood (...) We stated that whoever falls into hell, cannot be saved anymore (...) even the bonzos recognised that it is true that they cannot save the fallen souls from hell. They said that if they did not declare that, they will affirm a life of suffering without clothes and food. The disagreement that we had with the bonzos was all about hell.¹⁹

It seems that Xavier took an intransigent position about the redemption of fallen souls as he described in his letters (Letter 96, Paragraphs 48-49):

The Japanese Christians are in dismay. They lament deeply that we affirm that there is no solution for those who fall to hell (...) Many Japanese cry for their dead ancestors, and ask me [about the redemption of the fallen souls] (...) I repeat that there is no salvation for them. They feel that dismay but I have no regrets, because they

should look after their souls, and not [the souls of] their ancestors.²⁰

In fact, Xavier's attitude prompted criticism from the Buddhist priests. The monks began to mistrust the Jesuits of the feudal lord and the Jesuits had to move to Hirado. Their differing perspectives on the afterlife became the most critical cultural misunderstanding between the two religions and it would be a reason for the loss of new believers in Japan.

The Japanese considered the Jesuits a new school of Buddhism, but the missionaries had a goal: to improve their arguments in order to obtain more believers. The five letters written by Xavier from Kagoshima show the Jesuits' effort to discredit the Buddhist priests, and the need to defeat the priests was a constant preoccupation for Xavier.²¹ In fact, the Jesuits' arguments, which had been based on their own paradigm, probably sounded unconventional to the Japanese. Japanese culture had many unacceptable customs for the Jesuits. One of these, which was perhaps the custom Xavier criticized most, was *danshoku* (男色), the common habit of homosexuality in feudal Japan.

During his stay in Japan, Xavier observed *in situ* the differences between the Jesuits and the lower parts of Japanese culture that they were now starting to see and deplore. Xavier especially could not tolerate *danshoku*. In the missionary's eyes, homosexuality was an unforgivable sin, and those who committed it were in need of redemption. The Jesuits probably concluded that, criticizing these customs of the Buddhist priests and leaders would attract people to their teachings. On the other hand, these criticisms could also become a dangerous matter that could affect the success of the mission, because in this respect, they demonstrated a strongly ethnocentric preaching strategy.

After they had been past Hirado and were moving towards Kyoto, Xavier stopped briefly at Yamaguchi, the then-flourishing city known as a “Kyoto of the West” (西の京). At that moment, upon their first arrival in Yamaguchi, people already accused them of being intolerant of sodomy and idolatry, as Xavier recalled in his Letter 96, Paragraph 14. Xavier affirmed that his first meeting with Yoshitaka Ōuchi (大内義隆 1507-1551) ended favorably after they had read the book of Christian teachings, which was probably the one first translated by Paulo. ([Then the lord asked us to declare to him the law of God, and we read a part of the book to him] “Entonces nos mandó que declarásemos la ley de Dios y así le leímos mucha parte del libro”).²² However, Xavier remained critical of homosexuality at his first meeting with the feudal lord of Yamaguchi, and his criticism was so vehement that the interpreter Fernandez affirmed that he was always ready to be punished (Ruiz de Medina 1995: 97-99). They did not succeed in obtaining the feudal lord's permission this time and concluded that the encounter was

¹⁸ Kishino 2015: 259.

¹⁹ To his fellows in Europe, dated January 29, 1552, Cochin (Letter 96, Paragraph 26). “Los bonzos están mal con nosotros, porque les descubrimos sus mentiras. (...) Nosotros les probamos que los que van al infierno, no pueden ser sacados (...) Quiso Dios por su misericordia, que hasta los bonzos dijieran que era verdad que ellos no podían sacar las almas de los que iban al infierno; pero que si aquello no predicasen, que no tendrían ni qué comer ni qué vestir. (...) Sobre este infierno fueron todas las discordias entre los bonzos y nosotros” (Zubillaga 1968: 395).

²⁰ To his fellows in Europe, dated January 29, 1552 from Cochin, “Un desconsuelo tienen los cristianos de Japón, y es, que sienten en gran manera el que digamos que los que van al infierno, no tienen ningún remedio. (...) Muchos lloran los muertos y me preguntan, (...) Yo les digo que ningún remedio tienen. Sienten ellos este desconsuelo; mas a mí no me pesa porque no se descuiden de sí mismos, y porque no vayan a penar con sus antepasados” (Zubillaga 1968: 401-402).

