

Title	The activities of the early catholic missionaries as the intermediaries of trade in Japan
Sub Title	
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Publisher	三田史学会
Publication year	1973
Jtitle	史学 (The historical science). Vol.45, No.2 (1973. 1) ,p.2- 3
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	Abstract
Genre	
URL	<a href="https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00100104-19730100-0125">https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00100104-19730100-0125</a>

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## The Activities of the Catholic Missionaries as the Intermediaries of Trade in Japan

Koichiro Takase

The activities of the early Catholic missionaries in relation to the Portuguese trade between Nagasaki and Macao had three functions. The first one was the participation of the Jesuits in the Portuguese silk trade in order to get their financial resources. The second one was that they, especially father *procurador*, acted as an important commercial intermediary for the Japanese merchants and the Portuguese ones in Nagasaki. Thirdly they brought silver of the Japanese to Macao, where they invested it. In this report, I treat the third function mentioned above.

These economic activities until 1592 can be clarified by Valignano's "*Adiciones del Sumario de Japon.*" Valignano says that from the early days of the Christian mission in Japan, not only Christian but also heathen *daimyos* asked them to invest their silver in order to get gold. From these activities the missionaries obtained nothing but embarrassment. Because the Portuguese in Macao were dissatisfied with the matter, Valignano had to negotiate with them and get their permission, having promised them to restrict the investment within 6,000 ducats in a year.

In spite of the fact that Valignano's "*Adiciones*" does not mention Hideyoshi's request of the investment, a later Jesuit's document suggests it.

Afterwards, in the seventeenth century, silk stuff as well as gold had come to be demanded. But a silk thread was not treated. The *Edo Bakufu* also began to ask the Jesuit missionaries the investment. From 1603 to 1604 or 1605, the Jesuit accepted a good deal of financial aid from Ieyasu. This strange event can  
2 be explained by the fact that through the trade there was an intimate relation between Ieyasu and the Jesuits.

Soon, there occurred the strong opposite view from within the Society of Jesus against these activities, which the Jesuit general

forbade in his order. Following this order, the father visitor Francesco Pasio inserted the words of the same prohibition in the "*Obediencias*" of 1612. Some Jesuits such as João Rodriguez Giram, Carlo Spinola and Francisco Vieira etc. welcomed this prohibition in their letters. But all did not obey it at once. Francesco Pasio, in spite of the prohibition of the general, continued to accept the request, and in spring of 1612 he brought silver of the Japanese to Macao. This was probably the last investment. Because of the *Bakufu's* policy of prohibition of the Christianity, sooner or later these activities of the Jesuits would have come to be impossible.

It can be said that these economic activities of the missionaries were brought forth by the fact that the Christian mission formed a link in the chain of the Portuguese national policies at that time.