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Author	高瀬, 弘一郎(Takase, Koichiro)
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The Economic Basis of the Diocese of *Funai* of the Early Catholic Church in Japan

Koichiro TAKASE

The Christians of Japan were first included in the Diocese of Macao established in 1576, and formed the independent Diocese of *Funai* (*Bungo*) in 1588. In this article, the author intends to make clear the economic basis of this diocese.

In the first place, the King of Portugal, as a patron of Christianity in Japan, was under obligation to support financially the Diocese of *Funai*. In 1588 he decided to provide Moraes, the Jesuit Bishop of the diocese, with 500 *cruzados* annually in Portuguese India. The King determined to give an annual grant of 2000 *cruzados* to the next Jesuit Bishop Martins, perhaps in Salsete of Goa. He also decided to provide the next Jesuit Bishop Cerqueira with the same amount of money which was paid from the income of the village of Benaullim in Salsete of Goa. But this grant fell in arrears, for example, Cerqueira had not been provided at all until 1604 for six years since his arrival in his diocese. Martins and Cerqueira had requested repeatedly the full payment of this grant from the King. When this amount of 2000 *cruzados*, if it had been paid, arrived at Macao, it decreased in value to about 1280 *cruzados* because of the exchange, the freight, the tax for the Court of China, the expenses of the *procurador* in Goa, etc.

Cerqueira also asked the Pope for financial support, but it seems that he could not gain the Pope's help for his diocese. The Bishop of Japan who did not have a firm financial basis could not help depending upon the Jesuit Society for wide support of his activities. In the Diocese of *Funai* a Jesuit brother worked as an accountant of the diocese. Also in Macao, as an agent of the Bishop of Japan, the Jesuit *procurador* who resided in Macao participated in the keeping and the investment of the funds of the diocese.

The important source of the income of the bishop was from

2 commerce. He also consigned to the Jesuits the remittances and the investment of his capital for commercial activities. The parish priests in the Diocese of *Funai* also participated in foreign trade. In October 1607, the Bishop of Japan was in debt for more than 4.000 taels. But at the same time, he had enough property for repaying this debt. Afterwards the income of the Diocese of *Funai* seems to have increased and its financial situation to have become affluent. Around 1613, among the Jesuits in Japan, there was an opinion that the bishop and his parish priests were quite rich and would become richer, and that this abundance would bring on them spiritual degeneration. It seems that much alms was given to them. When Cerqueira died in February 1614, he left a large fortune, from which the Jesuit Society Japan borrowed, mostly in Macao, about 7.000 *cruzados*, the majority of which was in the form of merchandise. During the time of *Visitador* Francisco Vieira, the Jesuit Society had repaid all of this debt principally with the income from trade.

At the death of Cerqueira, the benefices of the parish priests who composed the Diocese of *Funai* were as follows. The priest of the parish church of *S. Pedro* had a benefice offered by *Toan Murayama, daikan of Nagasaki*. The expenditure of this parish church was covered with the income from commerce. The supplier of the benefice owned by the priest of the parish church of *S. Antonio* is not known. The suppliers of the benefice owned by the priest of the parish church of *S. Maria* were Portuguese traders and this benefice would have been covered with the income of trade. The supplier of the benefice owned by the priest of the church of *S. João* is not known. There were three other secular priests who did not have their own benefices.