²¹ App 1997: 232.

²² Zubillaga 1968: 390.

disastrous for the Jesuits. As the family Ōuchi mentions in their archives, Xavier criticized *danshoku*, and Lord Ōuchi felt offended and ordered the Jesuits' expulsion *ipso facto*.²³

In summary, Xavier first risked trusting Paulo and preaching Christianity in Buddhist terms, but at the same time he was determined to reject firmly what he considered a misunderstanding about the redemption of fallen souls and also many cultural customs which he would never accept.

After they returned from Kyoto, Yamaguchi became the land in which the Christians made their permanent residence and interacted with people from all social strata. Before entering into detail, it is necessary to consider the role played by Paulo's successor, the new young Spanish interpreter that came onto the scene at that time.

THE LEGO INTERPRETER FERNANDEZ, WHO INSPIRED ADMIRATION

Xavier planned to replace Paulo with Fernandez, since Xavier had ordered Fernandez to learn Japanese in India. Initially, Fernandez played a secondary role, complementing the Japanese translator Paulo. However, Fernandez quickly improved his Japanese abilities. He had learned Japanese from Paulo when they were in the Society of Jesuits seminary at Goa. Xavier often mentions Juan Fernandez in his letters as a *lego* (layman) (Letter 97, Paragraph 17).²⁴ This may have been because Fernandez was not well versed in Latin,²⁵ and certainly his knowledge could not compare with the Xavier's academic background. In fact, Fernandez was becoming the new translator for the Jesuits, and he would be the key person in interactions between them and the Japanese people after September 1550, when Xavier entrusted Kagoshima to Paulo. Despite not having any prior knowledge of Japanese, the rumor that Fernandez was fluent in the language spread quickly among the Japanese people. The Portuguese Jesuit Nunes (João Nunes Barreto 1510-1562) related how the Japanese regarded Fernandez: "He is our most brilliant missionary in Japan. He is unassumingly ascetic, a specialist, a model for us. He was considered by the Japanese as the possessor of an uncommon, natural talent (...)." ²⁶ In another letter regarding Fernandez's proficiency in Japanese written in 1555 by the Portuguese Jesuit Balthasar Gago (1520-1583), Fernandez's unique talent is reaffirmed, and it is stated that his Japanese was more fluent than his native tongue of Spanish.²⁷ These languages are too different to make any categorical judgement, but it must not be forgotten that Fernandez was the first non-Japanese interpreter for the Jesuits, during a period in which the absence of Japanese textbooks and other difficult circumstances made it almost impossible to learn Japanese.

It is remarkable that Fernandez managed to improve his Japanese enough to be capable of interpreting for Xavier

across Japan and for his interviews with leaders not to be considered discourteous. Fernandez most likely exercised tenacious willpower in studying Japanese, because he introduced a revolutionary method for teaching Japanese to the next generation of missionaries. He only spoke Japanese to his students and did not stop speaking Japanese even in the presence of Portuguese navigators.²⁸ He also compiled the vocabulary and grammar of the first Japanese textbook for the Jesuits, called *Arte*.²⁹ Even when he was unwell and had developed a fever, he spoke Japanese in his sleep.³⁰ It is worth paying special attention to how Fernandez acquired his advanced skills in Japanese and to consider the extent to which he was capable of thinking and expressing himself in that language.

The role played by Fernandez can be summarized in two aspects. First, he learnt the Japanese language and researched local religions for the purpose of dismantling them. Second, he was determined to translate the Creed into Japanese and to prepare Japanese grammar books for the next generation of missionaries.³¹

YAMAGUCHI, A PLACE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Xavier reached Kyoto in January 1551, in spite of the feudal lord Yoshitaka's disapproval and the long and risky journey. However, Kyoto was not an appropriate place for preaching. Admitting this obstacle imposed by the problems of war, Xavier returned to Yamaguchi in April and again visited the feudal lord Ōuchi. On this occasion, Xavier was more cautious than before, because his purpose was to obtain definite permission to preach. Xavier described this second encounter in the following fashion (Letter 96 Paragraph 16):

We returned to Yamaguchi, where we gave the lord of Yamaguchi some letters, which we had brought, from the governor and the bishop and a present that he had delivered to him as a token of their future friendship. The duke was delighted with the present and the letter. He offered us many things, but we refused to accept any of them, even though he tried to give us much gold and silver. (...) all that we wanted was his permission to preach the law of God in his lands and that those who wished to accept it might do so. He very graciously granted us permission for this and then, ordered placards in his name to be set up in the streets (...). He also gave us a monastery, like a college, so that we might stay there.³²

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 47.

