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Author	坂口, 昂吉(Sakaguchi, Kokichi)
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Essay on the Early Formative Years of Franciscans

Kokichi Sakaguchi

The present article intends to show the ideals and formation of early Franciscans.

There are two groups of historians who have different opinions about the early formation of the Franciscan Order. One of the groups (P. Sabatier) tried to build up the opinion that in early years, Franciscans were a society of people free from the hierarchical order. It was not the intention of St. Francis that this society would become a big systematic order under the patronage of the Church.

The others (J. Jörgensen and Fr. Cuthbert) opposed this opinion and maintained that St. Francis and his followers were faithful to the Pope and the Church from the very beginning and they intended to form a new order living in honest poverty.

The reason for the different opinions is the different historical materials on which historians based for their authority. The historical material for P. Sabatier's opinion was the "Speculum Perfectionis". The materials for J. Jörgensen and Fr. Cuthbert's opinions were the First and the Second Legend of Thomas of Celano. These historical materials were written by authoritative witnesses who were Franciscans and who were themselves influenced by the division of the Franciscans into two parties, namely conventuals and spirituals.

K. Esser tried to find out the real form of early Franciscanism referring to the historical materials which had no relation to the conventuals and spirituals. In this way, I have tried to show in this article, eight materials which were chronicles or letters written by people who were not Franciscans. 1

Through these materials and the Bull which was written for the early Franciscans and also the letters written by St. Francis

himself, I can come to the conclusion that Franciscans were not merely a group of lay men and women but a real religious order which had the same elements as other religious orders had. The differences were that they practiced their ideals strictly and they had some new elements. They had mobility and could enter into secular society. Their preaching and honest poverty were the elements which startled the people. Their unity was such that they had their own rules besides the strict obedience to their leader and through him to the Pope.

Bibliographical Note on the oldest
Manuscriptal Commentary of *Sangō-shiki*
and its Complete Text

Tsugio Ōta & Yūsen Inaya

Among numerous editions of commentaries on *Sangō-shiki* (三教指帰), which was one of the renowned works of Rev. Kūkai (空海) in his youth, it has been unanimously accepted that the oldest existing MS should be *Sangyō-kanchūshō* (三教勤注抄), stocked in the Library of Kōyasan-Hōjuin (高野山宝寿院). This MS is supposed to have been made sometime during the period between late Heian and early Kamakura.

Our recent investigation, however, has come to a different conclusion. A copy stocked in the Library of *Reiyūkai* (靈友会) is considered to be older than *Sangyōkanchūshō*. In spite of some technical limitations, being a mere fragmentary excerpt from certain older commentary, *Reiyūkai Book* not only well illustrates the feature of the original text, but also keeps the *Kana* way of reading or pronunciation, which is vitally necessary for further advanced criticism.

Besides, we are fortunately in a position to use the Introductory Chapter by the name of "Shikigo" (識語) written by Shōken