²⁹ Kishino 1998: 202.

³⁰ Schurhammer 1964: 48.

³¹ Kishino 1998: 204-205.

³² "Visto que la tierra no estaba pacífica para manifestarse la ley de Dios, tornamos otra vez a Amanguche, y dimos al duque de Amanguche unas cartas que llevábamos del gobernador y obispo, con un presente que le mandaba en señal de amistad. Holgó mucho este duque, así con el presente como con la carta. Ofreciémos muchas cosas, mas no quisimos aceptar ninguna, aunque nos daba mucho oro y plata. (...) Nosotros entonces le pedimos que, si alguna merced nos quería hacer, que nosotros no queríamos otra de él, más que diese licencia en sus tierras para predicar la ley de Dios, (...) nos dio esta licencia, y así mandó por las calles de la ciudad poner escritos en su nombre, que él holgaba que la ley de Dios se predicase en sus tierras, y que él daba licencia, que los que quisiesen tomarla, la tomasen. Con esto juntamente nos dio un monasterio, a manera de colegio, para estarnos en él" (Zubillaga 1968: 391).

²³ Toyosawa 1999: 176.

²⁴ Dated 29 January 1552 from Cochin, a letter to the cofounder of the Jesuits, Loyola (in Latin: Ignatius de Loyola 1497-1556), Xavier relates: [Considering that he is a *lego*, he speaks Japanese very well and performs the interpreter functions for Torres]. "Juan Fernández es lego y sabe hablar muy bien japon. Habla todo aquello que padre Cosme de Torres le dice" (Zubillaga 1968: 408).

²⁵ Kishino 1998: 197.

²⁶ Schurhammer 1964: 43.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 44.

It is significant that the key to successfully obtaining permission, as Xavier remembered, was that that “[t]he duke was delighted with the present and the letter”. In fact, this part of the history of the Jesuits in Japan is probably the one that has caused the most controversy. Xavier knew the risk of being misunderstood as a new school of *Chenijicu*, even more so once he had adopted a native translator as a transitional measure. Furthermore, in his second reception with the feudal lord, he gave him the presents and documents from the Viceroy of India³³ which he had originally brought to present to the Emperor. Nonetheless, to claim that he executed a “pious ruse”, as has been previously stated (App 1997), for taking advantage to obtain the final permission to preach, we need to overlook the fact that Xavier, since his arrival in Japan, was completely intolerant with *danshoku*, idolatry and other Japanese habits.³⁴

Xavier remembered the lord of Yamaguchi explaining that he and his wife were very devoted, but it is necessary to attach importance to the reason that Yoshitaka is not regarded as a Christian *daimyo* (キリシタン大名). Xavier said (Letter 96, Paragraph 31):

In this city [Yamaguchi], there are a very important lord and his wife who have been of great assistance to us, especially his wife, by giving us all the assistance they could so that the law of God might be increased. They always deemed the law of God to be good, but they never wished to accept it.³⁵

Of course, we cannot completely understand Yoshitaka's motivations for giving the missionaries permission to preach. Perhaps he thought that this new Buddhist sect was acceptable in a cosmopolitan metropolis like Yamaguchi was in that period, or possibly he believed that the differences between other Buddhist schools and this new one could coexist without difficulty.

In any case, having obtained the long-awaited permission, people visited the Jesuits every day at the residence that had been granted to them, called *Daidōji* (大道寺). At times, the temple could not contain the number of people who were curious to ask questions and learn. Xavier spoke of the situation in this way: “At the end of our sermon, there were always disputations that lasted for a long time. We were constantly occupied with answering questions or preaching (...)”.³⁶

³³ “Tornado, pues, el Padre del Miaco á Amanguchi determine de presentar á el rey de aquella tierra las cartas, con los presentes que le auía dado el visorrey de la India para el rey de Japón, (...)” (*Monumenta Xaveriana ex autographis vel ex antiquioribus exemplis collecta*, by Francis Xavier, Saint, 1506-1552, Published 1899 by Matriti: Typis A. Avrial, Tomus Primus, p.129). Available at: <https://archive.org/details/monumentaxaveria1601fran> (Accessed on September 20, 2017).

³⁴ It is unlikely that Xavier executed a “pious ruse” to obtain permission when he condemned categorically many Japanese customs, and also informed that they came from Portugal, his place of provenance, from the beginning at Kagoshima (Letter 90, Paragraph 19): “[...] they were immensely surprised when they noticed that we came from such far lands, as Portugal is from Japan, which is more than six thousand leagues, just to preach the words of God [...]”. “[...] se espantan en grande manera en ver como venimos de tierras tan lejanas, como es de Portugal a Japón, que son más de seis mil leguas, solamente para hablar de las cosas de Dios (...)” (Zubillaga 1968: 357).

³⁵ Zubillaga 1968: 397.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 391.

Xavier describes their *modus operandi* of reading the book of Christian teachings, affirming that one of the Jesuits was already able to speak Japanese (Letter 97, Paragraph 14):

At this time already, one of us can speak Japanese, and reading the book, which we wrote before with other explanations, many people became Christian. (...) Therefore we decided to preach out in the streets, twice a day, reading the book which we bring, and adding information, speaking about what we had just read.³⁷

Many paintings show how Xavier used to preach by going around reading a book. These preaching sessions happened after Xavier had expounded on his disapproving attitude toward homosexuality and on the differing beliefs of the two religions. Nonetheless, the book used for preaching in Yamaguchi was still the version translated by Paulo in Kagoshima, which retained all of the Buddhist terms. Therefore, it is more than likely that at this point, for the Japanese including the feudal lord, the Jesuits still remained sounded like an unfamiliar branch of Buddhism. On the other hand, for the Jesuits, and especially for Xavier, the strategist and high-ranking superior of the missionaries in Japan, the new believers became a source of reference regarding the cultural disparities between the Jesuits and the Japanese. Xavier said to his fellows in Europe (Letter 96, Paragraph 22):

In this town in Yamaguchi, for around two months and after many questions, 500 people were baptized, (...) many of them revealed to us the falsehoods of the priests and their sects; if it was not for them, we never would have understood the idolatry of Japan. The love that they profess for us is extremely vast; and trust me they are truly Christians.³⁸

Xavier emphasized the role of the new believers in Yamaguchi as true Christians and the importance of their interaction for gaining a deep understanding of the Japanese culture, which until then had not been entirely clear to the missionaries. The preachers' audience was diverse. Consequently, the newly converted Japanese included highly educated people as well as members of the warrior social class. They became the key point for investigating Buddhism, the main religion of Japan, and for acquiring the information necessary to defeat it in an argument. Xavier expressed this in his Letter 96, Paragraph 17:

Those who became Christians [in Yamaguchi], most of them were knights (*hidalgos*); after they converted, they were such good friends to us that it cannot be expressed through writing. Thereby, they informed us of all [the falsehoods] faithfully that the infidels (*gentiles*) have in their laws; (...) After we understood clearly what was in

³⁷ “A este tiempo ya uno de nosotros sabía hablar japon, y leyendo por el libro que sacamos en lengua de Japón, con otras pláticas que hacíamos, se hacían muchos cristianos. (...) Así determinamos predicar por muchos días por las calles, cada día dos veces, leyendo por el libro que llevábamos, haciendo algunas pláticas conforme a lo que por el libro leíamos” (Zubillaga 1968: 389-390).

³⁸ (January 29, 1552, from Cochín) “En esta ciudad en Amanguche, en espacio de dos meses, después de pasadas muchas preguntas, se bautizaron quinientas personas, (...) Muchos nos descubren los engaños de los bonzos y sus sectas; y si no fuese por ellos, no estuviéramos al cabo de las idolatrías de Japón. Grande en extremos es el amor que nos tienen los que se hacen cristianos, y creed que son cristianos de verdad” (Zubillaga 1968: 394).

their laws, we found proof to show that these laws are false, in this manner we argue with them every day, (...) and they could not refute us.³⁹

As a consequence of this fruitful exchange, Xavier discovered what the words that they preached meant to the Japanese, and at public conferences in Yamaguchi, Xavier ordered the Spanish translator Fernandez to specifically deny *Dainichi* worship by saying "*Dainichi na ogamiasso*" (大日な拝みあつそ, Do not adore *Dainichi*, *Dainichi* is not the true God).⁴⁰ When the Jesuits rejected the term *Dainichi* and began to use the Latin term *Deus*, they were subjected to public scorn from the Japanese monks, who then spread the rumor that the Christian God, until that time known as *Dainichi*, was a lie, *daiuso* (大嘘).

Although there is no historical proof in this regard, it can be supposed that during his dialogues in Yamaguchi with the Japanese, Xavier began to understand the contrasting characteristics of the two religions. However, the question arises as to what would make Xavier change his mind and modify his strategy of using the Japanese terms, as in the case of the *a posteriori* negation of *Dainichi* as the Christian God. Above all, he might have noticed that the *Dainichi* statue is portrayed with a symbolic hand gesture or *mudra* that symbolizes the origin of the universe through carnal union. Even though Xavier had used *Dainichi* throughout his preaching activities in Japan and it had helped him gain acceptance from the Japanese believers in Buddhism, this gesture might have been unacceptable to Xavier, especially since it was made by a figure representing the Christian God. The Japanese historian Kishino states that this may have been the primary reason for the removal of the problematic word *Dainichi* from the Japanese preaching Creed and the change in Xavier's strategy.⁴¹ It has been proposed that the impact of this communication between the Japanese and the Jesuits most likely prompted Xavier's paradigm shift in the summer of 1551. Proof of this is that Xavier mentioned *Deus* for God in his letter 96, 78 times instead of the usual term. What indicates the Xavier's significant awareness of this writing at this time.⁴²

After spending the summer in Yamaguchi, and in spite of the difficult questions posed by the Japanese people, the Jesuits gathered about 500 new believers in just two months (Letter 96, Paragraph 22).⁴³ Xavier highlighted how he silenced priests and said:

God shamed the incredulous through us and we have obtained victory among them at the debates, that is the reason why I can say that my stay here is the most comforting and satisfactory spiritual experience of my whole life.⁴⁴

³⁹ (To his fellows in Europe, January 29, 1552, from Cochin) "Estos que se hacían cristianos, muchos de ellos eran hidalgos; y después de hechos cristianos, eran tan amigos nuestros, que no lo podría acabar de escribir. Y así nos declaraban muy fielmente todo aquello que tienen los gentiles en sus leyes; (...) Después de tener verdadera noticia de lo que tienen ellos en sus leyes, buscamos razones para probar ser falsas, de manera que cada día les hacíamos nosotros preguntas (...) que ellos no sabían responder" (Zubillaga 1968: 392).

⁴⁰ Kishino 2015: 263.

⁴¹ Kishino 1998: 218-219.

⁴² App 1997: 242.

⁴³ Zubillaga 1968: 394.

⁴⁴ To his fellows in Europe, January 29, 1552 Cochin (Letter 96, Paragraph 52) "(...)en Amanguche, después de que el duque nos dio

After this, he may have considered his work in Yamaguchi to be done and accepted an invitation to visit the Bungo (豊後) region of the feudal lord Yoshishige Ōtomo (大友義鎮, the future Sōrin Ōtomo 大友宗麟 1530-1587). Xavier therefore put Father Cosme de Torres in charge of the believers in Yamaguchi. Torres went to Yamaguchi from Hirado in September 1551.⁴⁵

The similarity of the vocabulary that the Jesuits used in their homily reading of the translated book allowed the missionaries to adapt in a way that Xavier could not renounce at this time. He lost control of his strategy of acculturation due at first to his lack of knowledge about the Japanese language and culture. However, the religious debates that Xavier started in Yamaguchi and that ran from April to September 1551 were the first "pure" contact between the Japanese and the Jesuits without any Japanese intermediary. For the missionaries, these meetings became an invaluable opportunity to learn directly about Buddhism and Japanese traditions, and they are a rich example of the intercultural relations between the Jesuits and the Japanese.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE DEBATES IN YAMAGUCHI

Four letters have been preserved, three of them written by Torres, and one by Fernandez, that relate the content of the debates in Yamaguchi.⁴⁶ In these debates, the most impressive concept for the Japanese was the existence of the omnipotent and omniscient, Christian God, as Xavier described in his letters.⁴⁷ Besides this, the other matters introduced in the debates can be summarized in the following three points. First, the Japanese asked why the omniscient God created and permits the existence of evil, to which Xavier pondered with reference to the free will that God has granted to all human beings. Second, the Japanese considered the Christian God pitiless, because He established hell as a place for eternal punishment. Third, they wondered why an omniscient God had not manifested Himself before the arrival of the Jesuits in Japan, and about what would happen to their ancestors who had not heard the Christian teachings.⁴⁸

After Xavier's departure, with Torres being responsible for the arguing, Zen Buddhist schools came to the debates, and they discussed the matter of the eternity of the soul and the existence of an afterlife. This became the principal subject of the debates.⁴⁹ Xavier informed his fellows (Letter 102, Paragraph 9):

The mission in Japan is prospering. Father Cosme de Torres and Juan Fernandez are staying with the many converted Christians that increase every day. They [Torres

licencia para predicar la ley de Dios, era tanto el número de las personas que venían a preguntar y disputar, que me parece que con verdad podría decir que en mi vida nunca tanto placer ni contentamiento espiritual recibí, como en ver que Dios nuestro Señor por nosotros confundía a los gentiles, y la victoria que continuamente teníamos contra ellos" (Zubillaga 1968: 403).

⁴⁵ Schurhammer 1964: 31.

⁴⁶ Schurhammer 1964: 51.

⁴⁷ Kishino 1998: 221.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 222-223.

⁴⁹ Kishino 1998: 224.

and Fernandez] know the language well, because they are achieving great outcomes.⁵⁰

In fact, Torres was the trusted Superior in Yamaguchi at a theological or argumentative level. Although he could speak Japanese, the debates and subsequently the preaching were typically translated from Spanish by Fernandez, as Xavier affirmed (Letter 96, Paragraph 46).⁵¹

However, at that moment, Torres ordered Fernandez to record the contents of the debates not in Spanish but in Japanese, as indicated in a letter from Fernandez to Xavier dated 20 October 1551.⁵² It may be asked what led Torres to decide on this course of action, with the knowledge that the notes would need to be translated afterwards into a European language in order to inform Xavier of what was being debated. Firstly, Fernandez' extraordinary Japanese skills should be considered. Perhaps Torres wanted to prevent another misunderstanding resulting from the cultural gap between the Latin and Japanese terms and influenced by Buddhism's deep roots in Japan, as had occurred in the case of *Dainichi*. It is therefore plausible that Torres opted to attempt to bridge the gap between the two languages by ordering Fernandez to make records in Japanese first.

The debates in Yamaguchi began in April and Xavier participated in them until September, after which Torres extended them to the first period of October. Somehow, the discrepancies examined in these debates between the religions, made the differences between them and the missionaries clearer to the Japanese. In turn, the Jesuits then understood the cultural gap and restructured their cultural accommodation. However, for the majority of the Japanese, the Company remained an unconventional and *non grata* religious branch exported from India.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A CHENJICU

At the Yamaguchi debates, priests still called Christians by names such as *chincico*.⁵³ When Harukata Sue (陶晴賢 1521-1555) provoked a revolution against lord Yoshitaka Ōuchi on 28 August 1551, Torres also wrote to Xavier that the priests still called them *chenjicus*.⁵⁴ After the religious debates on 20 October 1551, Fernandez described an incident during this time of upheaval in Yamaguchi. He related how Japanese

warriors came to kill them, yelling: "The *chenjiqu* fellows kill them! (...) this disaster is their fault".⁵⁵ This *chenjiqu* understanding remained intact amongst the Japanese, even when the rebellion had subsided after Xavier denied *Dainichi* as the Christian God. When Xavier requested asylum and protection for Christians from the resurgent Yoshinaga Ōuchi (大内義長 1532-1557), Ōuchi put up notices around Yamaguchi aiming to protect the Christians from repression. The lord safeguarded their preaching activities by renewing their permission to remain at *Daidōji*. The notices gave permission for the "Buddhist priests coming from the West" to preach the "law of Buddha".⁵⁶ It is remarkable that in the Latin version transcribed by the Jesuits, the expressions "Buddhist priests" and "law of Buddha" are not translated directly.⁵⁷ This permission, dated 16 September 1552, demonstrates that the misunderstanding regarding this new "Buddhist school" was present among the Japanese during this period.

In addition, it has been argued before that mutual ignorance of one another causes misunderstanding, denying the possibility to conclude that the Jesuits consciously took advantage of the situation to acquire permission to preach.⁵⁸ This perspective has been attributed to the possibility that the missionaries could not read what was written in the Japanese notices themselves. However, if this were true, it is unclear how the Jesuits could have understood that the plate meant that they received permission for preaching in Yamaguchi. In fact, it is clear that the new Japanese believers were involved in the verification of the translation. In other words, the interaction between the new Japanese believers and the European missionaries was a source of constant and rich feedback for understanding Japanese culture, as Xavier described in his letters. Many Japanese people that joined the Jesuits were proactive in this interaction, and not only farmers but also educated people joined Xavier's retinue.⁵⁹ Therefore, it is improbable that the Jesuits did not realize that they were still considered as *chenjicus* after receiving permission from Yoshinaga in 1552. That was the unavoidable consequence of Xavier's temporary plan. This was, plausibly the risk of his sacrifice to establish Christianity in Japan, which was a mission that became more urgent for him every day.

IN CONCLUSION: THE VISION OF XAVIER

The cultural adaptation strategy adopted by the Company of Jesus in Asia was implemented differently according to the environment and conditions of the society in which the Gospel was introduced (Pina 2001; Esguerra 2015). With the arrival of Valignano in Japan in 1579, the acculturation method⁶⁰ was formally carried out by the

⁵⁰ (To Father Gonzalo Rodrigues in Ormuz, dated March 22, 1552) "Las cosas de Japón van en mucha prosperidad. Allí queda el padre Cosme de Torres y Juan Fernández con los muchos cristianos que se tienen ya hechos y cada día se hacen. Ellos saben bien la lengua, y por eso hacen mucho grandísimo fruto" (Zubillaga 1968: 425).

⁵¹ (To his fellows in Europe, dated January 29, 1552, from Cochín) [Father Cosme de Torres is in charge of preaching in the language (Spanish), and Juan Fernandez translates to Japanese, because he knows it very well, and then Christians take benefit]. "El padre Cosme de Torres ocúpase en hacer las predicaciones en lenguaje, y Juan Fernández las traslada en la lengua de Japón, porque la sabe muy bien, y así los cristianos se van aprovechando mucho" (Zubillaga 1968: 401).

⁵² "E porque el Padre me tiene mamdado, que sempre escreva em lingua de Japão lo que preguntam e lles responde, daquellas, que tenho escritas darei aqui a Vuestra Reverencia coenta" (Schurhammer 1964, appendix 12) [I would inform you my Lord, what kind of matters were asked and what was replied, as the Father (Torres) ordered to me to write always in Japanese].

⁵³ Murakami 1968: 49.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 27.

⁵⁵ Schurhammer 1964: appendix 23.

⁵⁶ Toyosawa 1999: 176.

⁵⁷ For further information see App 1997.

⁵⁸ App 1997: 241-244.

⁵⁹ Bernardo, the converted Japanese believer who travelled to Europe after Xavier died, accompanied Xavier on the entire journey from Hirado, passing through Yamaguchi and the capital and returning with him to India in 1551. Moreover, other influential new believers who learned at the Ashikaga School and a blind monk (琵琶法師) were baptized by Xavier in Yamaguchi (Obara 2016: 64).

⁶⁰ The Jesuits attempted in so far as possible to adapt to Japanese culture. At the end of the sixteenth century, other missionary branches such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans began to preach in Japan,

Company.⁶¹ However, for Xavier, the pioneer of the Christian mission in Japan, the situation demanded the path for the Jesuits' integration to be cleared from the beginning.

After noticing the translation discrepancies,⁶² which made clear the differences between the Japanese and European paradigms, Xavier started using Latin terms for the principal concepts of the Creed. However, as has been described before,⁶³ the exact nature of this new religion was not entirely clear to the Japanese people. In Yamaguchi, where more time was available for debate, the Jesuits paid special attention to the possible translation gaps and benefitted from the extraordinary Japanese proficiency of Fernandez. However, Xavier felt that Torres and Fernandez were not suited to be sent to argue at Buddhist universities and rather ordered them to be the future translators of more skilled Jesuits.⁶⁴

Once again, there was nothing left for Xavier to do but trust in them as an urgent measure, as was also the case of the first Japanese translator Paulo. This was Xavier's constant preaching stance and also the basis of his acculturation strategy. Nothing was permanent; every measure Xavier took was provisional and served his urgent commitment to the mission. Xavier planned to relieve Paulo with Fernandez, since he ordered Fernandez to learn Japanese while the Company of Jesus was in India. However, after his arrival in Kagoshima, Xavier continued to believe in the need to educate the Japanese to be translators for the future Jesuit arrivals. Directly after his arrival in Kagoshima, he made clear his future vision of continuing to instruct new Japanese translators and sent to India two people who had attended famous Buddhist universities (Letter 90 Paragraph 57).⁶⁵

but one of the clearest differences between them and the Jesuits was that the Jesuits implemented an adaptation principle in Japan. Valignano, the first Jesuit to bring printing technology to Japan in the sixteenth century, said: "They are in their land, so they won't throw away their customs. We have to adapt to them" and added: "We are in their land, so we cannot live here without them" (Hazama 2015b: 45).

⁶¹ The acculturation policy, which underlines the need to study the local language and religions in depth, as well as to teach Latin to new believers, was implemented officially by Valignano. This strategy of cultural accommodation was introduced at the doctrinal, cultural and educational levels (Esguerra 2015: 32). Subsequently, the Gospel was translated into Japanese using many Buddhist sutras as a reference. This was a complex process in which the missionaries and the converted Japanese worked together (Loureiro 2004).

⁶² As Villamor (2017) writes about the question of the continued appearance of Buddhist terms with many Latin philosophical words in the translated book *Fidesu no qvto*, this shows how Buddhist terms were still used at the end of the sixteenth century in the translation process. The policy was to have the new Japanese new believers work together with Europeans to distribute the book to remote places.

⁶³ Kishino 1998: 219.

⁶⁴ To Father Ignacio de Loyola in Rome, January 29, 1552 (Letter 97, Paragraph 16) [About those of the Company who are in Yamaguchi, and here in (Cochin), (...) I do not think they are ready to be sent to the universities, rather to learn the language and investigate their sects for when the Fathers from there [Europe] go to Japan, and be their faithful interpreters] "De los de la Compañía que están en Amanguchi, y de los que acá están, (...) no me parece que serán para mandar a estas universidades, más para aprender la lengua y lo que ellos tienen en sus sectas, para cuando vinieren los padres de allá ser intérpretes para hablar fielmente todo lo que les dijeren" (Zubillaga 1968: 407). Xavier sent the same affirmation to Father Simón Rodrigues of Portugal on January 30, 1552 (Letter 98, Paragraph 2) (Zubillaga 1968: 410).

⁶⁵ [This year there are two *bonzos* going to India, who have been to *Bandu* and *Meaco* universities, and with them another Japanese will also go to learn our law]. "Este año van dos bonzos a la India, los cuales

In fact, the policy of studying by having Jesuits pair up with natives, as the Japanese were converted in Yamaguchi, was implemented during the Jesuits' stay in India. When the Gospel was translated, people who could understand the Tamil language and those who understood Portuguese were paired (Kishino 1998: 180). While in Japan, the Jesuits were never alone. For the missionaries, Japan became a source of new knowledge which they obtained via the new Japanese believers' support. Even after the debate caused by the translation gap in Japan, Xavier wrote (Letter 97, Paragraph 21):

We wrote in the language of Japan a book about the creation of the world and every mystery about the life of Christ; later we wrote the same book in the Chinese script [Chinese ideograms, "kanji"] so when I arrived in China, I could make myself understood until I could speak Chinese.⁶⁶

From India, across Japan and even when he planned to go to China, Xavier's accommodation plan remained intact. This plan was to trust the work of the native translators and sacrifice, to a certain degree, the cultural meaning that is inevitably lost in the translation process, in order to achieve a more stable reception from the natives. Everything, of course, was a temporary approach until the most prepared missionaries from Europe had obtained the necessary knowledge of the language and culture to preach directly or translate the "authentic" words of God. However, on the other hand, this strategic vision for first clearing the path of the mission, which focused always on the long-term success of the Company of Jesus, sometimes went too far to be tolerated by Xavier due to the underlying linguistic and cultural gaps. This could not have gone unnoticed for a polyglot and erudite man of the world like Xavier. Rather, Xavier consciously made the decision to opt for this strategy to bring what he felt was the only alternative for salvation.

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estuvieron en las universidades de *Bandu* (*Kanto region*) y *Meaco* (*Kyoto region*), y con ellos muchos japoneses a aprender las cosas de nuestra ley" (Zubillaga 1968: 371).

⁶⁶ (To Father Ignacio de Loyola in Rome, January 29, 1552) "Hicimos en lengua de Japón un libro que trataba de la creación del mundo y todos los misterios de la vida de Cristo; y después este mismo libro escribimos en letra de la China, para cuando a la China fuere, para darme a entender hasta saber hablar china" (Zubillaga 1968: 409).

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